

MAY
16-31,
2010

VOL. 18
#9

\$1.50

people's VOICE

"Pro-life" policy
kills women

See page 4

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

CAPITALISM: going up in smoke?

April 21: Fire boat crews battle the explosion which killed eleven workers on the offshore oil rig Deepwater Horizon. Now, the massive oil spill threatens to turn the Gulf of Mexico into an ecological dead zone.

A system in deep crisis - page 4
Marxism and the environment - page 6

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May Day reports

Only briefly noted by the corporate media, people across Canada and around the world celebrated the First of May, the international day of the working class struggle for a better future.

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Strikes shake Greece

The Euro-bosses and the Greek government are meeting fierce resistance against the drive to make working people pay for the crisis.

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A time of insanity

In his latest "Reflection," Fidel Castro looks at "the insanities of our times" - the huge gulf between the needs of the people, and the ongoing arms race which is destroying our planet.

May Day collection sent to Sudbury strikers

By Liz Rowley

Toronto participants in the People's Voice May Day celebration responded to the call to support Sudbury strikers against Brazilian multinational Vale Inco with a donation of \$350. Another \$350 was raised for People's Voice, which has helped expose Vale's union busting, and helped mobilize support for the strike since July 2009.

The gathering also passed a resolution calling on the provincial government to pass anti-scab legislation, and to force the company to negotiate the "fair deal" that miners, smelterworkers, and the community are entitled to.

Vale Inco, which has 97% of its global holdings outside Canada, is determined to kill the defined benefit pension plan that provides some measure of security for workers after a lifetime in their dangerous occupation. Even this plan has left some workers and mine widows unable to cope, because pensions were not tied to cost of living increases. Nor do they cover the costs of diseases such as black lung which are rife in mining towns like Sudbury.

Vale wants a defined contribution (DC) pension, akin

to RRSPs, completely exposed to the ups and downs of the market. In the crash of 2008, hundreds of thousands of people lost substantial portions of their DC pensions and savings.

The company also wants to end the nickel bonus, a profit sharing arrangement whereby workers get a share of the increase when the price of nickel rises.

For the first time in its 100 year history, the Inco mines and smelters are being worked by scabs, as the company struggles to break the workers' resolve and their union, Local 6500 of the United Steelworkers. Strikebreakers and rent-a-cops have been recruited in Milton, a small farming community in Southern Ontario, as well as from Timmins, a hard rock mining town rocked by layoffs and mine closures. Others are being recruited from the unemployed and unorganized across the province, and flown into the mine and smelter sites by helicopter. The scabs are sleeping in the mine site offices, and flown out on regular rotations.

AFI Security cops are following strikers and their family members on trips to the grocery store, school, and so on. This intimidation is intended to wear down the families

and convince strikers to accept the company's terms. In retaliation, strikers are picketing the homes and businesses of scabs, and listing their names at mine entrances and in public places. Strike supporters have organized extended pickets, holding up company trucks as long as three hours, longer than the protocol which requires the union to let all traffic through the lines after twelve minutes.

In March, the office workers at Vale, members of a separate, composite USW local, voted nearly unanimously to accept a contract offer containing a \$5,000 signing bonus, a wage increase, and other juicy enticements. Instead of joining in the big strike of miners and smelterworkers, the office workers, including senior staff, opted to take the bait and look after themselves. These are the same untrained and inexperienced employees the company has used since last July to work the mines and smelters. Serious gaps in Ontario's labour

laws permit employers to redirect employees to work in their struck worksites. The deal was intended to put a wedge into the union, and it has done so. Strikers won't forget that they were left out in the cold

by their brothers and sisters who cross the picket lines every day.

In April, public pressure finally pushed NDP Mayor John Rodriguez and the Sudbury town Council

to enforce municipal by-laws that prohibit using company offices to sleep and house workers. A mass meeting at City Hall forced the Mayor and Council to speak up for the community.

But the company isn't producing much. Many of the trucks passing through the lines are empty. Production is fitful at best, intended mainly as a propaganda weapon to break down support for the union. There is a real danger of serious accidents in the mines, and chemical gas leaks or explosions from the smelters could affect the whole town. This itself is reason to compel the provincial government to step in and ban the use of scabs.

How to win against such a powerful company with such deep pockets? That's the question facing strikers and their supporters. Clearly there must be a greater mobilization of Canadian labour in support of the strike. Also at issue is ownership and control of

Canada's natural resources, and Investment Canada's "free pass" to Vale to extract nickel and precious metals under any conditions.

The labour and democratic movements can demand that local MPPs and MPs act to force the company back to the table to negotiate a collective agreement, to ban the use of scabs, and to reopen the Investment Canada deal that allowed Vale into Canada in the first place. They can also put pressure on other businesses that deal with Vale, such as TVOntario which sells advertising to Vale on its nightly "Agenda" news program. Letters to the editor and calls to the talk shows are important.

After 10 months, with no end in sight, this is now everybody's fight. The outcome will ripple right through the mining and resource sector, either lifting up the fight to save pensions and good unionized jobs, or axe them.

The strikers are holding on, but they need all the firepower the labour movement can bring to bear. Working people across Canada need to know what's in the balance, and what they and their unions can do to help win.

The real solution is to nationalize Vale and put the operation under public ownership and democratic control. That would end what is effectively a lock-out, and result in a fair deal for striking workers. It would also return ownership and control of these rich mines and natural resources to the Canadian people. A noble idea, and one worth fighting for sooner, rather than later.

(Liz Rowley is the Ontario leader of the Communist Party.)

PV Fund Drive: \$50,000 in 2010
\$24,494 raised: 49%

The PV Fund Drive for 2010 is now at the halfway mark. As of May 4, we have received \$24,494, taking us to 49% of our \$50,000 target. When the results of fundraising activities in recent days are added up - such as the Burnaby Club's annual Mother's Day Pancake Breakfast - we will be on the way to completing the second half of the Drive.

Our Saskatchewan supporters are in the lead, closing in on their \$800 target, with \$725 raised, taking them to 90.6%. Congratulations for your quick start!

Ontario has jumped into second place, at 52.5%. So far we have received \$11,342 from Ontario readers towards their provincial target of \$21,600. British Columbia is next, with \$8857 turned in, or 44.3% of their \$20,000 goal, followed by Quebec (\$200 raised, or 40% of their \$500 target). Alberta has sent in \$1350 out of \$3400, or 39.7%, and Manitoba is at 34.2%, with \$820 out of \$2400 raised. Newfoundland has sent in 20% of

their \$400 goal, and we have \$120 from the Maritimes, or 10% of their \$1200 target. Another \$900 has been raised by miscellaneous and overseas friends.

Our May 1-15 issue was circulated at a number of May Day events across the country, adding something unique to the marches and rallies. As noted last time, we are the only newspaper in Canada to devote an entire issue each year to celebrating the international day of the working class, printing greetings from trade unions, progressive ethnic groups, anti-war organizations, Communist Party clubs, and others who see our newspaper as an important part of the struggle for a better world. In this issue, we carry some highlights from May Day in Canada and around the world.

We have several fundraising events coming up soon.

On Sunday, May 16, readers in the Niagara Peninsula region are invited to hear Dr. Keith Ellis speak on the on cover-up of Cuba's

solidarity efforts in Haiti. This event will include a BBQ (including vegetarian food), and it takes place from 2 to 5 pm at 8 1/2 Allan Drive in St. Catharines.

On Saturday, May 29, from 8 am to 2 pm, Toronto readers are holding a street sale with proceeds to People's Voice. It's all happening at 526 Main Street, two blocks north of Main subway station. Whatever you want, they have it, including hot dogs & sausages, clothes, books, jewellery, plants, and more! Call Liz at 416-469-2481 for info.

The opening of the new office space for Clarté, our sister newspaper in Quebec, was postponed to Sunday, May 30, starting 1 pm. Clarté is now located at the Association des Travailleurs Grec Hall, 5359 Ave. de Parc, Suite C. There will be refreshments, live music, and political reports on the Common Front union fightback in Quebec.

And finally for this time, mark Vancouver's 18th annual People's Voice Banquet on your calendars. The banquet will take place at the Russian Hall, 600 Campbell Ave., starting 6 pm, Saturday, June 5. Tickets are just \$10; call Sam at 604-254-9836 for more details.

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

Construction talks bog down in Quebec

Special to PV

While the struggle of Quebec's public sector unions is drawing considerable attention across Canada, other important labour developments are underway in the building trades. Collective agreements covering 150,000 Quebec construction industry workers expired on April 30. Although talks for a new contract began last October, union negotiators have run into the intransigence of employers' associations representing the various sectors of the industry, including residential, road building, and institutional-commercial.

An alliance has been formed, consisting of unions which represent around 80% of all workers in the Quebec construction industry. The alliance includes the Quebec Provincial Council of Construction Trades-International, CSD Building, the CSN-Construction, and the Union of Quebec Construction (SQC), to which are attached six local affiliates of the Quebec Federation of Labour.

The spokespersons for the Alliance report that "to date, little progress has been made. The difference between union demands and employer positions is so great that discussions are very difficult."

The wage offer from the

employers does not even cover inflation, and maintains wage differentials for workers who perform the same tasks in the residential sector. Under the pretext of "economic hardship," the employers want to abolish the double-time overtime pay rate in the institutional-commercial sector, and to return to a working week of 50 hours at straight time on construction sites.

Yet all indicators show that construction activity is on the upswing, so the workers feel they are entitled to better pay and improved working conditions. The unions are refusing to surrender, instead resorting to pressure tactics against the employers, and possibly strike action towards the end of June. Unfortunately, Quebec law prohibits any retroactive settlement in the construction industry.

The union alliance acknowledges that a walkout would have serious consequences: delays in delivery of new houses; a slowdown in road work across Quebec making travel difficult for motorists; and a delay in Hydro-Quebec's La Romaine mega-site. But these disadvantages, the unions note, would be caused by aggressive business associations which seek to undermine the working conditions of construction workers. ●

Here's my contribution to the PV Fund Drive!

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

Name _____

Address _____

City/town _____

Prov. _____ Postal Code _____

Send your contribution to:

People's Voice, 706 Clark Drive, Vancouver, BC, V5L 3J1

Big May Day rallies in Montreal and Toronto

PV Vancouver Bureau

The turnouts varied from city to city, but May 1 was marked across the country by the labour movement and its allies as part of the worldwide actions for May Day.



The biggest rally drew an estimated 25,000 trade union members and supporters in Montreal. The demonstration included thousands of public sector workers, united in a Common Front to win a new contract with the Charest government of Quebec. Carrying flags and balloons, music blaring from speakers on a truck, the marchers went to Marguerite Bourgeoys Park, where they paid homage to late Quebec union leader Michel Chartrand.

The protesters condemned the health-care user fees and cuts in the public service in the recent Quebec budget.

"We're against any kind of user fees," said Régine Laurent, president of the Fédération interprofessionnelle de la santé du

Québec, representing 58,000 nurses. "Studies around the world prove that, as soon as there is an obligation for citizens to pay for health-care services, it's obviously the poorest who are most penalized."

Teachers at the rally attacked the Charest government for failing on its promise of smaller class sizes, and for imposing bureaucratic rules that take time away from teaching.

Some of the 250 *Journal de Montréal* reporters, photographers, copy editors and office workers, now in their 16th month of a lock-out, marched near the front of the rally.

Thousands were in the streets of Toronto on May 1, drawing attention to the attacks against refugees and immigrant workers



Photos from the May Day march in Toronto, by Ed Bil

in Canada. The solidarity group No One Is Illegal was joined by a wide range of trade unions for

the demonstration. "We've seen a further dismantling of an already broken immigration refugee system," said Faria Kamal, one of the organizers. "We're here today to speak out against it and fight back."

Smaller actions took place in several other cities. In Winnipeg, over 200 people made their way from city hall down Main Street, then circling through downtown to Old Market Square, with chants such as "the people, united, will never be defeated." The day's theme - Equal Rights, Equal Opportunities, Progress for all - highlighted the struggle for women's rights.

