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# people's VOICE

**Solidarity with  
Ford workers**

**See page 7**

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# Economic crisis slashes wages

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on page 6**



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**BC strikes**

HandyDart drivers challenge their US-based employer, while the BC Liberals bow to pressure from Olympic organizers and impose legislation against Ambulance Paramedics.

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**Hatemongers in Calgary**

Police and corporate media put "equal blame" on anti-racists and neo-Nazis for strife in Calgary, but only the city's fascists have a track record of violence.

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**Pension "reforms"**

The pension "reforms" announced by Federal Finance Minister Jim Flaherty will only affect about 7% of pension plans and 10% of retirement savings in Canada. Most workers remain unprotected.

# Municipal Conference in Ontario December 5-6

The 2010 municipal election campaign in Ontario municipalities opens January 1st, but already the right-wing is looking to take control of School Boards and Councils in

the province.

Bill 177 will force School Boards into fiscal compliance, and like it, by making it illegal for Trustees and Boards to publicly criticize the

inadequate provincial funding that is the cause of a new round of cuts, closures, and pressures to sell schools and land that are "excess to capacity."

In Toronto, former Health Minister George Smitherman, also known as "Furious George" and "the enforcer", has announced his candidacy for Mayor of Toronto noting his administration will focus on cutting expenditures, not increasing revenues. Retiring Mayor David Miller waged a national crusade to force federal and provincial governments to provide adequate and stable funding to municipalities. He was outmaneuvered when the province instead delivered the City of Toronto Act, enabling the city to levy new taxes on homeowners and tenants and drivers in the city, but not on businesses or corporations.

Smitherman, a right-wing Liberal, is expected to be challenged by ousted provincial Tory leader John Tory, in a battle of the Business Titans for control of the city executive. The majority left-centre forces on Council are also expected to be challenged from the right.

In the conditions of global economic crisis, mass unemployment and evaporating social programs and municipal services, this election promises to be a significant battleground for labour and working people in Ontario in the year ahead. Add on

a \$9 billion corporate tax cut hidden in and around the new Harmonized Sales Tax to come into effect next summer, and an angry electorate, and it's a combustible brew.

With this in mind, Ontario Communists will gather in Toronto December 5-6 to elaborate the Party's municipal policies and program, and discuss the municipal fightback across the province, with a view to assisting potential candidates and progressive school board and municipal reform movements. Communists will fight for the election of progressive majorities in school boards and municipalities across the province on November 8, 2010.

CPC (Ontario) leader Liz Rowley said the conference is important because it will help to turn the elections into a mini-referendum

on the HST, jobs and social spending in Ontario. The municipal elections come eleven months before a fixed date provincial election in October 2011.

For more information on the Municipal Conference, contact the Ontario Office at 416-469-2446. ●

## Ontario students rally against poverty



Thousands of college and university students protesting against tuition fees and student debt were joined by community members on November 5 as part of a united campaign for a poverty-free Ontario. "Ontario's students are struggling to pay the highest fees in Canada while facing the worst youth unemployment on record," said Shelley Melanson, Chairperson of the Canadian Federation of Students-Ontario. "With over 70 percent of new jobs requiring a diploma or a degree, for many people higher education is a necessary path out of poverty and unemployment."

Rallies and events involving thousands of people were held in Toronto, Ottawa, Sudbury, Thunder Bay, Mississauga, Guelph, London, Sault Ste. Marie, Peterborough, Scarborough, St. Catharines, Kingston and Windsor. Statistics and relevant facts are available at [dropfees.ca](http://dropfees.ca).

(People's Voice photo of the Toronto rally: Ed Bil)



CP (Ontario) leader Liz Rowley

## HandyDart workers deserve support

By Stephen Von Sychowski

On October 22, over 500 HandyDart workers in the Metro Vancouver area, represented by the Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) local 1724, issued a 72 hour strike notice to MVT Canadian Bus Inc.

The deceptively named MVT Canadian Bus is a California based company which took over the operation of HandyDart services in late 2008. HandyDart provides specialized public transit services for passengers with physical or cognitive disabilities which make them unable to use the other existing transit services.

Job action was set to take effect on October 26, but many ATU members were turned away when attempting to attend their duties on October 25, the day before the end of the 72 hour notice. The corporate media predictably launched into an immediate anti-worker frenzy, attempting to paint the ATU as a gang of greedy thugs more than happy to strand the disabled and elderly for a quick buck.

Meanwhile, back in reality the situation is quite different than in the imaginary world of corporate media. In fact, the ATU went to great lengths to avoid a strike which they knew could inconvenience the passengers they carry each day. The ATU attempted for over eight months to bargain with MVT, which met its workers with nothing but demands for unreasonable concessions which would destroy all the gains made by HandyDart workers over the last two decades.

These concessions include major cuts to benefits, reduction of shifts by as much as half, and elimination of the workers pension plan. It also fails to address the question of HandyDart operator's wages which are still below those of conventional bus drivers. All of this is nothing but a blatant drive to weaken the union and boost its own profits.

Under these conditions the members of ATU 1724 had no better option than to vote to strike. And so they did; an impressive 97% strike vote was achieved, giving a powerful mandate for job action against the corporate greed of MVT. At the same time, services are continuing to run at essential service levels for those who could otherwise face serious implications to their well being such as cancer therapy and kidney dialysis patients.

As events unfold, it becomes increasingly clear that this is not a case of "greedy" workers demanding more at the expense of the elderly and disabled. Rather, it is a case of a greedy U.S. corporation seeking to extract higher rates of profit by putting the squeeze on hard working unionized drivers who provide an important public service not just for the pay cheque, but also because they care.

In this struggle can also be found evidence of the negative effects of privatization and contracting out. This attack by MVT transit is cause for renewed calls for public and democratic ownership and control of public transit, for a democratically elected and accountable Translink board, and for increased transit funding leading to expanded service and reduced (and then eliminated) fares. All of this runs counter to the corporate agenda of the current Liberal government provincially and Conservative government federally.

With collective bargaining in the near future for other transit workers and the majority of the public sector in general, there is added urgency to the need to unite with HandyDart workers and help to see that their struggle is successful. If not, we may soon see how accurate the old saying that "an injury to one is an injury to all," really is. ●

## Apology for our mistake

In our Nov. 1-15 issue, an article incorrectly reported that economist Hugh Mackenzie, who wrote an Oct. 26 Toronto Star article criticizing the left for demanding that corporations pay higher taxes to support social programs, is the son of former Ontario NDP Labour Minister Bob Mackenzie. We apologize for any confusion created by our mistake.

## B.C. Liberals order paramedics "back to work"

PV Vancouver Bureau

About 400 labour activists rallied on Nov. 6 at the headquarters of VANOC, the Vancouver Olympic Organizing Committee which played a major role in the Campbell Liberal government's decision to impose back to work legislation on B.C.'s paramedics. Bill 21 was rammed through the legislature during an all-night sitting over the following weekend.

Health Services Minister Kevin Falcon admitted earlier that demands from VANOC helped lead to the legislation. Falcon had repeatedly claimed in the Legislature and to the public that the Olympics were not a factor, until CUPE released information described in a September memo from VANOC to the BC Ambulance Service and other government officials demanding "definitive confirmation" that "all required ambulance services will be provided as planned" for the 2010 Games.

The VANOC edict threatened that "If we are unable to obtain that guarantee (through either settlement of the strike or legislated "detente" for the Games), then VANOC will be required to initiate alternative contingency plans to avoid cancellation of the Games."

CUPE BC president Barry O'Neill said "the minister's story has certainly changed since we released contents of the memo, but what hasn't changed is this government's unprecedented attack on collective bargaining." The move to legislate the



Ambulance paramedics and their supporters rally at the VANOC HQ in east Vancouver on Nov. 6 (Photo: K. Cariou)

paramedics "back to work" came while they were in the middle of voting on the Liberal government's latest offer. The 3,500 Ambulance Paramedics of BC have been on strike since April 1 for better response times, equipment, wages and staffing levels. They have continued to work throughout the dispute under essential services orders.

Labour leaders unanimously condemned the legislation in the Paramedics dispute at an emergency meeting of the B.C. Federation of Labour.

"This legislation is completely unnecessary," said Federation President Jim Sinclair. "Paramedics were on the job. They were looking after people. Worse still, the Paramedics were in the process of voting on the government's last offer. This legislation isn't about

taking care of British Columbians, it's about Gordon Campbell going back to his old ways of ripping up workers' rights and legislating collective agreements. The labour movement will not stand for it. You can't bully workers into accepting collective agreements. This isn't going to create labour peace. This is going to create confrontation."

As John Strohmaier, president of the CUPE-affiliated Ambulance Paramedics, told the Nov. 6 rally, the legislation is intended to send a warning to the 200,000 public sector workers whose contracts are up for renewal following the Olympics. The Liberals have also sent a message to public sector employers, he added, that all they have to do is sit on their duffs and wait for the province to impose anti-worker contracts. ●

# Who are the hatemongers in Calgary?

## Special to PV

A recent report for the Southern Poverty Law Centre sheds important light on the hate group which is spreading its violent message in southern Alberta. The Intelligence Report by Sonia Scherr begins with a brief account of a clash last March 21, the International Day for the Elimination of Racism:

"Wielding 'White Pride Worldwide' flags and wearing black combat boots, about 40 members of the Aryan Guard and their supporters strode through the heart of Calgary... to broadcast their message of hate at City Hall. But they never got there. Instead, they encountered several hundred anti-racist protesters, some of whom threw rocks, water bottles and even cans of vegetables at the group as traffic came to a halt and police called for backup. Police eventually herded the neo-Nazis onto a bus that returned them to their vehicles on Calgary's outskirts. Though no serious injuries were reported, the melee snared headlines across Canada and prompted Aryan Guard spokesman Kyle McKee - who has 'Kill Jews' tattooed on his shins - to declare victory."

The Aryan Guard have spread fear and anger among Calgary's 250,000 immigrant and minority populations.

"Essentially a racist gang," writes Scherr, "the Aryan Guard is the most public hate group to



One of these groups in Calgary is not like the other: Aryan Guard members (above) and anti-racist demonstrators (below)



appear in Calgary - which, like much of western Canada, has a history of such activity going back to the Klan of the 1920s - in the past two decades. These Nazi look-alikes

have clashed with counter-protesters at rallies in the city's downtown, handed out white-power music CDs to teenagers in an attempt to bolster their membership, and perpetrated attacks on minorities despite espousing non-violence."

The Aryan Guard was founded in late 2006 with help from two former teachers: Paul Fromm of the Canadian Association for Free Expression, who lost his teaching certificate because of his white supremacist activities, and National Socialist Party of Canada leader Terry Tremaine, a former part-time university lecturer who in 2007 was fined \$4,000 by the

Canadian Human Rights Tribunal because of his racist and anti-Semitic Internet postings.

"They were the main catalysts behind bringing these young fellows here," said Constable Lynn MacDonald, hate crimes coordinator for the Calgary Police Service.

MacDonald says the Aryan Guard now has roughly 20 full-fledged members, and another 20 to 30 supporters, including those belonging to the Valkyrian Legion, or woman's wing of the Aryan Guard, which consists mostly of the girlfriends of male members. The majority are in their early 20s.

The group began to draw attention in 2007, when members began distributing hate literature in Calgary and Lethbridge.

In August 2007, the Aryan Guard began disrupting anti-racism rallies. Two months later, they rallied outside City Hall to denounce Muslim women who wear burkas while voting. Since then, they have conducted sporadic demonstrations, including "White Pride Day" rallies held on the International Day for the Elimination of Racism.

As Scherr notes, "the Aryan Guard has found itself vastly outnumbered by anti-racist protesters, including members of Anti-Racist Action Calgary." While police say both Aryan Guard members and counter-protesters have been arrested for assaults, ARA spokesperson Jason Devine says no member has been charged in connection with any incident at an Aryan Guard rally.

Meanwhile, the Calgary Police Service admits that Aryan Guard members have been linked to several assaults, including one against a cab driver from North Africa.

Writing about this attack on the neo-Nazi Stormfront website, McKee boasted about getting the case dismissed: "The reason being was that they couldn't make a positive ID because apparently

everyone there was all dressed in combat boots with white laces [and] black flight jackets and all had shaved heads. So let this be a lesson to anyone who wonders why on earth all us skinheads dress so similarly. [T]his is another great reason. lol [laughing out loud]"

In July 2008, a 17-year-old Aryan Guard member who had been making anti-Asian remarks followed a young Japanese woman as she left a bar and kicked her in the back of the head with steel-toed boots. He was wearing red laces - a skinhead symbol indicating he'd spilled blood for the movement.

ARA members believe that the Aryan Guard is responsible for the violent attacks against Jason and Bonnie Devine's home. Aryan Guard members have taunted the couple about the firebomb attack. "Is it hot in there?" they have asked during protests, according to Devine. "How are the kids? How's the house?"

And in yet another ugly case, four Aryan Guard members were charged with disturbing the peace after vandalizing a shopping mall and using racial slurs on the Siksika First Nations reserve near Calgary.

Scherr reports that two of the group's most prominent members, McKee and Dallas Price, faced assault and weapons charges in connection with a September 2006 confrontation in which one victim was hit with a wooden club and another was stabbed with a knife. Guard member Robert Reitmeier was charged with attempted murder in connection with a November 2006 assault on a man who suffered skull and facial fractures. Member Bill Noble was convicted in 2008 of posting hate material on the Internet that primarily targeted non-whites, Jews and gays. A judge sentenced him to four months in jail and imposed limits on his computer use for three years, though Noble continues to post frequently on Stormfront. ●

## Unions step up global campaign against Vale

From Sweden to Korea, New Caledonia to Indonesia and Mozambique, unions around the world are calling on Vale to make a Fair Deal NOW and respect basic labour rights at all of its global operations.

The United Steelworkers' (USW) campaign to prevent Brazilian mining giant Vale S.A. from eroding working conditions and denying basic labour rights at its operations is backed by the International Metalworkers' Federation (IMF), the International Federation of Chemical, Energy, Mine and General Workers' Unions (ICEM) and LabourStart.

Members of the two global union federations have held actions around the world targeting Vale business operations and investment. LabourStart, a web-based news service for the international union movement, launched an online letter writing campaign on Nov. 4, with more than 1,000 letters sent to Vale CEO Roger Agnelli within hours. The

IMF has also launched a webpage ([www.imfmetal.org/Vale](http://www.imfmetal.org/Vale)) with information about the struggle in four languages.

3500 USW members in Canada have been on strike since July 13 after refusing deep concessions from the Brazilian mining giant. The company has hired replacement workers to continue production during the strike.

On October 26, workers at Vale's largest Brazilian mine walked off the job in response to the company's proposal at the bargaining table. Vale workers in Brazil report the denial of basic labour rights, low wages and substandard health and safety conditions.

In October, IMF and ICEM affiliates tracked a Vale copper shipment from Canada to Germany and on to Sweden. Union members held a protest at the port outside of Hamburg and in Sweden, met with board members of Vale customer Boliden AB which owns the Ronnskar copper smelter. ●

## Communist Party condemns Calgary police inaction against neo-Nazis

**Statement by the Central Executive Committee, Communist Party of Canada, Nov. 4, 2009**

The failure by the Calgary Police Service to seriously investigate neo-Nazi violence against anti-racist activists is a reckless and shocking dereliction of duty which endangers lives. On October 3, the family home of Jason and Bonnie Devine and their four young children was the target of yet another such attack, in which windows were smashed and Neo-Nazi graffiti was spray-painted on the front door: a swastika and "C-18", an obvious reference to the violent British fascist organization known as "Combat 18." In February 2009, the house was firebombed with molotov cocktails.

Fortunately, nobody was hurt in either incident, but the long history of email and telephone threats against the Devine family

is ample warning that they remain in serious danger. The most likely suspects are in plain view - the Aryan Guard group which has been actively promoting racism and neo-Nazi ideology in Calgary for several years. Jason and Bonnie Devine have been in the forefront of community activists calling attention to the Aryan Guard. Both have campaigned as candidates for the Communist Party, and their courage has clearly angered the local fascists.