Vancouver's May Day march along Commercial Drive, the first in six years to be organized by the city's Labour Council, drew about 500 participants. The march finished up with a rally at Grandview Park, where retired Longshore union activist Dave Lomas spoke on the union's June 19 commemoration of the 1935 "Battle of Ballantyne Pier," a turning point in the Vancouver labour movement. Other speakers included B.C. Communist Party leader Sam Hammond and Vancouver school trustee Jane Bouey.

Later there was an evening social event, with greetings from two members of the Cuban Women's Federation who have been touring British Columbia. BC Federation of Labour President Jim Sinclair and VDLC President Bill Saunders both gave powerful speeches condemning the attacks on workers' rights by governments and corporations. ●

ILO condemns Saskatchewan government

Special to PV

"Hold full and specific consultations with unions at an early stage of considering any labour legislation.... Take the necessary measures in consultations with unions to amend the Public Service Essential Services Act and Regulations... Ensure that all social partners have confidence restored..."

Those are some of the requests of the International Labour Organization (ILO), in a ruling against the Saskatchewan government's labour laws. The decision was in response to complaints filed by the National Union of Public and General Employees (NUPGE) and its

component, Saskatchewan Government and General Employees' Union; and the SFL collectively with 16 local unions and five national unions.

The ILO Committee on Freedom of Association found the Saskatchewan government violated international law (freedom of association) by proclaiming Bills 5 and 6 and by failing to consult with the labour movement before introducing them in the legislature. The ILO made a series of recommendations and requests of the Canadian government, which is then responsible for ensuring the Saskatchewan government complies with the rulings.

The ILO also told the province to amend the Trade Union Act to

lower the requirement for the minimum number of employees expressing support for a trade union in order to begin certification. Bill 6 raised that level from 25 to 45 per cent of workers in a bargaining unit. Regarding the Trespass to Property Act, the ILO upheld that government must not violate citizens' freedom of association, including the right to picket.

"One of the biggest victories for workers in this decision is that the ILO said you cannot take away workers' right to strike without compensating them," says SGEU president Bob Bymoen. "And here we have a government who has prohibited tens of thousands of public sector workers from striking, yet provides no compensation or access to independent third party arbitration for workers who have had their

bargaining power taken away."

Larry Kowalchuk, the lawyer for Retail, Wholesale, Department Store Union, who wrote the complaints, with assistance from SFL staff member Cara Banks, says: "The decision recognizes that the right to strike is a fundamental civil liberty. It must not be taken away arbitrarily without consultation or compensation. The ILO and international labour standards were founded on the premise that servitude is not acceptable because labour is not a commodity like any other good for sale."

The ILO has requested that the government keep it informed on progress in implementing the recommendations. The labour movement will also be updating the ILO with ongoing evidence of the effects of the labour laws and the state of the LRB. ●

Firing raises fears on private school funding

When Vancouver's Catholic Little Flower Academy fired Lisa Reimer from her position teaching music because she is a lesbian parent, the episode sets off alarms about using public funds to subsidize private schools.

Reimer had told the school administration that she was a lesbian, and that her partner was expecting a baby. Last December, well in advance of their son's birth, she formally requested parental leave. The request was denied in January, and then Reimer was suddenly dismissed without warning.

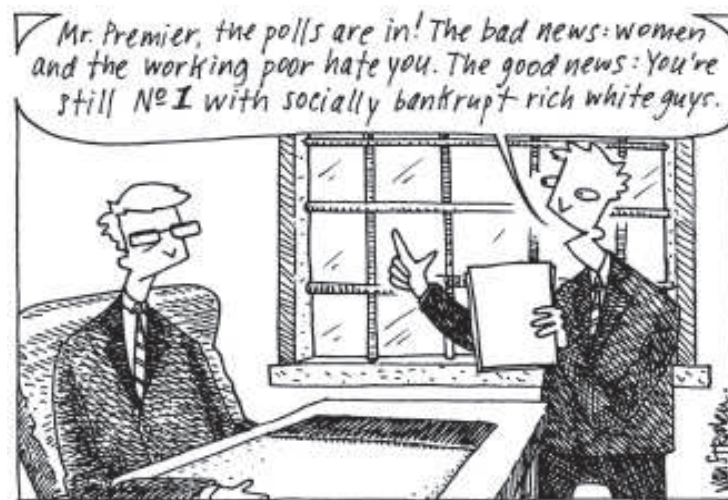
The principal stated the school had no concerns about Reimer's ability to teach. In fact, Little Flower Academy was very pleased with her performance. Reimer was told that many parents had complained after becoming aware of the fact that she had recently become a parent and that her spouse was a woman. The families were said to be worried that "the girls might follow Reimer's lead."

"Little Flower Academy is a publicly funded religious school," said Steve LeBel of BC's Pride Education Network. "They are clearly discriminating against Ms. Reimer on the basis of her family status and sexual orientation. In 2010, it is

absolutely unfathomable that any school would insinuate that students could be led into homosexuality by having a lesbian teacher and then fire that teacher. British Columbians want to know if the minister of education, Margaret MacDiarmid, is comfortable giving public funding to a private school that discriminates based on sexual orientation?"

"This kind of discrimination and homophobia could never happen in a public school," said Glen Hansman, a vice-president with the Vancouver Elementary School Teachers' Association. "This case is a clear example why private schools should not receive any kind of public funding whatsoever. All teachers have the right to a safe and accepting workplace. Catholic schools should be no different."

Reimer will return to the public school system in September as a teacher in Vancouver. The Vancouver School Board has a policy which explicitly protects lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) teachers from discrimination. The VSB policy, in keeping with the BC Human Rights Code and collective agreement, supports and protects LGBT teachers who choose to be out in the workplace. ●



Income gap for Aboriginal peoples still high

Income inequality between Aboriginal peoples and the rest of Canadians is stubbornly high, says a new study by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA).

For every dollar non-Aboriginals earned in 2006, Aboriginal peoples earned only 70 cents - a slight narrowing from 1996 when it was 56 cents for every dollar, say co-authors Dan Wilson and David Macdonald, who dug into 2006 Census data to quantify the Aboriginal income gap in Canada.

"The gap between Aboriginal peoples and the rest of Canadians narrowed slightly between 1996 and 2006, but at this rate it won't disappear for another 63 years

without a new approach," says Wilson. "Ironically, if and when parity with non-Aboriginals is achieved, Aboriginal peoples will reach the same level of income inequality as the rest of Canadians - which is getting worse."

Key findings in *The Income Gap Between Aboriginal Peoples and the Rest of Canadians*:

In 2006, the median income for Aboriginal peoples was \$18,962 - 30 per cent lower than the \$27,097 median income for the rest of Canadians.

The gap persists, even on reserves: First Nations people working on urban reserves earn 75 cents for every dollar a non-First Nations person makes; on rural

reserves they earn 53 cents per dollar that a non-First Nations person makes.

Aboriginal women are now earning median incomes closer to those of Aboriginal men, a trend that isn't being replicated in the general Canadian population. They are also getting high school diplomas and university degrees at a higher rate than Aboriginal men.

"The findings in this study suggest reason for hope," Wilson says. "Wiping out Aboriginal poverty and closing the income gap is a possibility, within our lifetime. But it requires new commitment from our governments to make it happen." ●

EDITORIALS

A system going up in smoke

The full impact of the Deepwater Horizon offshore rig blowout is gradually becoming apparent. As attempts to block the huge oil spill fall short, it appears more likely by the day that this corporate catastrophe may turn much of the Gulf of Mexico into a virtual dead zone, destroying the sealife and the environment which provide a living for millions of workers and their families. Yet this event was entirely predictable. Driven by the need for profits, offshore drilling is just one of the environmentally risky tactics used by the capitalist system to extract the oil necessary to keep functioning. While this is only the most recent and spectacular such disaster, imperialism has already turned much of the earth's surface into death zones.

On the "recovery" side of the capitalist ledger, cautious voices are already warning against euphoria. Stock prices, the most visible indicator of confidence in the system, continue to experience wild swings. As this issue goes to press, stocks are up on the news of the trillion-dollar "bailout" of the Greek economy. But if anyone thinks that Greek working people will quietly agree to pay the cost of this massive deal, they are quite mistaken. Faced with the "choice" between surrendering their wages, pensions and social programs, or continuing to resist, the people of Greece will not retreat. Their general strikes and huge demonstrations are only the beginning of a working class fightback which will inevitably spread across Europe and around the planet.

Truly, capitalism today is a system going up in smoke. It has no future to offer our world, and it must be replaced by the socialist alternative. That means building powerful, united, mass struggles for peace, jobs, equality, the environment, and genuine human progress. We have no alternative.

"Pro-life" policy kills women

The Harper government's latest attack on women's reproductive freedoms shows that the so-called "pro-life" forces are willing accomplices in the deaths of women and children around the world. Most Canadians support women's right to choose, yet the Tories have decided to exclude from Canada's G8 maternal/child health package any funding for reproductive health care that includes safe abortion services. This policy will have a deadly impact.

Until now, Canada has acted through the United Nations to help provide a full range of reproductive health services, including safe abortion where legal, and has consistently funded such services. In developing countries, up to 20 million women decide to resort to illegal abortions every year, resulting in an estimated 70,000 deaths. Millions of these women never receive medical treatment for the resulting complications. Over 200,000 children lose their mothers every year from unsafe abortion-related deaths, and the lifespan of the surviving children in such families is shortened. In countries where mass rape is used as a sexual weapon, lack of access to safe abortion services compounds the trauma imposed on women and girls, further reducing their chances to regain a normal life.

The new policy means that groups which forfeit Canadian funding may lose much of their ability to provide other basic healthcare. Far from improving the health of women and children, the Harper government's policy shift will cost countless lives.

This must not be allowed to happen. The Tories must be pushed to fund the full range of reproductive healthcare for women, and quality post-abortion care for women injured from illegal, unsafe abortion. This issue proves again the urgent need to mobilize Canadians to drive the Tories out of office, and to decisively defeat the right wing forces in the next election.

PEOPLE'S VOICE

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

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

Volunteers and contributors for this issue:

Dave Arland, Ed Bil, Paul Bjarnason, Sean Burton,
Miguel Figueroa, Sam Hammond, Mike Oosting,
B. Prasant, Gurpreet Singh, Liz Rowley, and our
mailers in Vancouver & Toronto.

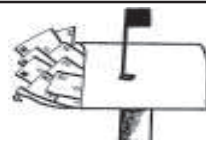
Editor: Kimball Cariou Business Manager: Sam Hammond

Editorial Board: Kimball Cariou, Miguel Figueroa,
Doug Meggison, Naomi Rankin, Liz Rowley, Jim Sacouman

LETTERS

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Letters to the Editor

More on Khadr legal case

Newspaper reports of Canadian Omar Khadr imply he hasn't had a trial on the charges that he killed a US Marine in Afghanistan. While technically true, Khadr has had at least two military hearings. The first was classified. The second was initially opened to the press.

Before reporters were barred in the second hearing, three marines testified, including the commanding officer on site. They said Omar could not have killed

anyone because he was lying on the floor of the radio room at the time with a bullet in the back of his head.

Omar is bilingual in English and Afghani. He was able to intercept messages from the marines as they closed in and relay their positions to his fellow soldiers. Because he stayed at his post, some of those trainees may have escaped. All the other 15-year-old boys trapped in the compound were killed. Omar lost an eye.

Later, with the apparent knowledge and complicity of

Canadian government officials, he was tortured at Guantanamo Bay. He is still prisoner there in spite of the Canadian Supreme Court reminding our government of their duty to protect Canadians. All Western countries that had prisoners at Guantanamo have successfully repatriated their citizens. Except Canada.

It must stick in the craw of the Harpers and Iggys that Omar Khadr was a better soldier, a better Canadian and a lot better man by the age of 15 than they will ever be.