Despite its motto, "To maximize public safety in Calgary with vigilance, courage, and pride," the Calgary Police Service has ignored repeated public appeals to take action. Aryan Guard members are suspects in various other crimes, including the beatings of a homeless man, a gay community member, and a cab driver from North Africa, but no arrests have resulted. In the view of the Communist Party of Canada, this pattern has gone beyond neglect, into the territory of tacit

encouragement of criminal activity. If serious injury or death results from further attacks, innocent blood will not only be on the hands of the perpetrators, but also on the hands of the Calgary Police Service which hides behind the feeble claim that "both sides are equally responsible" and that the Aryan Guard is simply "exercising its right to free speech."

The time has come for the City of Calgary and the Alberta provincial government to intervene in this crisis situation. Strong political leadership is required to replace Chief Rick Hanson with a police chief who is willing and capable of ensuring that swift action is taken to bring an end to these racist attacks. In the meantime, we extend our ongoing full solidarity to anti-racist activists and all democratic-minded citizens of Calgary who are standing up to the violent neo-Nazis in their community. ●



Vale S.A. is the world's largest iron ore producer.

# EDITORIALS

## Capitalism in the doghouse

The ruling class has tried to whip up enthusiasm for its celebration of the fall of the Berlin Wall, but people across the planet are very sceptical about the private profit system. A new BBC World Service poll reports that only 11% of the 29,000 people questioned across 27 countries responded that "free market capitalism works well and increased regulation will make it less efficient." Only in the U.S. and Pakistan did more than one in five agree that capitalism works well as it stands.

Almost a quarter (23% globally) agreed that "capitalism is fatally flawed and a different economic system is needed". That is the view of 43% in France, 38% in Mexico, 35% in Brazil, 30% in Ukraine, and 27% in Spain. Here in Canada, 20% agreed, more than those who support the system as it stands. (Over 50% of Canadians support "regulation and reform" of free-market capitalism.)

There is strong support everywhere for more equal distribution of wealth. That view was backed by majorities in 22 of the 27 countries, especially in Latin America (92% in Mexico, 91% in Chile, and 89% in Brazil). In 26 countries, the majority want government to be more active in regulating business.

Interestingly, world opinion over the former Soviet Union is divided between the imperialist countries and the "global South." While the majority of Americans and Europeans agreed that the end of the USSR was "mainly a good thing" (79% in Germany, 76% in Britain and 74% in France), millions even in this region took a different view. On the other hand, 70% of Egyptians, 61% of Russians, 54% of Ukrainians, and an average of about 40% in Pakistan, India and Indonesia say the end of the Soviet Union was "mainly a bad thing."

"It appears that the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 may not have been the crushing victory for free-market capitalism that it seemed at the time," said Doug Miller, chairman of polling firm GlobeScan which co-conducted the survey.

Too bad for the bosses, but from the viewpoint of the global working class, support for socialist alternatives to capitalism is on the rise!

## Closing Canada's doors

The number of refugees gaining asylum in Canada has been slashed by over half since the Tory minority government took steps to close the doors against people fleeing desperate circumstances in other countries. Successful refugee applications have dropped a startling 56% since 2005, thanks to measures such as new visa restrictions. The changes have had a particularly dramatic impact on certain groups, such as Romas who face blatant racism and discrimination in the Czech Republic, and refugees from Mexico, where virtual warfare between the military and criminal gangs has become widespread. The Immigration and Refugee Board rejected over 90 percent of claims by Mexicans in the past year.

The Tory changes are called "immigration reforms," but as critics point out, the callous new strategy scraps legal obligations under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms to provide people with a fair hearing before deportation. By setting lower targets for asylum acceptance, the Tories are condemning thousands of refugees to further delays in hearings, and to deportation back to torture, discrimination, and other forms of persecution. In one recent case, a 24-year-old woman was murdered in Mexico after being deported from Canada following two failed refugee claims.

After taking office, the Harper Tories left many Immigration and Refugee Board positions vacant for months while they searched for right-wing appointees, swelling the case backlog and limiting the number of hearings. There is now an 18-month delay between a refugee claim in Canada and an IRB hearing.

Canada is clearly turning a hostile shoulder to refugees. In a world where millions of people are displaced by imperialist wars and occupations, environmental catastrophe, and a wide range of forms of discrimination, this is yet another reason to dump the Harper Tories.

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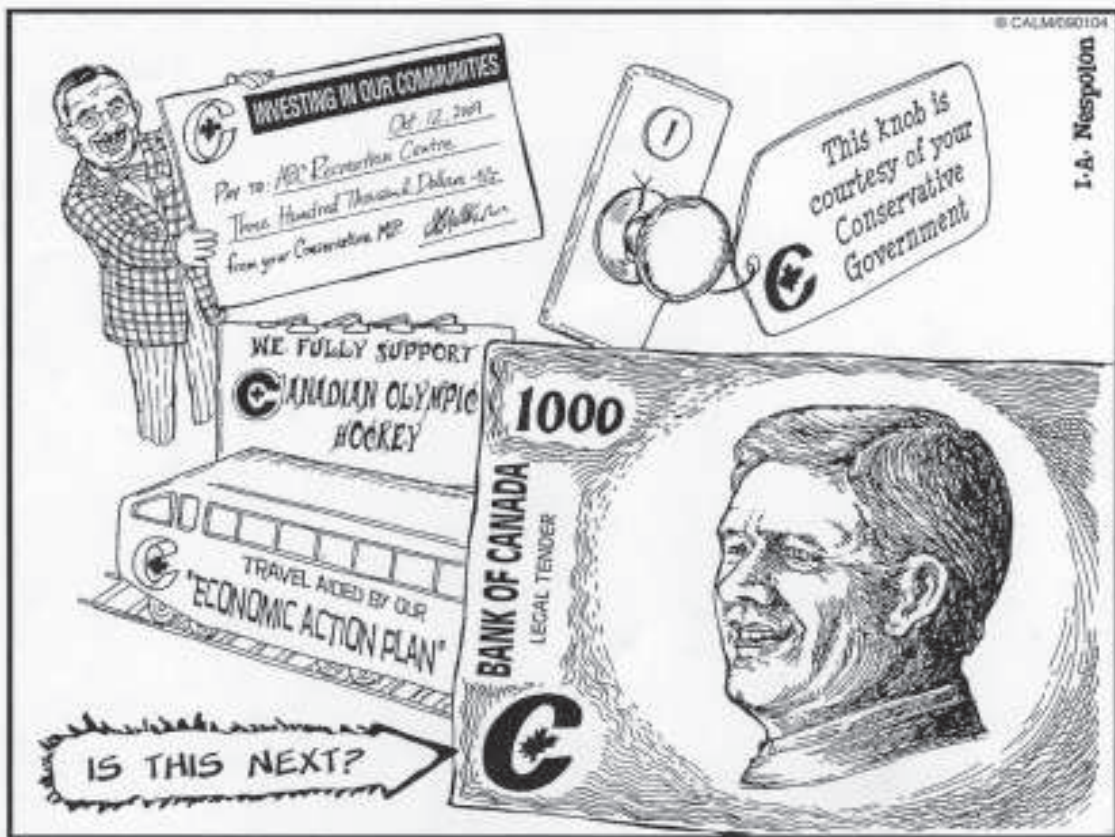
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## LETTERS

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706 Clark Drive, Vancouver, BC, V5L 3J1 or  
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## SPEAKING FRANKLY

## Two martyrs remembered on November 16

By Gurpreet Singh

November 16 is the martyrdom day of a great Indian revolutionary, Kartar Singh Sarabha, who was hanged in 1915 by the British Empire that occupied his motherland until 1947. Although it's a matter of sheer chance that his martyrdom day coincides with that of Louis Riel, the Métis hero of Canada, the two men had one thing in common: they challenged colonialism at different times and in different forms.

Kartar Singh Sarabha was born in 1886 in Punjab, when India was under the British rule. He migrated to the USA in 1912 for studies at the University of California, where he came in contact with Indian revolutionaries who believed in armed rebellion to free India from the foreign invaders. He became an active member of the Gadar Party that was founded in 1913 and helped in running the party newspaper.

He later went to India to participate in an armed revolution and tried to incite Indian soldiers who worked for the British Empire to revolt. He had also participated in robberies to raise funds for arms and ammunition. While the planned rebellion failed, he was later arrested by the police with the help of an informer and hanged.

Louis Riel was born on October 22, 1844. Known as a founder of the province of Manitoba, he led two resistance movements, the first one being the Red River Rebellion, which established a provisional government that later negotiated the terms under which Manitoba entered the Canadian confederation. He was executed on November 16, 1885, after the second Métis resistance was defeated at Batoche. Although Riel was not the only person hanged for struggling for Aboriginal rights, he symbolizes the continued indigenous resistance in Canada.

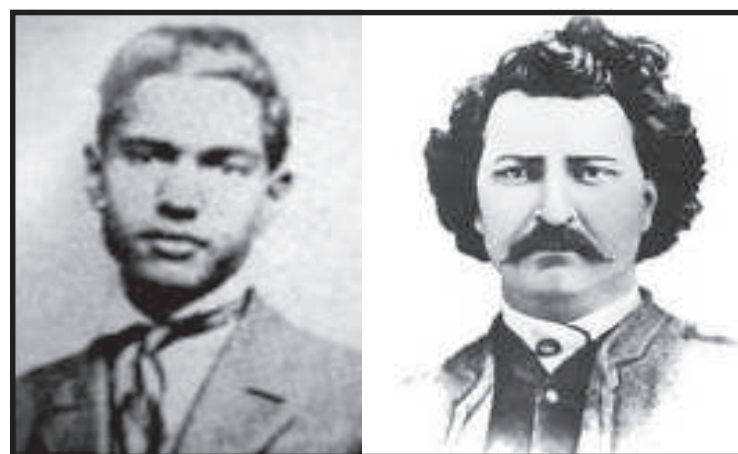
The two men set an example for those who believed in social justice and equality. Their sacrifices have made some difference, but there is still a long way to go. The

imperialist wars and the plunder of resources are still going on in the world. Colonialism in the garb of globalization is still posing a threat to the life and liberty of people, especially those belonging to economically weaker sections. And above all the exploitation of indigenous peoples continues shamelessly both in India and Canada.

Known as the world's largest democracy, India has witnessed systematic discrimination against the so-called untouchables or dalits, who are the First Nation of that country. In south India, the dalits were allowed to enter a Hindu temple after 100 years last month, and that too under the police

on the other side of the border. Instead of making tokenistic gestures, these leaders should check institutional racism.

In both the secular and culturally diverse countries, right-wing thinkers and historians have always tried to demonize the First Nations as savages one way or the other. The Indo-Canadian pioneers used to call the natives *Tae Ke* (those belonging to the elderly uncle's family). This informal sense of association should be popularized to strengthen relations between the two communities. Progressive groups can make some beginning by organizing a commemorative event to mark the martyrdom of both these men. ●



Kartar Singh Sarabha and Louis Riel

protection. They were declared untouchables by the priest class centuries ago and are still not allowed to enter many temples. The Indian communists have now launched a campaign in support of the dalits seeking social equality. Ironically, Kartar Singh Sarabha's Gadar Party had denounced caste discrimination, yet this social ill is prevalent in free India.

In Canada, Aboriginal peoples are still struggling to retain the rights over their lands, rivers and cultural heritage. Prime Minister Stephen Harper has apologized for the abuse of the students in the residential schools, and US President Barack Obama has opened dialogue with First Nations

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# Communist Party hits Tory inaction on flu outbreak

November 4 - The Communist Party of Canada's Central Executive Committee has condemned the Harper Conservative government's inaction on the H1N1 flu outbreak, and called for vastly improved sick leave laws and for placing Big Pharma under public ownership. The CEC statement says:

The current swine flu outbreak reveals that after many years of underfunding by the federal and provincial governments, privatization, contracting out of services, P3s, and attacks on health care unions, Canada's universal Medicare system has been stretched to the breaking point, lacking the capacity to handle any significant increase in the numbers of people needing medical care.

The Harper government has failed to deal effectively with this outbreak. Relying on one, private and unaccountable pharmaceutical corporation - GlaxoSmithKline - to produce the swine flu vaccine is a giant abdication of responsibility by the Harper Conservatives. It has proven to be a mistake that may cost the lives of many Canadians.

Big Pharma's investments and production are based on profitability, not the health and well-being of the majority of Canadians. The swine flu vaccine shortfall is thus no accident, but a predictable outcome of the profit-driven interests of the industry.



This failure brings into sharp relief the need for public ownership of the entire pharmaceutical industry, especially the removal of the profit motive from the production of drugs and vaccines.

The government is failing to take other obvious steps that would reduce the spread of the swine flu and other infectious diseases.

- Workers who are paid to stay home when they are sick cannot spread disease through the workplace. Vastly-improved sick leave provisions are needed for all workers, a measure that would help the large majority of people.

- The giant increase in military spending is robbing the medical system of resources it could use to prevent and cure many diseases.

- The profit motive has corrupted the priorities of researching and developing drugs to cure diseases and disorders that afflict the most oppressed sections of the working class, such as tuberculosis and diabetes.

The Communist Party demands that the federal government create a comprehensive plan for the protection of people from epidemics, including:

- place the pharmaceutical industry under public ownership

- require employers to provide ten paid sick days per year, provincially and federally, an amount that could be extended by government decree based on expert medical advice in designated areas

- increase spending on research and development of drugs and vaccines to cure diseases that afflict at epidemic levels - the most oppressed sections of workers,

such as tuberculosis among Aboriginal peoples.

- improve housing and eradicate poverty to remove the underlying causes of many diseases.

- move agriculture and the food industry away from reliance on pesticides, herbicides, antibiotics and other substances whose long-term safety is not supported by reliable evidence. ●

## Canada drops 43,200 jobs

Canada's economy shed more than 43,000 jobs in October, indicating that the economy is still in the deep recession that erupted a year ago. The result would have been worse without the pick-up of 27,500 in self-employment. That meant there were 70,700 fewer actual employees in October - 45,200 fewer in the private sector, and 25,600 less in the public sector. The decline over the last 12 months was mainly in manufacturing, construction, transport and natural resources. The deterioration of the labour market is now spreading to the service industry, including retail and wholesale trade, down by 31,000, and "other services", down by 20,000. Women aged 25 and over (-24,400) and young workers (-19,900) who are traditionally over-represented in service, retail and wholesale, suffered most of the lay-offs in October. There are now 1.59 million unemployed Canadians. Since last fall 400,000 jobs have been lost.

"Since last fall hundreds of thousands of people have seen their full-time jobs disappear, their families have been decimated and their communities hollowed out," said CLC President Ken Georgetti. "People have had to trade full-time, family-supporting work for part-time jobs and self-employment. Fewer than half of unemployed workers qualify for Employment Insurance and those who do get benefits are receiving an average of about \$50 a day."

Georgetti restated the CLC's call for a change in accessibility rules to provide regular EI benefits on the basis of 360 hours of work, to make all workers eligible for up to 50 weeks of EI benefits, and to raise benefits to 60% of earnings calculated on the best 12 weeks of earnings. ●

# COPE/Vision differences begin to emerge

## PV Vancouver Bureau

A year after sweeping the right-wing Non-Partisan Alliance out of office, Vancouver's tenuous centre-left alliance between Vision and the Coalition of Progressive Electors is looking frayed at the edges.

Unity between the two civic parties remains solid on the Vancouver School Board, where the four Vision and three COPE trustees have been a model of cooperation. Facing a wide range of new costs imposed on schools, the trustees have been at the forefront of resistance to the Campbell government's botched education policies. For the first time in memory, teachers, other school staff unions, parent groups, and school trustees are fighting for improved, guaranteed funding. That unity is directly linked to the advocacy campaign carried out by the VSB's chair, Vision's Patti Bacchus, and vice-chair, COPE's Jane Bouey.

But meanwhile, differences are widening between Vision's Mayor Robertson and his party's seven city councillors, and COPE's David Cadman and Ellen Woodsworth. The two groups still vote the same way on many issues, but some key splits have emerged.

One concerns the debate over civil liberties during the upcoming Winter Olympics. COPE's councillors have joined with free speech advocates to oppose sweeping measures to restrict criticism of the negative impact of the Olympics in Vancouver. While the Vision majority claims that these moves are intended only to block illegal advertising, the question of what constitutes "legal protests" during the Olympics remains up in the air.