Jim Erkiletian, Nanaimo, BC

Ontario Communists: nationalize the pharmaceutical industry!

Statement from the Communist Party of Canada (Ontario)

The Liberal government in Ontario has launched a campaign to reduce health care costs that won't, in fact, reduce health care costs substantially and will almost certainly increase drug store dispensing fees paid by the public. That's because the government is solely focused on reducing generic drug companies' kickbacks to drug stores for product placement, while ignoring the multi-national pharmaceutical companies which are the single biggest drain on health care dollars in Ontario and across Canada.

Called "professional allowances" these kickbacks do add - minimally - to the cost of drugs. But they're just a fly in the ointment compared to the obscene mega-profits rolling in from the price fixing monopoly of the multinational pharmaceutical companies. These roll in year after year on the backs of the sick and the poor in Ontario and globally, because the federal is protecting them, and the provincial government hasn't the will or the desire to take them on.

Rather, the Premier and the Health Minister are taking on pharmacists, with the full knowledge that pharmacists are either employees in chains like Shoppers Drug Mart, or owner operators of small neighbourhood drug stores that likely won't survive the Liberals' pre-election campaign.

If the Liberals really wanted to

cut drug and health care costs, they'd go after Big Pharma which is making a 25% profit on the drugs it sells in Ontario - far more than the profits they make on the same drug sales to France, Italy, Sweden, Switzerland and Britain.

Further, to really lower the cost of drugs the Liberals would also have to take on the federal government over their refusal to tighten up on drug patent laws which have allowed the multinational pharmaceuticals to extend their patent protections - and mega-profits - for years into the future.

But the McGuinty government is prepared to do neither of these things, preferring to campaign against drug store chains and independent pharmacists instead of the real cause of increasing health costs - the obscene profits of the multi-national drug companies.

The Communist Party of Canada (Ontario) calls for the nationalization of the pharmaceutical industry, and the expansion of Medicare to include pharmacare. That would fundamentally cut health care costs in Ontario by eliminating obscene profiteering, and would provide immediate and long-term health care benefits to all Ontarians. This is the campaign the McGuinty government should mount without further delay.

Further, we call on the provincial and federal governments to take immediate action to rescind current drug patent legislation which protects Big Pharma profits, and to pass legislation to speed up and increase Canadians' access to generic drugs of all types.

Health care is just too important to be left to the profiteers and privatizers like the pharmaceutical industry that is working daily to dismantle universal public health care in Ontario - Medicare in Canada.

Ontarians and all Canadians have shown they are willing to fight to protect and expand Medicare. What's so obviously missing with the government's cynical pre-election campaign against pharmacists is the political will to take on the real threat to Medicare - the multi-national pharmaceutical companies and their boundless greed. Could it be related to political contributions to the Liberal and Tory parties from pharmaceutical companies in Ontario?

If a little country like Cuba can do it, surely the governments of Ontario and Canada can do it. The health of Ontarians and all Canadians depends on it. •

Renew today!

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Please check the address label on the front page to see if it's time to renew. Readers who find "2010/05/02" on their label, for example, will have their subscriptions expire with this issue, May 1-16, 2010. Don't miss a single copy - renew today!

Let us commemorate 65 years of the Victory!

The following joint statement marking the 65th anniversary of the defeat of fascism has been issued by several dozen Communist and Workers' parties, including the Communist Party of Canada

On May 9th, we commemorate 65 years of the victory over Nazi-fascism - the most violent and brutal expression of monopoly domination in a capitalist system in deep crisis - which led humanity to one of the worst catastrophes of its history, with the barbarity of concentration camps and the Second World War's procession of death and destruction for the peoples.

The communists were on the frontline from the very first moment, mobilising and organising workers and peoples in the resistance. The anti-fascist struggle was marked by the firm and determined action of the communists, to which millions gave their lives.

The heroic contribution of the USSR, of its Red Army and of its people, which suffered around 27 million deaths, was decisive for the victory over the fascist hordes.

It was with the victory in 1945 and the formation of the socialist camp that millions of men and women undertook their emancipation, freeing themselves from exploitation, oppression and colonialism, with the working class movement winning enormous social and political victories on a progressive path never before attained in human history.

In the current situation, at a time of capitalism's deep crisis in

which the imperialist offensive is hitting so seriously the toiling masses, humanity is again facing great dangers resulting from imperialism's deepening contradictions, from the arms race, from the reinforcement of aggressive military alliances and from the attempt to forcefully impose a brutal intensification of exploitation, precariousness in labour relations, dismissals and unemployment, poverty and the negation of the most basic necessities for millions of working people.

In commemorating the 65th anniversary of the victory over Nazi-fascism as an important action of struggle for peace, we also condemn the monumental falsification of history which currently tries to place fascism and communism on an equal footing and to erase the communists' decisive role in the peoples' liberation from the yoke of Nazi-fascism. This anti-communist campaign - which, as history proves, is always anti-democratic - seeks to make illegal and suppress not just the actions of the communists, but of all democrats who oppose capitalist domination and exploitation and who resist and fight in an organised manner against monopoly and imperialism.

For us communists, evoking the 65 years of the victory is to reaffirm our deep belief in the struggle for social emancipation, in the justice of our values and liberating ideals. We reaffirm our determination to fight against the forces which were at the root of the fascist horror. We reaffirm our unshakeable confidence that

the future does not belong to those who oppress and exploit, but to the workers and peoples who resist and fight for humanity's eman-

ipation from the shackles of the exploitation, and for a society in which the workers fully enjoy the fruits of their labour, and in

which social progress, peace and welfare prevail. The future belongs not to capitalism, but to socialism and communism. ●

Russian Communists mark historic victory over fascism

Excerpts from the statement by the Communist Party of the Russian Federation, marking the 65th anniversary of the triumph over fascism in 1945.

The 65th anniversary of our Victory in the Great Patriotic War is not just an outstanding date, a remarkable anniversary. This is the historic feat of the socialist state - the USSR...

At the fiercest battles of the world, the Soviet system won a complete victory over fascism, which threw against the USSR a huge potential of almost the whole of Europe and much of Asia. The Soviet order provided our country an unprecedented leap forward, making it possible within a decade to overcome the same path of development which took the leading capitalist countries a hundred years. The Soviet government placed once agrarian Russia among the world's superpowers. It gave the country both the peaceful atom and a nuclear defense shield, turned it into a space power.

The war became a battle for dear life. It was not only a battle between states and opposing ideologies, but the decisive battle for the future of human civilization... The future of the



May 9, 1945: flags of the defeated Nazi army are presented during the Victory Parade in Moscow's Red Square.

Earth - that's the main problem that was solved at Moscow and Stalingrad, in the Orel-Kursk Bulge and at the battle for Berlin. In this great battle the Soviet Union secured not only military and economic victory, but an ideological, political and moral one as well.

The war became the feat of responsibility and decisiveness for the Communists. Already in the first year of the war 40% of all Communists - 1,340,000 men - went to the front. Almost half of them died in the first months of heavy fighting. In the folk memory will never die the fact that during

the war years, the guerrilla movement involved about 2 million Soviet people, united in hundreds of clandestine regional, area, city and other party organizations. When the war came to Germany, fascism, with its "Werewolf" could organize nothing like such resistance. The people will never forget that at the front and rear, a ten million army of young communists fought and worked for the victory...

The war confirmed the primacy of the Soviet system in organizational sphere. The call

see RUSSIAN, page 11

Bhagat Singh: a secular revolutionary misunderstood by religious extremists

Gurpreet Singh

When Sikh separatists held a procession to celebrate Vaisakhi in Surrey last month, they stirred controversy by displaying pictures of fundamentalist militants who had died during the bloody struggle for Khalistan. But they also offended progressive thinkers in the community by adding a picture of Bhagat Singh, one of the most revered martyrs of India, and an atheist who opposed religious orthodoxy in his writings.

The organizers of the annual Surrey Vaisakhi parade are staunch supporters of Khalistan, an imaginary Sikh homeland they wish to carve out of India. Vaisakhi is the harvest festival of India, with great religious significance for the Sikh community. It was on Vaisakhi day that Guru Godind Singh, the tenth master of the Sikhs, laid the foundation of the Khalsa, an army of the devout and baptized Sikhs.

The parade is organized under the aegis of the Gurdwara Dashmesh Darbar, a Sikh temple whose management openly demands Khalistan. Not only do they display the pictures of "their martyrs", but also wave Canadian and Khalistani flags. For years until 9/11, Canadian politicians attended the event without any

reservations. Thanks to increasing trade relations with India, the Canadian establishment, which was earlier accused of being soft on the Sikh separatists by the Indian government, has mended its ways. A case in point is the unanimous resolution in the House of Commons condemning the online death threats against Liberal MP Ujjal Dosanjh, who is critical of Khalistan and violence. In an unrelated incident, Dosanjh and Dev Hayer, a B.C. Liberal MLA who is another opponent of terrorism, were also warned by one of the parade organizers to come at their own risk.

In an apparent bid to tease the Indian government and critics of the Sikh separatists, the organizers displayed the picture of Bhagat Singh. A terrorist in the eyes of the British government, he had killed a police officer and had thrown a bomb in the assembly, and believed in an armed revolution. True, but he was not a religious fundamentalist. He and his comrades were fighting against the British occupation of India, leaving aside their religious beliefs and not seeking a Hindu or a Sikh state. Born in a Sikh family, Bhagat



Photo of Bhagat Singh (centre, top row) amid fundamentalists. (Photo: Chandra Bodalia)

Singh gradually became an atheist after being influenced by the writings of revolutionaries. A year before his hanging in 1931, he wrote an essay, "Why I am an atheist?" in which he quoted leftist thinkers and challenged the existence of god. In other essays, he suggested that he was opposed to religious fundamentalism. Above all, his struggle was not only for the freedom of India but for social justice. He tried to organize the peasantry and the workers, and challenged the age old caste system that discriminated against those considered untouchables.

It is pertinent to mention that

Bhagat Singh was hanged along with two Hindu patriots, Sukhdev and Rajguru. They were all inspired by the secularist revolutionaries, and any attempt to equate their struggle with a sectarian movement is inappropriate. Those who lost their lives in the name of Khalistan, either in police encounters or after being hanged, were not followers of Bhagat Singh's ideology. During the Khalistan movement, not only Hindus were targeted, but women were forced to wear traditional attire by militants who curtailed the freedom of people. Three hundred communists were killed by the fundamentalists, including Darshan Singh Canadian, the Punjab MLA well known to Canadians for his contributions to building the labour movement during the 1940s in British Columbia. Other theocratic groups, like the Hindu nationalist RSS, have also tried to embrace Bhagat Singh in the name of patriotism, but he was a socialist, while religious extremists of all shades have been enemies of the left.

Even though the parade has passed, this controversy refuses

to die. A Sikh website has accused Dosanjh and Hayer of double standards for joining the celebrations of Bhagat Singh's birth centenary in 2007. Although Dosanjh and Hayer represent parties that are in no way close to Bhagat Singh's ideology, and their participation in the celebrations was more tokenistic, Bhagat Singh cannot be simply confused with trigger happy anarchists. He was a thinker, who had adopted peaceful and Gandhian ways during the final years of his life. He participated in a hunger strike to oppose inhuman treatment towards Indian prisoners. He was responsible for only one murder of a police officer, and threw a bomb in the assembly to oppose draconian British laws, without any intention of killing anyone. This bomb, in the revolutionaries' own words, was thrown to make the deaf hear. Bhagat Singh and his friend B.K. Dutt courted arrest after the bombing and made no attempt to escape. As a part of the planning, Bhagat Singh wanted to reach the Indian masses by using the court system as a propaganda tool. ●

Gurpreet Singh works for Radio India and is currently working on a book, *Canada's 9/11: Lessons from the Air India bombings*.

Is Marxism relevant to environmentalism?