Perhaps even more significant for the future of city policies is Vision's move to further shift the tax burden from businesses to homeowners. This strategy is historically the aim of right-wing civic administrations, just as resistance to higher taxes on homeowners has been linked to COPE and its allies in the labour and social justice movements.

An important example of how Vision's approach has alienated former friends has been the response of the Think City group, which has organized citizen dialogues since 2002 in Vancouver. Some Think City activists figured in the Vision group's exit from COPE during the 2002-2005 term, while others remained pro-COPE in their outlook, but most were strong supporters of the alliance which came together in 2008 to oust the NPA.

But recently, Think City has come out swinging against Vision's budget plans. An angry statement from the group's staff notes that "Vancouver's city hall is in the midst of the decision-making process for the annual operating budget during the biggest financial crisis in a generation. Millions of dollars have disappeared from city coffers due to out-of-control Olympic costs, downloading and transfer cuts by senior governments and reduced revenues from development. For the second budget in a row, balancing the books will include some tough choices to deal with the projected multi-million dollar shortfall."

In the face of this crisis, says the group, "council and staff have developed their plans in secret leaving little time or opportunity for citizens to have

meaningful input."

While City Hall has been working on the 2010 budget since last Feb. 3, it took until Oct. 23 to announce that consultations would begin Oct. 25 and wrap up by mid-November, a mere three weeks.

Usually Vancouver's budget is completed in the spring, but due to the Olympics, the final decision on its \$900 million annual operating budget will be taken this December, not next April. The city faces huge cost pressures from previous commitments, and the loss of nearly \$16 million in development fees as a result of the economic crisis. Yet unlike higher levels of government, the city is not allowed to run a deficit.

Looking at a potential shortfall of \$61.7 million, the city reduced that gap to \$28.1 million by increasing user fees, permits and licenses by four per cent, reviewing services, and extending its hiring freeze for a second year.

On Oct. 20, city council instructed staff to come back with a revised budget that increases property tax by 2.3 per cent, and to find another \$20 million through increased charges and service cuts. The city is also planning a further two per cent shift of taxes from commercial to residential properties. If the overall tax increase stays at 2.3 per cent, this will result in a 4.3 per cent increase for residents while businesses (or their landlords) will see a minuscule tax hike of 0.3 per cent.

The cuts may include shorter opening hours for pools, libraries and community centres, higher charges for senior centres, reduced cleaning of streets and parks, less road maintenance, higher parking fees and library fines, fewer police or reduced

support for community groups.

Think City has recommended that rather than cut services, the city should suspend the tax shift for a year. Combined with a four per cent overall increase spread across all property classes, this would generate \$22 million, and cost the average homeowner only \$5.50 per month in extra property tax.

Other options backed by Think City include waiving the four per cent pay increase for senior managers (saving nearly \$3 million), and extending parking meter hours to compensate for the \$1.8 million in parking income the city will lose during the Olympics.

The final budget will come before council on Dec. 15.

In a commentary on the November 2008 civic election, *People's Voice* noted that

"Cadman and Woodsworth have made it clear that they hope to work closely with the Vision majority to tackle the urgent problems of homelessness and inadequate public transit. But the two will also be free to stake out independent positions if Mayor Robertson and his caucus yield to powerful pressures from the developers and other business interests."

One year later, the Vision councillors are back-peddalling on the more progressive aspects of their platform. That makes the outlook for future centre-left unity cloudy, but it has given COPE renewed stature as the voice of working people in Vancouver. The balance of forces between the two parties may tilt in COPE's favour by the time of the 2011 civic campaign. ●



COPE School Trustee Jane Bouey and Councillor Ellen Woodsworth during the 2008 civic campaign. (PV file photo)

# Global wages drop despite "economic recovery"

By Kimball Cariou

The International Labor Organization reports global growth in real wages slowed dramatically in 2008 as a result of the economic crisis, and wages are expected to drop even further this year, despite signs of a rebound in profits and stock prices. In an update of its Global Wage Report, the ILO also warns of worse times ahead.

The report says the deterioration of real wages around the world calls into question the true extent of an economic recovery, especially if government rescue packages are phased out too early.

In a sample of 53 countries for which data are available, the ILO finds growth in real average wages had declined from 4.3 percent in 2007 to 1.4 percent in 2008, and the picture is projected to get worse this year. ILO Specialist on the Conditions of Work and Employment, Patrick Belser, says declining wage rates are linked to the levels of unemployment.

"The quite dramatic unemployment figures, which we now see in some of the countries, this strongly suggests that there will be greater pressure on wages in the future as more people will be unemployed, more people will be looking for jobs and the pressure on employers to raise wages to attract workers will decline," he said. "So, we expect that the second part of the year will not be very good in terms of wage growth."

The report finds more than a quarter of the countries experienced flat or falling monthly wages in real terms. They include, the United States, Austria, Costa Rica, South Africa and Germany.

ILO economists say some nations have come up with policies to lessen the impact of lower wages



during the economic crisis. An example of these is work sharing with government subsidies. Under this scheme, the number of individual working hours is reduced in an effort to avoid layoffs. For this scheme to work, the government must provide wage subsidies to compensate for lost pay due to the shorter hours.

Besler says a second important finding in the report is that both developed and developing countries have strengthened their minimum wages in recent years.

"A large number of countries, including major economies such as the U.S., Brazil, Russia, and also Japan have increased minimum wages by more than inflation figures in 2008. And, these countries have also addressed

their minimum wages further in 2009," said Belser. "The ILO considers that minimum wages are an important tool for social protection and that everyone should have access to a decent minimum living wage."

The ILO also says the United States is reporting slightly higher rates of unemployment than Europe. October figures show a 9.4 percent U.S. jobless rate compared to 8.8 percent in the European Union.

The report calls the link between productivity growth and wage increases "essential for economic and social sustainability". It argues companies should be able to achieve competitiveness through rising productivity rather than by cutting labor costs. And, it correctly stresses that workers

should have enough bargaining position to defend their wages.

However, the ILO's argument is weakened by its failure to consider the contradictions of capitalist economies. As Karl Marx revealed in *Capital* and other groundbreaking studies over a century ago, employers are compelled by the dynamics of their own system to constantly attempt to expand the total mass of surplus value (profits) created by workers, and to increase the level of exploitation within each enterprise.

The rising productivity referred to by the ILO report can be achieved through various means, including savings on fuel costs, the reduction of raw materials required per unit, cutting expenditures on storage, transportation, etc.

But the most significant way to increase productivity is to produce more goods or services with lower labour costs. This can be accomplished by investments in new labour-saving technologies, such as automation of processes to reduce the numbers of hired workers. Or it can be done through speed-up, forcing employees to work harder and faster, or by lengthening the working day. Another option, of course, is to reduce wages and benefits such as pensions or paid vacation time.

The competitive nature of capitalism forces every corporation to use these methods, or else face bankruptcy. Workers are the targets of this process, compelled to constantly resist pressure from bosses to work harder and longer, or to accept wage cuts and other concessions. The threat of unemployment is ever-present ("we'll move the plant to South Ilesia if you don't take this pay cut").

In a society based on working class political power and collective ownership of the means of production and natural resources, rising productivity is a means of increasing the average standard of living - higher wages, improved health care and education systems, greater levels of social equality, and so forth. This was the case in the Soviet Union and other socialist countries for decades before the restoration of capitalism, and it remains the basic feature of Cuba's socialist economy.

But under capitalism, the drive for higher productivity pits capitalists against each other, and workers against other workers. The ILO's latest report gives a useful picture of the serious crisis facing workers on a global scale; however, its solutions fall far short of what is really required. ●

## Canadian corporate tax cuts hand \$4-6 billion to U.S. treasury

Corporate tax cuts planned by the federal and provincial governments will transfer \$4-6 billion of annual revenue to the U.S. treasury, according to a study released on Nov. 3 by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA).

The study, by economist and CCPA Research Associate Erin Weir, explains that the U.S. taxes its corporations on a worldwide basis. When an American corporation repatriates profits from Canada to the U.S., it pays the 35% American federal corporate tax rate minus a credit for taxes already paid in Canada. Given a Canadian corporate tax rate below 35%, American corporations will have to pay the rate difference back to Washington.

"For American corporations, the only effect of deep federal and provincial corporate tax cuts will be to transfer some of their tax payments from Canadian governments to the U.S. treasury," observes Weir. "Canadian governments can ill afford such revenue losses, particularly given concerns about the prospect of ongoing budget deficits."

Furthermore, cutting corporate taxes is unlikely to attract investment or jobs.

"If American corporations must pay the U.S. federal tax rate on their Canadian profits, a lower Canadian tax rate will not make their existing Canadian assets more lucrative, let alone induce them to invest more in Canada," Weir says.

The report recommends that Canada enact a combined federal-provincial tax rate of at least 35% to retain revenue that will otherwise be shifted to the U.S. treasury. Canadian corporate taxes would still be lower than the combined U.S. rate because all but three states apply additional corporate taxes over and above the 35% American federal rate.

*The Treasury Transfer Effect: Are Canada's Corporate Tax Cuts Shifting Billions to the U.S. Treasury?* is available on the CCPA website: <http://policyalternatives.ca>. ●

## Carmen Nordelo, mother of Gerardo Hernandez, dies in Cuba

*Statement from the International Committee for the Freedom of the Cuban Five*

Carmen Nordelo, mother of our Gerardo Hernandez, died November 2nd. Gerardo, the youngest of her children and only son, was not able to say goodbye. His unjust imprisonment did not allow him to physically be with her in these hard years of her illness. It did not allow him to give her a last kiss, nor to cry with his relatives, or even hold the hands of his wife Adriana. All the basic things a human being needs most at a time like this.

Several arrangements of



Carmen Nordelo

beautiful flowers were presented to her grave side on behalf of Fidel, Raul and the Cuban people to pay homage and respect. Carmen Nordelo Tejera, who for her exemplary life and dedication to the struggle for the freedom of Gerardo and his four brothers also received from Fidel the highest distinction that the Cuban State awards, the Mariana Grajales Order.

A Cuban flag and a bouquet of red roses from Gerardo and Adriana covered the small body of Carmen, bringing together all the kisses, all the tenderness and all the hugs that this Hero of the Republic of Cuba would have wanted to give to his mother.

We are not going to deny the pain and the tears that we shared in the farewell to Carmen, nor will we deny the profound indignation of an entire people who witnessed that at the same time Gerardo lost his mother while in absolute solitude in the high security prison in Victorville, in Miami they were

celebrating the freedom of the terrorist Santiago Alvarez, figurehead and protector of the international criminal Luis Posada Carriles.

The United States has inflicted endless pain on the mothers of these dignified sons who without one gun risked their lives to protect the lives of others.

Once again it is Gerardo who from his infinite strength and dignity stands up to help us to overcome this sad and bitter hour for everybody who feels part of this great family of the Cuban Five. Gerardo has asked us to thank, in his name and in the name of his family, all the Cuban people and the friends from all over that world who have sent him messages to console him in this difficult time. He sends us all an embrace and encourages us to continue fighting more than ever until the Five return to their homeland and their families.

Hasta Siempre Carmen, your smile will be forever in the smile of Gerardo. We will fight without resting to unmask the lies and to bring them all back to your beloved homeland that you made yours.

We are thankful to you for bringing to life a person like Gerardo. ●

# Support the Ford workers!

By Zoltan Zigedy,  
*Marxism-Leninism Today*  
website

Confronting corporate power directly constitutes the sharpest, most challenging, and most politically advanced form of political struggle, of class struggle. At a time of compromise, half-steps, modest aspirations, and low expectations, these moments are unfortunately rare.

One such moment occurred with the determined, courageous efforts of the single-payer advocates in their effort to retire profit-driven insurance corporations from the field of health care provision. In the face of the predictable demonology of "socialism" and "government involvement", they have fought a relentless struggle - including civil disobedience - to put patients before profits. Single-payer, in its HR676 incarnation, attacks corporate dominance by financing health care from taxes on the rich as well as kicking out the private insurance companies. Where the compromised public option feeds the rapacious insurance industry and burdens the working class, single-payer is

a direct assault on the interests of the ownership class, an assault benefiting the vast majority of US citizens. While victory is hardly assured, their efforts will continue to gather momentum long after any tepid, corporate-friendly legislation is passed by the Congress.

Now we have the stirrings of another - long overdue, but heartily welcome - counterattack in the war against corporate dominance. The

union workers at Ford Motor Company have voted overwhelmingly to reject a concessionary proposal offered by Ford and urged by the United Autoworkers leadership.

Nationwide, over 70% of the Ford UAW membership voted against contract concessions that were demanded by the auto giant. The UAW top leadership which has negotiated and urged ratification of decades of

concessions met a fierce resistance from the rank-and-file and local leaders. The head of the UAW's Ford division was booed and heckled at local meetings in Michigan and President Ron Gettelfinger's former local rejected the proposal by over 80% despite his personnel appearance and appeal. The happy message of "win-win" class collaboration fell on deaf ears this time. By rejecting these concessions, workers chose a different path - the path of class struggle.

Knowing full well of the relative advantages it enjoys, Ford argued that it deserved the same deal that the UAW accepted for its bankrupt competitors, GM and Chrysler. The US government granted each of the other two domestic auto makers a bailout in return for a promise to close plants, layoff employees, and shed brands and dealerships. The UAW sweetened the deal further by granting further concessions on its 2007 contract with GM and Chrysler. In fact, the UAW had accepted two sets of concessions to Ford since the 2007 contract, and this third group of demands spurred the membership's overwhelming rejection. This is in stark contrast to the French auto bailouts that required the domestic producers to retain jobs in order to receive government aid. In the case of France, a rabid conservative President Sarkozy was faced down by a militant labour movement and popular support. In the case of the US, a corporate-coddling government and a collaborationist union leadership kicked autoworkers in the teeth.

Cynically, Ford and the UAW International leaders agreed to schedule the concession ratification before the declaration of Ford's third quarter earnings so they could best make the case for "making Ford competitive" against the crippled competition. Nonetheless, the UAW members soundly rejected the contract concessions even before Ford announced net third quarter

earnings of over a billion dollars, the most since 2006.

Nothing shows the bankruptcy of the business union model better than this crass fealty to the corporate interests of The Ford Motor Company. Nothing shows an awakening rank-and-file militancy better than the overwhelming rejection of this offensive proposal.

After years of urging concessions that have stripped benefits and hourly wages, the UAW top leadership is now faced with a membership in open rebellion against its no-struggle policies. The membership recognizes, far better than the top officials, that it is now time to stop the retreat and use the power of working people to improve their future. For too long the union's top leaders have acted as a kind of third party linking the position of the workers to the continued prosperity of the corporations and "selling" that bankrupt notion to the members. The union belongs to the members and this vote demonstrates that they want it back. This is a banner moment for working class consciousness and anti-corporate action. The top leadership of the union should heed this or step aside.

For the left, this is a reaffirmation of the centrality of the labour movement in its confrontation with wealth and power. The action of tens of thousands of autoworkers rocks the corporate agenda far more than high-sounding electoral rhetoric or parliamentary horse-trading. As these early sprouts of emerging labour independence mature, the left must help nurture this movement into a powerful social force, a force worthy of the UAW's legacy. For some on the left, this requires shedding the illusions and comfortable ties with the top leadership of the labour movement. The reality is that the contradiction between the needs of working people and a complacent, corporate-accommodating leadership will grow ever more apparent. ●



Ford workers listen to CEO Alan Mulally in the assembly plant at Wayne, Michigan.

## BC Federation of Labour meets Nov. 23 in Vancouver

Delegates to the 53rd Convention of the B.C. Federation of Labour will gather on Nov. 23 in Vancouver, on the theme of "Confronting the Crisis: An Economy that Really Works for B.C." The Communist Party of British Columbia sends its warm and militant greetings to the delegates, and our best wishes for your successful deliberations.