The disastrous British Petroleum oil blowout in the Gulf of Mexico has escalated concerns about the impact of corporate profiteering on the global environment. This article is by Anna Pha, from The Guardian (newspaper of the Communist Party of Australia)

How often have you heard it said that Marxism has no relevance to the environmental crisis or that the environment is not a class question? After all, Marx and Engels were writing 150 years ago, long before the current environmental crisis.

Marx and Engels certainly did not have the benefit of the scientific knowledge that we enjoy today, nor were there such imminent threats as climate warming or loss of biodiversity. For example, the study of ecology - the interdependence of the various components of nature - really only emerged as a widely accepted

science in the 1960s.

Engels studied the historical processes of the material world, the constant changes taking place and the impact of each change on other aspects of that world. In *The Transition from Ape to Man*, he says:

"Animals ... change external nature by their activities just as man does, if not to the same extent, and these changes made by them in their environment ... in turn react upon and change their originators. For in nature nothing takes place

the simplest things."

"The animal destroys the vegetation of a locality without realising what it is doing. Man destroys it in order to sow field crops on the soil thus released, or to plant trees or vines which he knows will yield many times the amount sown. He transfers useful plants and domestic animals from one country to another and thus

his ends, masters it...

"Let us not, however, flatter ourselves overmuch on account of our human conquest over nature. For each such conquest takes its revenge on us. Each of them, it is true, has in the first place the consequences on which we counted, but in the second and third places it has quite different, unforeseen effects which only too often cancel out the first."

How true! Humans had no idea that the extensive use of fossil fuels and other producers of greenhouse gas emissions would burn holes in the ozone layer, induce global warming and bring the human race to the brink of extinction. This is the same process that Engels is describing. Of course Engels had no means to foresee the extent of revenge that nature would take on humanity.

Engels continues in the same prophetic vein: "The people who, in Mesopotamia, Greece, Asia Minor, and elsewhere destroyed the forests to obtain cultivable land, never dreamed that they were laying the basis for the present devastated condition of these countries, by removing along with the forests the collecting centres and reservoirs of moisture.

"When, on the southern slopes of the mountains, the Italians of the Alps used up the pine forests so carefully cherished on the northern slopes, they had no inkling that by doing so they were cutting at the roots of the dairy industry in their region; they had still less inkling that they were thereby depriving their mountain springs of water for the greater part of the year, with the effect that these would be able to pour still more furious flood torrents on the plains during the rainy seasons..."

This analysis stands the test of time.

"Thus at every step we are reminded that we by no means rule over nature like a conqueror over a foreign people, like someone standing outside nature - but that we, with flesh, blood, and brains, belong to nature, and exist in its midst, and that all our mastery of it consists in the fact that we have the advantage over all other beings of being able to know and correctly apply its laws."

Engels looked not just at the impact on nature but on the social consequences of human actions. He looked at the impact of primitive communal ownership of land and the barest means of subsistence and compared this with higher forms of production and the eventual division of the population into different classes - the capitalist mode of production.

"The individual capitalists, who dominate production and exchange, are able to concern themselves only with the most immediate useful effect of their actions. Indeed, even this useful effect - as much as it is a question of the usefulness of the commodity

that is produced or exchanged - retreats right into the background, and the sole incentive becomes the profit to be gained on selling."

The manufacturer Engels says, is "not concerned as to what becomes of the commodity afterwards or who are its purchasers".

Engels asks: "What did the Spanish planters in Cuba, who burned down forests on the slopes of the mountains and obtained from the ashes sufficient fertiliser for one generation of very highly profitable coffee trees, care that the tropical rainfall afterwards washed away the now unprotected upper stratum of the soil, leaving behind only bare rock?"

"In relation to nature, as to society, the present mode of production is predominantly concerned only about the first, tangible success; and then surprise is expressed that the more remote effects of actions directed to this end turn out to be of quite different, mainly even of quite an opposite, character."

That narrow focus on immediate outcomes, on profits, is what drives capitalism. The process described by Engels was accelerated by colonialism and continues unabated today.

The result is desertification, salination, river-beds drying up, extreme weather conditions and the many other forms of environmental crisis that people around the globe have experienced.

The result is global warming, irretrievable loss of biodiversity, millions of people facing starvation and many plant and animal species, including human beings, facing the threat of extinction.

Marx also recognised the relationship between humans and nature: "man himself is a product of Nature which has been developed in and along with its environment". (A criticism of the Hegelian Philosophy of Law). If only the full implications of their writings had been further studied.

Marxist theory is a living tool, a scientific approach to interpreting and understanding the universe. Marxism is the application of scientific method to social, economic and environmental issues. Scientific method is not static but continually undergoes change reflecting our knowledge of the material world around us.

Communists bring something to the environmental struggle that many other groups do not; that is their class analysis of the causes of the crisis - capitalism. Based on that analysis they also identify the only basis of a lasting solution - socialism. They have an important role to play in tackling the pressing questions of climate change, biodiversity and sustainable development. Marxism serves all environmentalists, including communists, well. ●



Marxist Theory Today

in isolation. Everything affects every other thing and vice versa, and it is usually because this many-sided motion and interaction is forgotten that our natural scientists are prevented from clearly seeing

changes the flora and fauna of whole continents.

"More than this. Under artificial cultivation, both plants and animals are so changed by the hand of man that they become unrecognisable. The wild plants from which our grain varieties originated are still being sought in vain. The question of the wild animal from which our dogs are descended, the dogs themselves being so different from one another, or our equally numerous breeds of horse, is still under dispute....

"But all the planned action of all animals has never resulted in impressing the stamp of their will upon nature. For that, man was required.

"In short, the animal merely uses external nature, and brings about changes in it simply by his presence; man by his changes makes it serve



Louisiana fishermen set out booms to catch floating oil.

"Anti-Tory majority must rule" - British CP leader

Whichever party or coalition forms the next government of Britain, the ruling class will be in power, warned the leader of the Communist Party of Britain the morning after the May 6 election.

Robert Griffiths continued, "A Labour-led government based on progressive policies would be the best outcome in current circumstances. But big battles lie ahead to defend public services, jobs, wages, pensions and benefits - and to withdraw British troops from Afghanistan.

"Enormous pressure is being exerted by the bankers, speculators and City spivs to force the new government - whatever its composition - to slash public spending or face savage attacks on sterling and that government's ability to borrow money. A Tory government would enthusiastically collaborate with the ruling class offensive against the working class and peoples of Britain.

"That is why we need a government based on the anti-

Tory majority. For the LibDems to support the installation of a minority Tory regime would indicate how shallow and insincere their proclamations in favour of progressive policies really are. For New Labourites to yield to LibDem and City pressure to support some kind of 'national consensus' for massive cuts would be the final betrayal of millions of working class Labour voters.

A Tory-LibDem government would not represent the broadly progressive majority which still exists among the peoples of Britain. Yet it is tempting to contemplate such a development with some relish. Let the Tories provide the butt of mass popular opposition to reactionary policies. Turf them out at the first opportunity and force another General Election.

"The problem is that a Tory-LibDem coalition could inflict massive damage in a very short space of time, backed by most of the mass media. The danger is that

many Labour voters would become demoralised rather than reinvigorated, while a fresh General Election could be engineered to consolidate the Tory and LibDem vote against a near-bankrupt Labour Party.

"Only a Labour-led government supported by the LibDems, Plaid Cymru, SNP and progressive MPs - and under pressure from the trade union, pensioners and peace movements - would be remotely likely to resist any aspect of the ruling class offensive.

"But it would have to tax the rich and big business rather than slash public services. A Windfall Tax on energy, banking, retail, armaments and pharmaceutical monopoly profits would raise billions of pounds immediately. The government budget deficit would be reduced still further by abandoning ID cards, withdrawing from Afghanistan, terminating PFI schemes, taking

see BRITAIN, page 11

May Day rallies hit corporate agenda

PV Vancouver Bureau

May Day rallies across the planet this year shared a common theme - resistance against the drive by big capital and compliant governments to make working people pay the full costs of the "economic recovery." In many cases, corporate news outlets limited coverage to fights between police and small groups of anarchists, but the real demonstrations were much larger.

Over 140,000 union members and political activists gathered for the first legally-sanctioned May Day celebration in **Istanbul's central Taksim Square** in 30 years. Participants included relatives of 34 people killed when police attacked a rally at the square on May 1, 1977.

For the past four years, union activists determined to commemorate the massacre have clashed with riot police who barred their entry. The governor of Istanbul said he authorized the celebration this year "to avoid tension ... and even to destroy certain taboos."

Union organizers called the rally a victory. "It has very symbolic meaning for us," said Eyup Ozer, a spokesperson for the Revolutionary Workers Unions Confederation, DISK. "All the people who were murdered in the



The scene at Taksim Square in Istanbul, Turkey

speakers blamed the right-wing government for failing to stem rising unemployment and eroding the nation's cherished welfare system. Thousands of demonstrators in Paris took to the streets to condemn President Nicolas Sarkozy's plans to gut the pension system.

Thousands of **demonstrators in Moscow, carrying red balloons and Soviet flags**, called for the Russian government's resignation over rising prices and unemployment.

The Bulgarian Socialist Party organized actions on May 1 under the slogan "Against the Crisis! All United for Labour and Democracy!" Demonstrators gathered at the National Assembly square to protest the policies of

In Tokyo, about 32,000 workers rallied in Yoyogi Park, wearing headbands and raising banners calling for job security. National Confederation of Trade Unions leader Sakuji Daikoku said more than 17 million people in Japan are temporary or part-time workers, and 3.5 million are jobless.

"Under such working conditions, there is no hope or bright future," Daikoku said. "Let's make a change to create a society where full time employment is the norm."

In Hong Kong, about 1,000 protesters - including janitors, construction workers and bus drivers - demanded the government increase the minimum wage to 33 Hong Kong dollars (\$4.30). "We demand reasonable pay. We demand a share in the fruits of economic success," the workers chanted at an urban park before setting off to Hong Kong government headquarters. Hong Kong has never adopted a minimum wage, but the government says it aims to pass legislation by July.

Thousands of **Tehran residents chanted anti-government slogans** as they marched towards Iran's Labour Ministry on May 1. At least 4,000 people marched down Azadi Street in central Tehran toward the ministry, according to witnesses. There was a heavy police presence in the area, including hundreds of anti-riot cops, while police helicopters hovered overhead. Security forces arrested at least 30 protestors. In nearby Baharestan Square, protestors chanted "Death to the Dictator" and "Death to Khamenei," referring to Iran's Supreme Leader.

Elsewhere, in the north-western city of Tabriz, hundreds of people rallied outside the local Labour Ministry building chanting anti-government slogans. At least 20 protestors were arrested.

Hundreds of workers took to the streets to mark **May Day in Bahrain**. Carrying the national flag and workers' unity banners, they marched from the General Federation of Bahrain Trade Unions (GFBTU) premises in Adliya to the parliament. GFBTU secretary-general Sayed Salman Mahfoodh said that any development in the country would not succeed if it did not involve the input of workers, who are the key to economic growth. He called on the government to ratify international labour agreements and conventions.

"Workers are paying for no fault of theirs and we have to take steps to lessen their suffering," he said. "We are also concerned that labour union activity is not allowed in

many companies even though unions are legal. The government should intervene in this matter as well and ensure every worker has a right to take part in union activities."

The **May Day turnout in Havana was massive**, as about a million Cubans turned out to voice support for the island's socialist government and its measures to protect workers.

Bolivian President Evo Morales announced on May 1 that four power companies were being nationalized as part of the drive to increase public ownership over key sectors of the country's economy. Bolivia's key natural gas industry was nationalized soon after he took office in 2006, followed by several utility companies and the biggest smelter and top telecommunications firm.

the **U.S. this year**, in the wake of Arizona legislation which makes it a crime to be in the state without legal status and requires police to check for immigration papers.

In Los Angeles, 60,000 immigrants and their supporters turned out for a May Day Immigration Rally, one the largest demonstrations in the city's history. The lively, animated march proceeded through downtown Los Angeles to city hall.