Workers in this province are sharp attack, as are our sisters and brothers across Canada and around the world. Using the economic crisis of the capitalist system as their justification, the bosses and right-wing governments everywhere are pressing to eliminate the hard-won gains of decades of working class struggles. Collective agreements are being shredded, wages rolled back, pension plans ripped off, social programs gutted at the stroke of a pen. Unemployment in the OECD countries will hit 60 million next year, and tens of millions more face the bleak prospect of survival on reduced hours and wages. Meanwhile, the profits of the biggest corporations are rebounding, and the outrageous gap between the rich and poor is growing even wider. In short, despite wide recognition that the neoliberal policies of capitalist employers and governments were a key factor in making the current crisis much worse, the only "remedy" offered by the ruling class is more of the same.

Here in British Columbia, the right-wing assault has similar features. Unemployment is now officially at 8.3%, and in reality much higher. Over 52,000 jobs have been wiped out in the last year. Wages are falling even further behind the high cost of living, and British Columbia now has the lowest minimum wage in Canada. Thousands of homeless people face a hard winter on the streets of our

cities and towns, while the rich prepare an orgy of celebrations (and restrictions on civil liberties) after spending at least \$6 billion to host the Olympics.

For the organized working class, 2010 will not be remembered for the so-called "Olympic legacy," but as the year of the next all-out Campbell Liberal attack on the public sector. The "back-to-work" legislation against the Ambulance Paramedics signals the government's intention to impose a wage freeze and to roll back working conditions, pensions and other benefits for some 200,000 public sector workers who are about to enter negotiations. The Liberals are fast-tracking their plans to privatise and contract out public services, and to slash spending on education, health care, and social programs.

The response of labour must be to build a powerful, united fightback. Only unity of the entire trade union movement can block the impending attack on the public sector workers, and only united action by labour with its allies - the movements of indigenous peoples, social justice groups, women, students, seniors, environmentalists, anti-war groups - can stop the neoliberal attack in

its tracks. We urge delegates to the BC Federation of Labour to craft a fightback program to build such unity, and to mobilize all working people around a wide range of tactics and strategies, up to and including job actions against the Liberal agenda.

We also urge delegates to consider what is truly needed to create "an economy that works for B.C." There are no common interests between the bosses and working people. An economy that works for us must be based on public ownership of the resource sector and the banks. It must put people's needs ahead of corporate greed: rolling back the huge tax breaks given by the Campbell Liberals to the wealthy and the corporations, an emergency program to build social housing, a minimum wage of \$16/hour, a massive expansion of low-cost public transit instead of more freeways, a dramatic increase in spending on public education and health care, and so on.

With such strategies, the 53rd Convention of the BC Fed can be a turning point in the fightback. The Communist Party of BC will do everything in our power to help build this struggle! ●



BC workers rally for better pay and conditions. (Photo: K. Cariou)

### CBC apology to Communist candidate

Zachary Crispin, the Communist Party of BC's Kootenay West candidate in the May 2009 provincial election, has received a formal apology from the CBC for its "shocking" coverage of his campaign.

Crispin and the Party sent a formal complaint arising from an interview conducted by the CBC Kelowna Radio news program during the campaign. The station prepared short features on all candidates in the 16 ridings covered by its broadcast area, profiling the candidates and introducing their views on important issues.

But in Crispin's feature, the program presented his campaign as a farce. From the opening introduction of "listen up comrades", it went on to identify him as a so-called "aspiring apparatchik" and dubbed in film clips and musical content such as the Soviet anthem. The feature, said Crispin and CP-BC leader George Gidora, was an irresponsible and shocking violation of the CBC's own *Journalistic Standards and Practices*.

In a written response, Wayne Williams, the News Director for CBC News in British Columbia, agreed that Crispin was the only candidate given such treatment. The profile, said Williams, "was entirely inappropriate and should not have been broadcast."

Williams discussed the matter with the program's producer and the reporter, drawing their attention to the CBC's standards. "Both have offered their sincere apologies to which I add my own to Mr. Crispin and the Communist Party of British Columbia," wrote Williams. The Communist Party of BC has accepted the apology.

Crispin received more positive media coverage during the campaign. He finished with 174 votes, or 1.09% of the total, the highest percentage for a Communist candidate in BC in recent years. ●



# GLOBAL CLASS STRUGGLE

## Guatemala mourns another union leader

On October 25, Guatemalan trade union leader Victor Galvez was gunned down as he was leaving work. Galvez was a community leader and a member of the natural resources protection and resistance front, FRENA, affiliated to the national front for the defense of public services and natural resources, FNL, which is part of the Guatemalan labour, indigenous and campesino movement, Movimiento Sindical Indígena y Campesino Guatemalteco (MSICG).

Guatemala has been cited as the second most dangerous place to be a trade unionist in Latin America. The situation in Guatemala has worsened since the passing of the Dominican Republic-Central America Free Trade Agreement, with over forty labour and campesino activists murdered in the past few years. Nine trade unionists were murdered in 2008, with virtually no one arrested and prosecuted in these cases.

Galvez had helped lead the efforts against labour violations by the companies DEOCSA and DEORSA, subsidiaries of the Spanish multinational Union FENOSA. In June 2009, along with other workers, he was beaten and threatened for demonstrating outside the national electricity institute, INDE, while supporting a proposal for changes to the state's electricity laws to help communities during the economic crisis.

Galvez's murder follows the July 16 review of the first CAFTA labour complaint filed by the AFL-CIO and five Guatemalan trade unions. The complaint uses several case studies to document illegal firings, failure to bargain in good faith, health and safety violations, and violence against trade unionists.

## Sugar Union leaders sentenced in Iran

In a drive to destroy the independent union established last year by workers at the giant Haft Tapeh plantation/refining sugar complex in southern Iran, a court on October 12 sentenced six union leaders to immediate prison terms on charges stemming from October 2007. Three leaders convicted last year for "endangering national security" in connection with worker action in 2008 had their sentences overturned on appeal in September. Two union officers, president Ali Nejati and communications officer Reza Rakhshan, both of whom face lengthy prison sentences, were still awaiting the outcome of their appeal when the court in the city of Dezful sentenced the six leaders on the similar 2007 charges.

Ghorban Alipour, Feridoun Nikoufard, Jalil Ahmadi, Nejat Dehli and Ali Nejati were all sentenced to six months' imprisonment and six months suspended sentences over five years, during which time they are barred from union activity. Mohammad Heydari Mehr received a four-month term, and eight months suspended. Ali Nejati

must serve his suspended sentence as prison time, meaning he faces an immediate one-year prison term.

Haft Tapeh workers have repeatedly had to resort to strikes and other actions to claim wage arrears and protest deteriorating working conditions. The union was officially founded in June 2008 following a 42-day strike. The Haft Tapeh union is an affiliate of the International Union of Food



Workers (IUF).

Haft Tapeh president Nejati has been refused work at Haft Tapeh and blacklisted from all work in the region since being released in April from a month in solitary confinement in an intelligence detention center. The other Haft Tapeh leaders sentence on October 12 have now also been turned away from their work and instructed to report to prison.

The fate of imprisoned transport and teachers' union activists shows that the Haft Tapeh prisoners risk prolonged physical and psychological abuse.

## 15.7 million U.S. workers jobless

U.S. unemployment worsened in October to 10.2 percent, up from 9.8 percent in September. That's 15.7 million jobless workers, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labour Statistics. The total unemployment and underemployment rate is now 17.5 percent, as more than 27 million American workers are without full-time jobs.

The construction, manufacturing and retail industries had the biggest losses, with 62,000 construction jobs lost in October, 61,000 in manufacturing and 40,000 in retail. Health care and temporary employment were the only bright spots, with health care jobs increasing by 29,000 and temp jobs by 44,000.

Commenting on the numbers, the AFL-CIO said "The jobs situation would be even more dire without the Obama administration's Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. Nearly 1 million jobs have been saved or created because of the economic stimulus plan... But as today's numbers show, the overall jobs situation isn't improving any time soon."

Economists predict that one-third of the U.S. workforce will be unemployed or underemployed in 2010. Long-term unemployment is the worst in 24 years, and there are more than six workers for every available job. The U.S. Senate recently passed an extension of unemployment insurance, but far more needs to be done, warns the

AFL-CIO.