Twenty-five thousand protested in Dallas, and more than 10,000 in Milwaukee. Washington, DC, and Phoenix, among more than 70 places around the United States which held rallies or vigils.

New York City was the scene of a historic rally, organized by the labour and immigrants' rights movements, to demand government action on jobs, and



Marcher at the CUT rally in Santiago, Chile

"We're here ... to nationalize all the hydroelectric plants that were owned by the state before, to comply with the new constitution of the Bolivian state. Basic services cannot be a private business. We're recovering the energy, the light, for all Bolivians," Morales said in the central Cochabamba region.

The state now controls 80 percent of electricity generation in Bolivia. Earlier, the Bolivian government had failed to convince investors to sell the shares the state needed to have a controlling stake.

"It's the state's obligation to compensate investors for their assets. ... We made an effort to reach an agreement with the private, multinational companies, but they were unwilling to reach an accord," said Morales.

In Chile, the May Day rally in Santiago, led by the Unified Workers Confederation (CUT) focused on discontent with the new right-wing government of President Sebastian Pinera. But some protestors also expressed their disenchantment with leaders from the centrist Concertacion alliance who attended the protest, after ignoring May Day events in previous years, when they held political power.

CUT leader Martinez did not shy away from mentioning the targeted opposition members, saying, "We've been waiting years for reform. Take care when approaching the workers. We know who kept their word and who did not."

Martinez attacked Pinera and his government, especially the billionaire businessman's conflicts of interest because of his vast wealth.

Immigrant rights were a hot topic for **May Day rallies across**

end to harassment of immigrant workers, and to "reclaim May Day." The rally was planned before the Arizona anti-immigrant law was passed, but repeal of the law became a significant rallying cry of the demonstration. The other main demand was for jobs for all. Trade unions came together with immigration coalitions to "reclaim" May Day, creating an alliance of the two overlapping movements that drew 20,000-25,000 people.

The May Day rally by **ten thousand people at Chicago's Haymarket Square** amounted to a declaration by the city's workers that they were re-claiming a holiday once derided as a day only "the left" celebrated.

Al Martin, field director for the Illinois AFL-CIO, chaired the rally which was sponsored by the Chicago Federation of Labour. He was cheered as he compared the struggle of the Haymarket Martyrs for the eight-hour day and for justice on the job to the struggle today for passage of immigration law reform. "This whole thing is about racism being used to divide and conquer us and we are not going to let that happen," he declared.

Fifty Japanese workers, members of Zenroren, Japan's national labour federation, were applauded as they joined the Chicago crowd. Komatsu Tamiko, the Zenroren international representative, paid homage to those who died in the struggle for the eight-hour day. Today, she said, "Japanese workers and American workers share the same fight for justice against corporations that are exploiting our brothers and sisters all over the world." ●



Young girl at May Day in Havana

1977 May Day demonstration will be represented by their photos."

Thousands of flag-waving union members filed peacefully past security barriers, armoured personnel carriers and helmeted riot police often referred to in Turkey as "Robo-cops." Against a soundtrack of blaring labour anthems, activists chanted slogans like "Equal Jobs, equal Pay," "Free Health Care for Everyone" and "Long Live May 1st."

In Athens, over 20,000 demonstrators protested against anti-worker measures adopted by the PASOK government to secure loans from the European Union. Two days later, the Greek protests escalated again with mass walkouts by public sector unions. Protesters led by the Greek Communist Party stormed the Acropolis on May 4, hoisting a huge banner calling on European workers to rise up.

Similar demands were raised in other European cities. In Zurich, police used water cannons to disperse protesters as unions and politicians protested against excessive Swiss banking bonuses.

Thousands joined May Day marches in Stockholm, where

the GERB center-right ruling party, and then headed for an open-air stage in Sofia's central park. The Socialists were recently outraged at the refusal of the state-owned Bulgarian National Television and Radio to run commercials advertising the May 1 rally.

Tens of thousands of **workers thronged the streets of Asian cities**, demanding job creation and minimum wage hikes. In Jakarta, Indonesia's capital, thousands of red- and blue-shirted workers marched on the presidential palace. Some 15,000 police lined the streets, barbed wire was stretched in front of the palace, and water cannons were at the ready as the crowd chanted, "Workers unite! No more layoffs!"

"This corrupt government has taken the side of the capitalists and businessmen, not us, the workers," rally organizer Bayu Ajie said in a rousing speech. "Workers unite to fight corrupters! We'll not be defeated!" the crowd responded.

The Indonesian workers' demands include social security guarantees, an end to outsourcing, the elimination of arbitrary layoffs and human rights for workers.



GLOBAL CLASS STRUGGLE

Georgian workers vs. global bosses

In Georgia, the Metallurgical and Mining Industry Workers' Trade Union and the Georgian Trade Union Confederation (GTUC), are in a serious confrontation at Zestafoni Ferroalloys Plant and the Georgian Manganese mines in nearby Chiatura. Majority ownership of both enterprises is held by London-based Stencor Holdings, a global steel-producing, marketing, and distribution firm with roots in the Oppenheimer family of businesses.

A majority of the 2,000 workers at the Chiatura mines and 617 of 800 workers at the ferroalloy smelter in the Georgian city of Zestafoni staged a three-day warning strike from 20-22 April. They want recognition of the Metallurgical and Mining Industry Workers' Trade Union of Imereti Region, a branch of the Tbilisi-based union, better working conditions, and an end to management harassment of union members.

Managers at Zestafoni Ferroalloys refused to renew labour agreements after March 31, in part because the union has won the allegiance of an overwhelming number of miners at Georgian Manganese, who seek to replace a company-dominated union. The Metallurgical and Mining Union was democratically established in October 2009.

Before the warning strike, off-site meetings between smelting-plant workers and miners in both Zestafoni and Chiatura were watched by managers, who took photos and made threats. At one meeting, the company's security director attempted to provoke a melee by grabbing a union activist outside the hall. At the Ithkvisi mine, another manager physically attacked one of nine strike committee leaders.

As well as immediate recognition and permanent work contracts, the union wants improvements to occupational safety and health equipment, updating of medical facilities; transparent rules on hours of work, days off, public holidays; protective clothing and boots; and sanitary break areas and safe food to eat. Other demands include a sizeable salary increase, establishment of a minimum salary at the mining complex, and reinstatement with full back pay for two union activists who were sacked for their trade union activities.

The GTUC has filed a complaint with the ILO Committee of Freedom of Association over the blatant violations at the Zestafoni Ferroalloys Plant and the Georgian Manganese mines.

Stop work at Ford Australia

Australian Ford workers in Geelong and Broadmeadows walked off the job on May 10 in pursuit of a better pay offer. A union shop steward said the strike action was just the start of what management could expect if

negotiations did not get back on track. The walkout began at 6 am after skilled trades group members voted to stop work for 24 hours.

"The 24-hour stop work will kick it off and we'll gauge the reactions of the company," the union steward said. "If negotiations stall there will be continued stop works, could be 24-hours, could be longer."

The union's main concerns are related to pay, job security and contractors. The workers have not had a pay increase since August 2008, despite Ford Australia announcing an after-tax profit of 13 million Australian dollars. The union membership has rejected an offer which amounts to about 1.6%, less than the inflation rate.



In other concerns, the union is upset that Ford has not hired any new apprentices, and that growing numbers of workers are on fixed-term employment contracts. "It's getting out of hand," the shop steward said. "We don't want to see it like at the supermarket where everyone is casual and called in as required."

New material on Colombian trade unionists

The British trade union campaign organisation Justice for Colombia (JFC) is highlighting the murders of trade unionists and the abuse of human rights in the South American country with a range of new publicity material.

One leaflet contains the name of each of the 128 Colombian trade unionists assassinated between 2007 and 2009, pointing out that over 60 per cent of union activists killed across the world are Colombian. In nearly every case no action has been taken against the murderers, giving a green light for the killings to continue.

A three-part leaflet, including a postcard to send to the UK Foreign Secretary, outlines the plight of Colombia's political prisoners. Hundreds of people are in jail for speaking out against the Colombian regime, most imprisoned without trial. There is also a fact sheet on human rights in Colombia, described by the United Nations as a "humanitarian disaster". Copies of the leaflets are available from www.justiceforcolombia.org.

Meanwhile, Canada's National Union of Public and General Employees has released a new pamphlet entitled *Canada-Colombia Trade Deal - Canada's Shame*, condemning the agreement negotiated by the Harper

government with the murderous regime that runs the crime-ridden South American country.

"It's time for Canada to take a principled stand against violence and corruption in Colombia," says the pamphlet, which notes that the death toll in 2009 alone included 45 trade unionists and 114 indigenous women, men and children along with thousands more who were forced off their land. The pamphlet can be downloaded at the union's website, www.nupge.ca.

Greece forced to buy weapons

France and Germany, while publicly urging Greece to make harsh public spending cuts, bullied its government to confirm billions of euros in arms deals, a leading Euro-MP alleged on May 7. Franco-German lawmaker Daniel Cohn-Bendit, leader of the Greens in the European Parliament, said that Paris and Berlin are seeking to force Prime Minister George Papandreou to spend Greece's scarce cash on submarines, a fleet of warships, helicopters and war planes.

"I met Mr. Papandreou last week. I was in Athens. I've known him for a long time," Cohn-Bendit told reporters. He said that France and Germany made their contributions to an IMF-led "rescue package" for the Greek economy contingent on Athens honouring massive arms deals signed by Papandreou's predecessor.

"It's incredible the way the Merkels and Sarkozys of this world treat a Greek prime minister," he declared, adding that Papandreou had recently met Sarkozy and French Prime Minister Francois Fillon in Paris.

"Mr. Fillon and Mr. Sarkozy told Mr. Papandreou: 'We're going to raise the money to help you, but you are going to have to continue to pay the arms contracts that we have with you'," Cohn-Bendit said. "In the past three months we have forced Greece to confirm several billion dollars in arms contracts. French frigates that the Greeks will have to buy for 2.5 billion euros. Helicopters, planes, German submarines."

Opera silenced by wildcat strikes

Italy, opera's birthplace, is no stranger to drama. But austerity politics has silenced opera houses across the nation, as musicians, dancers and singers protest new emergency measures supposedly aimed at making the 14 state-supported theatres more entrepreneurial and efficient.

The Italian government's latest austerity decree sparked wildcat strikes that cancelled a La Scala premiere of *Das Rheingold*, *Die Frau Ohne Schatten* in Florence, a symphonic concert in Venice, the premiere of *The Barber of Seville* in Turin, among others.

The Berlusconi government has passed emergency measures that limit pay for the country's 5,500 theatre workers and put a

moratorium on new hires. Unions immediately called wildcat strikes. Some theatre directors made their displeasure known. The managing director of Turin's Teatro Reggione issued a statement calling the hiring moratorium "a deep injustice" toward workers who for years have made sacrifices and are now hoping to receive long-term contracts.

"La Scala cannot accept a decree that penalizes a theatre and interferes with the capacity to manage," La Scala's general director Stephane Lissner declared.

The decree limits secondary contracts between individual opera houses and their workers, which act as a local differential on top of the national contract shared by all of the Italy's 5,500 music theatre workers. The national contract awards the same pay to musicians at La Scala, which last year put on 290 concerts at home and another 47 abroad, and, say, Sicily's Catania, which put on closer to 40. Local contracts can account for 15 to 25 percent of salaries. Ultimately, the decree penalizes workers at the most famous opera houses like La Scala, Turin's Teatro Reggione and Venice's La Fenice.

Jamaica teachers demand back pay

Jamaica's public school teachers have gone on strike for Mondays and Tuesdays on two consecutive weeks in an attempt to force the island's government to pay them 8 billion Jamaican dollars (\$94 million US) owed in retroactive pay. The Jamaican government says that only \$8 million (US) of the amount can be paid this year because of conditions

set by the International Monetary Fund under a stand-by arrangement for the injection of nearly US\$1.3 billion for the Jamaican economy.

If further talks between the government and the union fail, the government is expected to seek a court injunction restraining the teachers from taking further action.

Ray Howell, a JTA past president and member of the negotiating committee, said teachers were disturbed by the "arrogance and disrespect" displayed when Finance Minister Audley Shaw criticised them for demanding their retractive pay.

"There is a level of arrogance and disrespect that is coming out of the minister of finance. We signed an agreement which we consider to be sacrosanct. If the government did not make provisions in the budget it means they had no intention to pay," Howell said, adding that the finance minister seemed to be bringing in secondary and irrelevant issues, such as the performance of teachers in regard to the recent Grade Four Numeracy Test results.

Education Minister Andrew Holness had previously apologised to teachers for comments made by Shaw, but also appealed to the JTA to accept the offer for the payment of retroactive money. "It is not an unreasonable sentiment on the part of the teachers to ask that they be paid what they are due," said Holness. "But the truth is that we simply cannot and dare not break the commitment that we have made toward fiscal responsibility. We are now for the first time at a point of reckoning, where we are seeing our way out of almost an eternal financial crisis, and once we announce what those deficit targets are we cannot and dare not break those deficit targets."

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

Send me information on the Communist Party of Canada

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

Central Committee CPC

290A Danforth Ave, Toronto, Ont., M4K 1N6
Ph. (416)469-2446 Fax (416)469-4063 E-mail <info@cpc-pcc.ca>

Parti Communiste du Quebec (section du Parti communiste du Canada)
5359 Ave Du Parc, Suite "C"
Montreal, Quebec H2V 4G9
Email: pcq@cpc-pcc.ca

B.C. Committee CPC
706 Clark Drive, Vancouver, V5L 3J1
Tel: 604-254-9836 E-mail: cpbc@telus.net

Edmonton CPC
Box 68112, 70 Bonnie Doon PO
Edmonton, AB, T6C 4N6
Tel: 780-465-7893 Fax: 780-463-0209

Calgary CPC
Unit #1, 19 Radcliffe Close SE,
Calgary, T2A 6B2 Tel: 403-248-6489

Saskatchewan CPC
Email: <mail@communist-party-sk.ca>

Ottawa CPC
Tel: 613-232-7108

Manitoba Committee CPC
387 Selkirk Ave., Winnipeg, R2W 2M3
Tel/fax: 204-586-7824

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

Hamilton Ctee. CPC
265 Melvin Ave., Apt. 815
Hamilton, ON,
Tel: 905-548-9586

Atlantic Region CPC
Box 70, Grand Pré, NS, B0P 1M0
Tel/fax: 902-542-7981

Mass strikes paralyze Greece on May 5

The following report from the All Workers Militant Front (PAME) of Greece gives a brief overview of the nationwide strike and demonstrations on May 5, led by PAME. Nearly every productive activity in Greece was shut down. Factories, construction sites and stores, ports and airports, universities and schools were paralysed. In some cases, private employers threatened to fire any employee who did not turn up at work; this was the case with the three Marfin Bank workers who died that day when their building was attacked by anarchists.

In the early morning thousands of workers and young people were outside workplaces, defending the right of the workers to go on strike against employers' intimidation. Hundreds of thousands of people took part in the demonstrations organised by PAME in 68 cities throughout Greece. At the same time, provocative groups tried to undermine the strike demonstration. The actions of provocateurs led to the death of three young bank workers after a Molotov cocktail was thrown into their building.

In Athens, the central strike demonstration of PAME took place at Omonoia Square. Giorgos Perros, member of the Executive secretariat of PAME delivered the main speech stressing: "No more sacrifices for the bankers, for the industrialists, for the monopolies. We will make sacrifices so as to defend, all together and united, our rights, our life; so as to defend the life of our children, not hand them over to the most brutal exploitation bound hand and foot. We do not give up our gains.

"They lie when they argue about a rescue bailout package for the country; it is a rescue bailout package for the employers, the banks, the ship-owners, the ones

who have benefited from the previous rescue bailout packages; likewise for the foreign creditors, who along with the parasites of plutocracy will plunder the wealth produced by our people for the next decades.

"They have elaborated and gradually implemented these measures over many years. These measures are outlined in the Treaty of Maastricht, in the White Paper; they are included in all decisions of the EU Summits; they were included in the programmes of PASOK and New Democracy; likewise in the 9-point agreement between GSEE and Federation of the Greek Industrialists."

Perros underlined: "we deserve our own Greece, which is far better than theirs, and we will struggle for it. Even if they pass these measures, we will never legitimate them in our consciousness, we will never obey the laws that impose those measures. Day by day, month by month we will gather forces to block the implementation of these measures, till the overthrow of them and their measures."

Following the speech, a PAME march took place, against the line of concessions taken by the GSEE and ADEDY labour federations. Other groups joining the march include the All Greek Antimonopoly Rally of the Self-employed (PASEVE) and Students' Militant Front (MAS).

The protesters marched through the central streets of Athens to the parliament, where the social democratic PASOK government had tabled anti-labour measures, seeking to pass the legislation under emergency procedures. Inside, the Communist members tried to use the parliamentary regulations to block the government's attempt to require a simple majority for approval of the anti-people bill.



This image was seen around the world on May 4, when Greek Communists symbolically occupied the Acropolis as part of the mobilization against the government's anti-worker legislation.

Killings and provocations undermine the people's struggle, warns KKE

Report from the Greek Communist Party (KKE) on the deaths of three workers during the May 5 demonstrations in Athens

The massive and protected demonstration of PAME on May 5 gave a dynamic response to the provocative action organised by several groups in order to disorient the people, to reduce the importance of the massive mobilization, to slander the KKE, to stop the dynamic of the struggles and intimidate the working people.

In her speech in parliament, right after the announcement of the death of three people, KKE leader Aleka Papariga made the following statement:

"The working people, who suffer an unprecedented attack,

the worst after 1974, are able to distinguish the systematic political struggle for the defense of their rights to protest, a struggle that can take many forms according to the conditions at each time. They can clearly tell the difference between this struggle and every plan aiming at the subversion of the struggles, every provocative action that causes innocent victims and aids all those who want to slander the struggles.

"People should not only defy the provocations, they should also take all the measures to protect their struggles which should start from the workplaces. They should hit where it hurts. The starting point of the battle must be the workplace and lead to a nationwide struggle.

"I should also stress the following: stop putting the blame on the people. People are blamed for the crisis, for everything. The responsible organised people's movement cannot be blamed for actions planned backstage. This

provocation will not pass. We will continue our struggles."

Papariga also gave a resolute response to Georgios Karatzaferis, president of the nationalist party LAOS, who resorted to anti-communism and attacked the KKE during the debates.

"When the march of PAME arrived at the parliament, there was a group of members of 'Xrisi Avgi' (ultra-right nationalist group), the so-called the known-unknowns, who in 1994 set the Polytechnic School on fire, and they were saying 'burn the parliament down'. We disarmed them, we denounced them, we marched with linked arms and not a single incident occurred while we were at Syntagma Square.

"I do not know whether this group outside the parliament has blood ties, permanent or temporary with Mr. Karatzaferis. But honestly, Mr. Karatzaferis is playing the role of a provocateur in order to impose the anti-people measures." ●

WFTU announces 16th World Congress

The Secretariat of the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU) has issued the call for the organization's 16th World Congress, to be held in Athens next April.

The five years since the last Congress have seen considerable growth. Formed in 1945, the WFTU now has 200 national and sectoral trade unions in 110 countries, and 72 million members.

But the strength and potential of the new WFTU, the Call notes, "lies mainly in its positions and action, in its strategy, its tactics and initiatives... its active involvement in the struggle, facing all current problems that affect workers."

"The period we live in," says the Call, "is one of aggressive imperialism, anti-labour neo-liberal policies and of the international economic crisis of

the capitalist system. This crisis is expressed in all sectors: in the economic and social level, the environment, the quality of life, culture and climate change. Crises are in the DNA of capitalism and for this reason they come again and again. It is impossible for capitalism to solve the problems of the peoples of the world."

The next issue of *People's Voice* will print highlights of the Call. ●



On March 4, members of PAME, the All-Workers Militant Front, occupied the Finance Ministry building in central Athens to protest against the antipopular economic measures adopted by the government of Greece. Seen here, WFTU Deputy General Secretary Valentin Pacho speaks to the protesters, expressing solidarity on behalf of the World Federation of Trade Unions. PAME is an affiliate of the WFTU.

France approves return of Maori heads

After years of foot-dragging by French museums, the country's parliament voted 437-8 on May 4 to approve the return of 16 tattooed, mummified Maori heads to New Zealand. For years, New Zealand has sought the return of heads kept in collections abroad, many of which were obtained by Westerners in exchange for weapons and other goods.

The repatriation is "a matter of great significance for Maori," New Zealand's culture and Maori affairs minister Pita Sharples said. "Maori believe that, through their ancestors' return to their original homeland, their dignity is restored, and they can be put to rest in peace among their families."

Dozens of museums worldwide have agreed to return the heads, but not all. Some racists in France had argued that case could set a precedent for similar action against other museums, such as the Louvre's collection of Egyptian mummies.

The UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Article 11, states the following: "1. Indigenous peoples have the right to practice and revitalize their cultural traditions and customs. This includes the right to maintain, protect and develop the past, present and future manifestations of their cultures, such as archeological and historical sites, artifacts, designs, ceremonies, technologies and visual and performing arts and literature;

"2. States shall provide redress through effective mechanisms, which may include restitution, developed in conjunction with indigenous peoples, with respect to their cultural, intellectual, religious and spiritual property taken without their free, prior and informed consent or in violation of their laws, traditions and customs."

Meanwhile, the Harper government of Canada is one of the few world-wide which refuses to sign the UN Declaration. ●



A tale twice told #2: financial crises 1929 and 2008

The Great Crash 1929, by J.K. Galbraith, 1954, re-published 2009 by Mariner Books. *The Great Financial Crisis - Causes and Consequences*, by J.B. Foster and F. Magdoff, Monthly Review Press, 2009. Available from www.peoplescoopbookstore.com.

Review by Paul Bjarnason

Neither of these two short books is earth shattering unto itself, but when taken together, and realising that they were written 55 years apart, they give us an interesting insight into the problems of capitalism and its debt loads and financial aspects in particular. Economics is often referred to as the dismal science, but both of books are written to be understood by mere mortals as well as the academics. While both are focused on the U.S. economy, the effects and lessons apply to capitalist countries in general.

Galbraith is not usually considered a humorist, but with chapter titles in *The Great Crash*

1929 such as "In Goldman Sachs We Trust", "The Twilight of Illusion", and "Vision and Boundless Hope and Optimism" you are in for a treat. His analysis (contempt) for the banks and financiers is reminiscent of Lenin's *The Renegade Kautsky* for biting wit and sarcasm backed with historical facts.

Galbraith shows us the effects of the banks changing into a form of investment houses called Trading Corporations, the impotence of the Federal Regulators, and the optimism that drove the 1928/1929 boom and bubble. He touches on earlier bubbles, and our inability to learn from prior experience once greed and the profit motive set upon society. During the late 1920s, many of these Trading Corporations were being set up, and shares in them sold even though the assets were just the capital from the sale of those shares.

"More investment trust securities were offered in September of 1929 than even in August - the total was above \$600 million..."



It is difficult not to marvel at the imagination which was implicit in this gargantuan insanity. If there must be madness, something may be said for having it on a heroic scale.

Foster and Magdoff wrote their analysis as a series of articles starting in the spring of 2006, which tend to overlap due to being written as stand alone pieces. These

articles are more technical, but with lots of graphs and charts, *The Great Financial Crisis* is understandable and relevant to our current crisis. In 2006 they flagged the "Household Debt Bubble", followed by the "Explosion of Debt and Speculation", and later the "Financialization of Capitalism".

"Financialization" is a recurring

theme of the book. The substance of the argument is that the rate of profit from traditional capitalism is too low, and therefore capital turns to the higher returns in the financial sector. The authors show that from 1965 to 2005 the rate of profit in manufacturing dropped from 50% to 12%, while financial profit rose from 16% to 40%.

Their second theme is debt, which has grown from 1.5 times the GDP in 1970 to 3.5 times the GDP in 2007. A footnote states that they only use the publicly held federal debt; if the debt of federal agencies debt is included, the total debt load is approximately six times the GDP.

Is this a new stage of capitalism? This reviewer has not seen much theoretical analysis of this question. To date, governments have bailed out the financial sector and parts of the manufacturing sector, and productivity has grown, all at the expense of the unemployed and the future of our children. Progressives need to consider this in order to develop our tactical response. ●

Michel Chartrand, trade unionist and socialist

(Adapted from a text of a collective of authors published in *Le Devoir*, November 18, 2006)

On April 12, Michel Chartrand passed away at 93 years old. This exceptional fighter participated for over 70 years in all the memorable events in Quebec's history, starting in the mid-1930s. During the Fifties, in the "Grande Noirceur" (the dark days of Duplessis), he acted as a spearhead of the trade union movement, which acted as the real opposition to Duplessism and opened the way to the Quiet Revolution. Chartrand paid the price, jailed no fewer than seven times in the hard-fought conflicts that marked that period, the best known of which were those in Asbestos and Murdochville.

This gave a foretaste of his later troubles with the legal system,

including his detention for four months under the War Measures Act decreed by the Trudeau government during the October Crisis of 1970. His trial, like that of all the 300 or so persons unjustly jailed, ended in a dismissal of the charges.

Michel was predominantly a political man, speaking abundantly about public issues. "Everything is political," he loved to say. But this patriarch of the Quebec left scorned the traditional parties, which in his view sought only power without real change.

In the first part of his public life, he was deeply involved in the reformist nationalist parties of the Thirties and Forties - Action Libérale Nationale and the Bloc Populaire - precursors of the contemporary sovereigntist Parti Québécois and Bloc Québécois. As his thinking radicalized, in the Fifties he succeeded Thérèse

Casgrain as leader of the Parti Social-Démocrate, the Quebec wing of the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation (CCF). And in the early Sixties he was the founding president of the Parti Socialiste du Québec (PSQ). At the end of his life, he was an eminent member of Québec Solidaire.

An independentist from the beginning, he never supported the PQ, criticizing its overly centrist and neoliberal policies. However, he was not a narrow nationalist, conscious that a nation oppressing another one cannot find the path to freedom. This is why he actively supported the struggle of the Mohawk people during the Oka crisis in 1990.

Driven out of the CTCC (the CSN's predecessor), by its then secretary general, Jean Marchand (one of the three "doves" who, with Trudeau and Gérard Pelletier



Michel Chartrand

headed to Ottawa in 1965 to "put Quebec back in its place"), Chartrand went back to practising his trade as a printer for ten years.

But as president of the Montreal Central Council of the CSN, from 1968 to 1978, Michel gave his full measure as a man of action and an orator. He became one of the pillars

of the Quebec union movement, which he helped transform into an instrument of struggle.

He was the keenest enthusiast of the innovative orientation adopted by the union central, which sought to add a "second front" to the traditional mission of trade-unionism, the negotiation of collective agreements. This was expressed, for example, in the Central Council's involvement in causes such as defense of the rights of tenants and injured workers; the founding of a popular newspaper, the weekly Québec-Press; the establishment of superstore food co-operatives; support to the Front d'Action Politique (FRAP), the first progressive party to oppose Jean Drapeau, the autocratic mayor of Montreal; the successful campaign to abolish the private hunting and fishing clubs, which earned Chartrand yet another stay behind bars; and, above all, the practice of international solidarity.

Still tireless, in the mid-1980s Michel established the FATA (Foundation to assist injured workers). When he was over 80 years old, he criss-crossed Quebec holding dozens of meetings for his campaign to establish a "citizenship income." He even made a lengthy stop in Jonquiere, during the 1998 elections, to run against then premier Lucien Bouchard, as a spokesperson for the Rassemblement pour l'alternative progressiste (RAP - Coalition for a progressive alternative), one of the predecessors of Québec solidaire. His slogan was "Zero poverty through a citizenship income," which contrasted with the "Zero Deficit" of the PQ government.

We hope this can acquaint the younger generation with some of the accomplishments of an exceptional personality, thirsting for justice, who devoted his life to the defense of the most disadvantaged in our society. ●

Craig Pritchett, Longshore union leader

Two pivotal figures in the struggles of the working class in Canada died recently. Quebec's Michel Chartrand was more widely known, but Craig Pritchett had a big impact on the labour movement on the west coast.

Born in December 1924, in New Westminster, BC, Craig was one of five sons of the legendary communist Harold Pritchett, president of the International Woodworkers of America from 1937-1940. He attended John Oliver High School in Vancouver, then worked in the North Vancouver shipyards. In 1943, he joined the B.C. Regiment, serving overseas in the war against fascism. Soon after his return, he became an organizer for the IWA. After the split in the IWA in 1948, Craig returned to the waterfront, and attained membership in ILWU local 507 (Grainliners). He was elected to the executive of his local

in 1955 and vice president in 1956. Craig represented Local 507 in the union's District Council where every Canadian local had representation. But he was a visionary who realized that the interests of the dockworkers in B.C. depended on stronger unity of the various union locals, and genuine Canadian autonomy. In February 1959, he was elected the founding President of the new ILWU Canadian Area by acclamation. He held that position until 1962, when he was appointed an International organizer by the ILWU, and continued to play a major role in discussions to unite all the longshore locals in Canada. This amalgamation was completed in 1966 with the formation of ILWU Local 500. During these years, Craig was also a delegate to the Vancouver & District Labour Council and a frequent delegate to B.C. Federation of Labour and Canadian Labour

Congress conventions.

His dream of building the Canadian union into a truly autonomous and sovereign section of the ILWU - a goal shared by Harry Bridges and other ILWU leaders - was realized at the 16th ILWU Canadian Area Convention, which passed a resolution requesting the International Union to discontinue the appointment of International Reps in Canada. At that point, he retired as ILWU Regional Director in Canada, returning to work in the industry as a dock checker.

Craig was also a strong fighter for peace and international labour unity. In 1959, he attended the first All Pacific Asian Dockworkers Conference in Tokyo, and later took part in meetings in Geneva, Vienna, Athens and other cities.

After retirement, he continued his participation as a deeply

respected member of the ILWU, and devoted himself to activities such as the Canadian-Cuban Friendship Association. When divisions threatened the Communist Party of Canada at the beginning of the 1990s, Craig remained a loyal member of the CPC, rejecting attempts to turn the party away from its revolutionary outlook.

A celebration of Craig's life was held on April 17 at the Maritime Labour Centre in Vancouver, in front of the huge mural depicting historic key industries of British Columbia, including the waterfront. Many members of Craig's family were there, and the memorial was chaired by his son Dave, who also works on the docks in Vancouver. They were joined by many current and retired longshore workers, and by other progressive activists and Communist Party members. ●

Paul Pauk recognized for Robeson activities

At the O'Neil Centre's yearly Caribana Gala Event, on April 13th, Paul Pauk (a long-time supporter of People's Voice and earlier working class newspapers) was presented with a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Ontario Long Term Care Association. Now residing in the O'Neil Centre Nursing Home in Toronto, Paul was chosen to represent the facility because "we admire his efforts to continue the mission to bringing peace and friendship to the forefront of our society."

A statement from the O'Neill Centre includes:

"In 1995, our resident Paul Pauk developed and started the Paul Robeson Commemorative Committee in Toronto. His goal was to enlighten the younger generation about the tremendous accomplishments of Paul Robeson and hoped to inspire them to follow his message of peace, liberation, equality and human dignity.

"Paul Robeson was famous for the song, Old Man River and other great songs of social struggle. He was also an actor, lawyer and fought relentlessly against racism, oppression and injustice for all peoples. Unfortunately, during the McCarthy period, he got 'blacklisted' in the USA and his passport was taken away. Through the years he was almost forgotten.

"Our resident, Paul Pauk wanted to ensure that Robeson would not be forgotten in Canada. So, Paul Pauk himself went around to schools with displays of Robeson's achievements to teach young people the history of this great singer and fighter for social justice. Our resident succeeded in this mission, not only did the students love to learn this history but they were also given his tapes and CDs.

"Paul Pauk and his Commemorative Committee felt that the city of Toronto should honour this crusader of peace on the 100th anniversary of his birth. On April 9, 1998 Mayor Mel Lastman proclaimed April 9th as 'Paul Robeson Day' in the City of Toronto. The city declared that Robeson

endured great personal hardships for the causes championed and that the citizens of Toronto believe in equality for all human beings. They agreed that it is important for young people to learn about and be inspired by the accomplishments of Mr. Robeson. He is a great role model and is known world-wide for his courage and integrity.

"Paul Pauk was successful in starting The Paul Robeson Commemorative Committee. If our resident was chosen to be honored it would shed new light on his commitment to honour his hero and a great humanitarian, Paul Robeson."

Also presented to Paul was a congratulatory certificate from Olivia Chow, MP, Trinity Spadina: "On the occasion of being presented with a Lifetime Achievement Award, Paul Pauk, it is my pleasure to extend sincere congratulations to you. Your vision and leadership in promoting peace in our society have helped make Toronto the great city that it is. Thank you for your efforts on behalf of all of us. Congratulations!" ●



Paul Pauk with his Lifetime Achievement Award

Russian Communists mark Victory Day...

continued from page 5

"Everything for the front! Everything for the victory!" became the essence of life for the Soviet people, for every communist. Behind the Volga and the Urals, within the shortest time the second industrial base of the country was created. It included 2,600 evacuees, as well as thousands of new enterprises. That provided not only the compensation of the losses incurred during the fascist invasion, which had taken nearly a third of the national wealth, but also made it possible to surpass the aggressor. The Soviet Union produced tanks and assault guns, fighter planes, guns and other weapons two times more than

Germany. The industrial battle between the two social systems was unequivocally won by the Soviets.

In the end, standing against more than two-thirds of Germany's armed forces, the Red Army defeated 507 German divisions and one hundred divisions of fascist allies. It inflicted three-quarters of all Nazi losses, both in humans and in military equipment...

The victory was secured by a price unprecedented in history. The losses of our army reached 8.7 million. Of those, more than a million officers and soldiers died for the liberation of Europe. Nearly 18 million Soviet civilians died under Nazi bombing and shelling, from starvation, in concentration

camps and due to hard labor, as the result of invaders' punitive actions...

We are confident that achievements like the victory in the Great Patriotic War, can neither be destroyed, nor slandered, nor forgotten. With each new generation the image of Victory is being cleared of filth thrown against it. ●

Alphonso Alvarez

Deepest sympathy to Comrade Ardis Harriman, whose life partner Alphonso Alvarez passed away after a long battle with cancer on May Day, 2010.

Alphonso was a respected member of the Chilean Communist Party who came to Canada after the coup against the Popular Unity Government of Salvador Allende. A poet and an artist, he and Ardis were seen and heard at many progressive events, reading the revolutionary and humanist poetry of Pablo Neruda and other international people's artists.

We join with Chilean Communists in Toronto in tribute to his memory, and invoke the words of the great Joe Hill: Don't mourn for me - organize!

Ontario Committee,
Communist Party of
Canada

affiliations and half the party's individual members. The remaining affiliated trade unions must take the earliest opportunity to impose progressive policies on the Labour Party and clear these wreckers out of Labour's ranks...

"Advantage must be taken of the current crisis in Britain's political system to put forward alternatives that embody the real essence of democracy - namely, rule by the people. However this governmental crisis is resolved, the labour movement will have to focus on mobilising the widest alliance of popular, anti-monopoly forces against reactionary policies from any quarter. Projecting the People's Charter as the positive alternative will be an essential weapon in the huge battles to come." ●

Britain needs anti-Tory rule...

continued from page 6

the subsidised railways back into public ownership and scrapping plans for new weapons systems.

"Together with a genuine commitment to introducing proportional representation - preferably the Single Transferable Vote in multi-member constituencies - this kind of progressive programme would win majority support inside and outside Parliament.

Whoever would head such a Labour-led government is far less important than its policies.

"It is clear, however, that the New Labourites have brought the Labour Party to the brink of disaster, losing millions of voters, two important trade union

What's Left

Vancouver, BC

Communist Party of Canada 89th anniversary, forum and celebration, 7:30 pm, Thursday, May 27, 706 Clark Drive. Sponsor: Vancouver East Club CPC, 604-255-2041.

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

Left Film Night, Sunday, May 30, 7 pm, "From Wharf Rats to Lords of the Docks," on ILWU leader Harry Bridges. Free, donations welcome, Centre for Socialist Education, 706 Clark Drive. For info, call 604-255-2041.

18th Annual People's Voice/Rebel Youth Banquet, Sat., June 5, 6 pm, Russian Hall, 600 Campbell Ave. Tickets \$10, call 604-254-9836 for full details.

On-to-Ottawa Trek, historical plaque ceremony and send-off for 2010 homelessness Trekkers, Sunday, June 6, 1-3 pm, Crab Park (N. foot of Main). On to Ottawa 75th Committee, www.ontoottawa.ca.

Calgary, AB

On-To-Ottawa Trek, 75th anniversary celebration, Wed., June 9, 7:30 pm, ATU Union Hall, 5325-1A Street SW. An entertaining multi-media celebration of history, labour and social conscience.

Toronto, ON

Bazaar & White Elephant Sale, Sat., May 29, 11-4, AUUC Cultural Centre, 1604 Bloor West (between Dundas and

Keele). Arts & crafts, bake table, bingo, raffle, bargains galore, lunch and refreshments. Tables for rent \$15. For info, contact Patricia, 416-604-8724.

People's Voice Street Sale, Sat., May 29, 8 am-2 pm, proceeds to Fund Drive, 526 Main St. (2 blocks north of Main Subway). Hot dogs & sausages, clothes, books, jewellery, plants, and more! Call Liz at 416-469-2481 for info.

G8/G20 rally and march, Sat., June 26, 1 pm, from Queen's Park, call 416-441-3710 for details.

St. Catharines, ON

People's Voice Fundraiser, hear Dr. Keith Ellis on the cover-up of Cuba's efforts in Haiti, Sun., May 16, 2-5 pm, BBQ including vegetarian food, 8/12 Allan Drive

Fort Erie, ON

Canadian-Cuban Friendship Association-Niagara, social event Sunday, June 13, 2-6 pm, \$5 for a taste of Cuba, BBQ, Cuban music, 1760 Ridge Road.

Montreal, QC

Parti Communiste du Québec and Clarté Office launch, (new date), 1 pm, Sunday, May 30, at Association des Travailleurs Grecs Hall, 5359 Ave du Parc. Live music, refreshments, political discussion on the Common Front and the fightback.

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

Solidarity with the Greek workers!
Support the PV 2010 Fund Drive!

People's Voice deadlines:

JUNE 1-15 issue: Thursday, May 20

JUNE 16-30 issue: Thursday, June 3

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

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For Peace and Sovereignty!**



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The Insanities Of Our Times

By Fidel Castro

We have no choice but to call a spade a spade. Those who still have a pinch of common sense find it easy to see how little realism is being left in today's world.

When American President Barack Obama was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize, Michael Moore said, "Now, earn it." Many people liked the ingenious comment; it was a smart phrase, even though many found the decision of the Norwegian Committee an example of demagoguery and the exaltation of the apparently harmless petty-politics of the new US President, an African-American, a good communicator and a clever politician leading a powerful empire involved in a deep economic crisis.

The World Conference in Copenhagen was about to be held and Obama sparked off hopes that the United States would join the world consensus in favour of a binding agreement to prevent the ecologic catastrophe threatening the human species. What happened there was disappointing; the international public had become the victim of a painful deception.

At the recent World Conference of the Peoples on Climate Change and the Rights of the Mother Land, held in Bolivia, responses were offered filled with the wisdom of the ancient indigenous nationalities, invaded and virtually devastated by the European conquerors who, in search of gold

and easy wealth, imposed for centuries their selfish cultures incompatible with the most sacred interests of mankind.

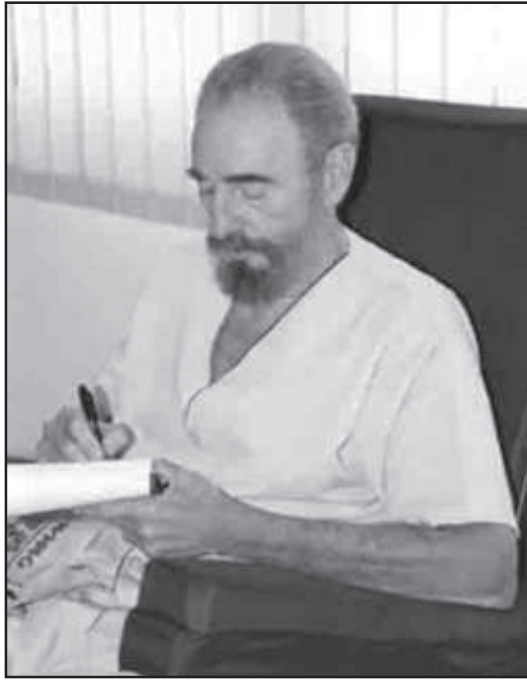
Two news reports received yesterday are an expression of the empire's philosophy intending to make us believe in its "democratic, peaceful, selfless and honest" nature. Suffice it to read the text of said press dispatches dated in the US capital.

WASHINGTON, April 23, 2010. - US President Barack Obama is examining the possibility of deploying an arsenal of missiles with conventional non-nuclear warheads and a very powerful explosion capacity that can hit their targets anywhere in the world in about an hour. Albeit the new super-bomb, delivered by Minuteman missiles, will not carry nuclear warheads their destructive capability will be similar, as confirmed by the fact that their deployment is foreseen in the recently signed START 2 agreements with Russia.

The Moscow authorities demanded, and managed to include in the agreement, that the United States will remove one of its nuclear warhead missiles for each one of these missiles.

According to reports in the *New*

York Times and the CBS TV network, the new bomb known as Prompt Global Strike (PGS) should be able to kill Al Qaeda leader Osama Bin Laden in a cave in Afghanistan, destroy a North



Fidel Castro

Korean missile in full preparation or attack an Iranian nuclear site, "all of this without crossing the nuclear threshold."

The advantage of having the military option of a non-nuclear weapon with the same effect of the targeted impact of a nuclear bomb is judged interesting by the Obama Administration.

The project had been initially undertaken by Obama's predecessor, Republican President George W. Bush, but it was blocked by Moscow's protestations. The Russian authorities had said that given the Minuteman's capability to deliver nuclear warheads, it was impossible to determine that the launching of a PGS did not mark the beginning of a nuclear attack.

However, the Obama Administration feels that it can give Russia and China the necessary guarantees to avoid misunderstandings. The missile silos of the new weapon will be raised in areas distant from the nuclear warhead deposits and they

can be regularly supervised by experts from Moscow or Beijing.

The super-bomb could be delivered by a Minuteman missile capable of flying through the atmosphere at sound speed while carrying one thousand pounds of explosives. Then, extremely sophisticated equipment will enable the missile to release the bomb letting it fall with great accuracy on the selected targets.

Responsibility for the PGS project "at an estimated cost of \$250 million only in its first experimental year" fell on General Kevin Chilton, commander of the US nuclear arsenal. Chilton explained that the PGS will be filling up a gap in the range of options currently available to the Pentagon...

WASHINGTON, April 22, 2010 - A US Air Force non-piloted spaceship took off from Florida this Thursday, its military mission covered by veil of secrecy. The automated spaceship or X-37B was launched from Cape Canaveral in an Atlas V rocket at the 19:52 hours local time, according to a video distributed by the army...

The plane looking like a miniature spaceship is 8.9 meters long by 4.5 meters wingspan. It has taken years to manufacture the reusable spaceship and the army has offered only vague explanations on its objective or its role in the military arsenal.

The vehicle has been designed to create the ambience of an "orbital laboratory" to put to the test new technologies and components before these technologies are assigned to ongoing satellite programs,' stated the Air Force in a recent communiqué.

... Gary Payton, second assistant secretary of the Air Force space programs, indicated that the ship could stay in space up to nine months. The aircraft, manufactured by Boeing, started in 1999 as a US National Space Agency (NASA) project and was later transferred to the Air Force, which has plans to launch a second X-37B by 2011.

Do they need anything else?

Today they face an enormous obstacle: the already unstoppable climate change. There is talk of the unavoidable rise of heat by more than two degrees centigrade, with catastrophic consequences. Within only 40 years, the world population will increase in 2 billion to reach the figure of 9 billion people in that short time. Harbors,

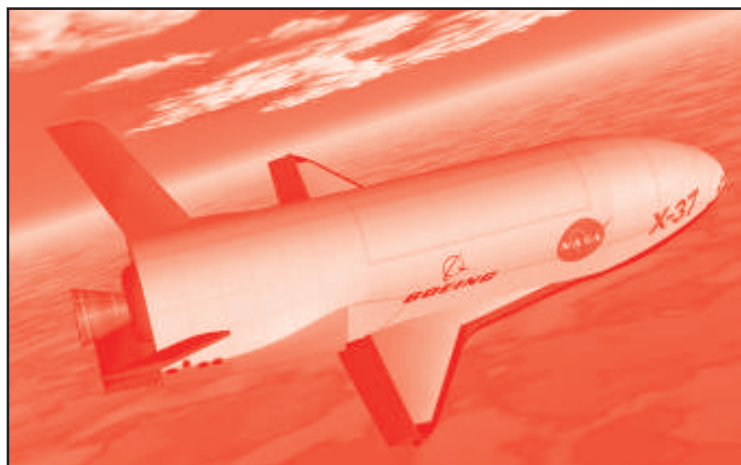
hotels, tourist resorts, roads, industries and facilities close to the ports will be underwater in less time than a generation from a wealthy and developed nation needs to enjoy half their lives, the same nations that today selfishly refuse to make the least of sacrifices to preserve the survival of the human species. The farming land and the drinking water will be considerably reduced. The oceans will be contaminated and many marine species will no longer be edible while others will be extinct.

This is not simply a logical assertion but the result of scientific research. Through natural genetics and the transfer of various species from one continent to another, human beings had been able to increase food and other useful crop productions per hectare. Thus, for some time, man suffered less from the shortage of such food as maize, potato, wheat, fiber and other necessary products. Later, genetic manipulation and the use of chemical fertilizers also contributed to the solution of crucial needs, but they too are coming to the end of their possibilities to produce healthy food for human consumption.

On the other hand, we are witnessing the depletion in barely two centuries of the hydrocarbons that it took nature 400 million years to create. Likewise, crucial non-renewable mineral resources required by the world economy are being depleted. At the same time, science has created the capacity to destroy the planet several times over in a matter of hours. The major contradiction of our times is precisely the capacity of the human species for self-destruction and its inability to govern itself.

The human being managed to raise its life possibilities to such limits as exceed its own capacity to survive, and in this battle they are consuming at an accelerated pace the raw materials available to them. Science made it possible to turn matter into energy, as in the case of the nuclear reaction - through large investments - but there is no sign that turning energy into matter is even viable. The infinite cost of investments in the relevant research is showing the impossibility to achieve in a few decades what it took the universe tens of thousands of millions of years to create. Will it be necessary for Barack Obama, the wunderkid, to explain it to us? Science has experienced a remarkable growth but ignorance and poverty grow too. Can anyone prove the opposite? ●

Fidel Castro Ruz, April 25, 2010, 6:30 PM



The X-37B "automated spaceship" - a new part of the Pentagon's military arsenal.

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Inside the X-37B