Help certainly isn't coming from Wall Street or Big Business, says the labour federation. "Now that they have pocketed their bailout cash, Wall Streeters are impervious to the nation's ongoing jobs disaster. In fact, an annual report by Johnson Associates on financial industry payouts projected they will be up 40 percent from 2008, when they plunged in the midst of the financial crisis. In 2008, Wall Street handed out nearly \$20 billion in cash awards and billions more in stock and other incentives to employees based in New York. Wall Street is celebrating a 'recovery' based on a 3.5 percent increase in the gross domestic product in the third quarter of this year. But America's workers know there can be no recovery unless everyone who wants to work can find a good job."

This alarming jobs report "should be a wake-up call to sleepy politicians," says AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka: "Every day, it becomes more urgent that the federal government step up to the plate with bold actions to boost job creation. Such action should include urgently needed fiscal relief to state and local governments, community jobs programs, additional investments in infrastructure and green jobs and credit relief to small and medium-sized businesses. Failing to act puts us at very real risk of a lost generation of hard-working Americans who can't put food on the table and bright young people who never realize their potential."

The AFL-CIO and its allies are launching a new campaign to push for immediate job creation, among other critically needed economic aid for working families.

## Chilean public workers on strike

Close to 450,000 Chilean public employees went on strike Nov. 3, demanding an across-the-board wage hike of eight percent. The civil servants, represented by the ANEF union, also want a monthly minimum wage of 250,000 pesos (\$460) and regularised status for temporary workers and contractors, who don't receive health coverage or other benefits.

The 48-hour strike hit state agencies, and halted activity in hospitals and doctors' offices, where according to the unions, 80 percent of the workers joined the strike, though skeleton crews remained on duty to deal with emergencies.

ANEF leader Raul de la Puente accused the ministers of finance, Andres Velasco, and of labour, Claudia Serrano, of not keeping President Michelle Bachelet's promise to improve working conditions for civil servants. De la Puente also considered 'unacceptable' the government's offer of a 2.5% pay increase for 2010.

## Algerian unions plan protests

Algeria's teachers and health care providers are planning an open-ended round of strikes, seeking improvements to public-

sector pay scales. The National Union of Education and Training Workers (UNPEF), which represents educators at secondary, technical and high schools, and the National Council of Secondary and Technical College Teachers (CNAPEST) have called for simultaneous and possibly prolonged walk-outs.

Government, business and the unions will meet before mid-December to look at the issue of public sector wages.

The unions are calling for a "decent" pay scale, to be backdated to January 2008. To achieve this goal, individual unions and labour federations are taking varied approaches. The Council of Algerian High Schools called on its members to stop work "indefinitely" starting November 9. The National Union of Public Health Workers is opting for rolling national strikes for three days a week, beginning December 1.

Labour leaders are concerned about instructions issued by the prime minister, which call into question the whole issue of pay scale retroactivity. In 2007, after years of stand-offs with the unions, the Algerian government agreed to review the special status and allowances payable to workers in the public sector.

But the prime minister's recent instructions stipulate that the allowance systems for public sector bodies will date from when they were published in the government's official journal, and not January 1, 2008, as originally planned.

## Recognition for Bahrain dockers

Dockers in Bahrain have won union recognition, paving the way for negotiations towards a collective bargaining agreement.

The dockers, represented by the General Federation of Bahrain Trade Unions, and APM Terminals, part of the AP Moller-Maersk Group, reached the agreement on November 4 following intense negotiations. The company's international management in the Khalifa Bin Salman port had previously refused to enter into talks with the union.

Salman Alsaad, union chairperson, commented: "After spending a long time in discussions, we agreed to discuss all matters on the table, although we haven't reached a final settlement. I think this is a very good start; now we can move forward on negotiating to reach a collective bargaining agreement."

## Bangladesh hits port unions

The Bangladesh parliament passed a bill on Nov. 5 to amend the country's Labour Act to limit the number of trade unions at the Chittagong and Mongla ports.

Employees of the ports will now be allowed to collectively form only one trade body at each port. That trade union must be formed in line with the provisions of the act within six months, and all the existing trade unions will be dissolved.

The bill also limits union membership to those who have completed one year's employment. The Act empowers the government to control the activities of trade unions, and it may cancel registration of any trade union on grounds of "violation of the law." Finally, the workers' provident fund, gratuity and welfare fund will be put under the jurisdiction of the port authorities, who will maintain control of these funds.

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

## Send me information on the Communist Party of Canada



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

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# Venezuela-Colombia dispute heats up

## Venezuelanalysis.com

Venezuelan Vice President and Defence Minister Ramon Carrizales claimed on Nov. 1 that he had evidence that a group of Colombians who were kidnapped and assassinated a week earlier in Venezuelan territory were part of a "paramilitary infiltration plan" that aimed to destabilise the socialist government of President Hugo Chavez.

The bodies of nine Colombians, one Peruvian and one Venezuelan kidnapped on October 11 during

an amateur football match were found executed on October 24, in the border state of Tachira. They are believed to have been executed by an illegal armed group operating in the region.

Carrizales appeared on the show José Vicente Hoy, hosted by former Vice President José Vicente Rangel and broadcast by private TV channel Televen. He told Rangel that the victims, known as "Los Maniceros" or peanut vendors, because they apparently made a living selling peanuts, "had all the characteristics of a paramilitary

group in training, which was being consolidated with another goal."

"The threat from Colombia and imperialism is materialising," said Carrizales, "but we are also preparing to defend our territory to ensure our sovereignty."

The families of the victims have denied that they were involved in paramilitary activity.

Opposition governor of Tachira, Cesar Perez Vivas blamed the massacre on the National Liberation Army (ELN), a leftist guerrilla group from Colombia, and accused the Chavez government of losing

control of the border region.

In turn, Carrizales said that the governors of Tachira and Zulia, another border state controlled by the opposition, are responsible for the security of their states, because they manage the regional police forces and security resources, "which is not to say that as a national government we're evading our responsibilities."

The region bordering Colombia is one of the most conflict-ridden areas of Venezuela.

Authorities say that Colombian paramilitary groups, leftist guerrillas, drug traffickers and extortion rings all operate there.

Carrizales also accused Perez Vivas, who is from the right-wing COPEI party, of "complicity" in forming an alleged "logistics base" for paramilitary operations in the region.

Earlier this year, Perez Vivas, together with representatives from business organizations and private security firms, created a parallel police force called the "Regional Human Security Council," in Tachira. The "Council" and a previous separatist referendum on autonomy promoted by Perez Vivas were ruled unconstitutional by the Venezuela Supreme Court.

Amidst reports of increased paramilitary activity after the massacre, the Venezuelan government ordered the deployment of 515 border guards to Tachira, in order to strengthen security in the region.

Interior and Justice Minister Tarek El Aissami, in an interview with state-run VTV, announced that eight Colombians including a known paramilitary leader, Jorge Roa Bolanos were captured in San Antonio del Tachira, a city 850 kilometres west of the Venezuelan capital on Oct. 31. El Aissami did not say whether the arrests were related to the massacre.

"These people were intimidating the local population... they were handing out fliers, as the paramilitaries do, saying that social cleansing was going to start. That is to say, murders and disappearances," he said.

Local media reported that as many as one thousand business establishments shuttered their doors. However, the minister said just a "limited number" had closed. "Once we strengthened the [military and police] presence, little

by little calm and daily activities were restored," El Aissami said in San Antonio.

The Venezuelan government will take strong measures against paramilitary groups operating in its territory, because it will not allow foreign forces linked to the U.S. Empire and the Colombian Army to generate fear amongst Venezuelan citizens, the minister declared.

Relations between Venezuela and Colombia, which share a 2,219



Venezuelan soldier guarding part of a huge shipment of Colombian cocaine seized at the border between the two countries.

km land border, have deteriorated since Colombia agreed to a deal that expands the US troop presence on its military bases. Venezuela says the agreement is a threat to its Bolivarian revolution and to peace in the region.

The incidents on the border, together with the recent arrest of three men accused of spying for the Colombian intelligence service, have exacerbated these tensions.

In a report to Venezuela's National Assembly El Aissami presented "irrefutable evidence" that Colombia had sent spies to Venezuela, Ecuador and Cuba as part of a CIA operation. The documents allegedly originating from Colombia's DAS were discovered following the apprehension of the suspected Colombian spies on Venezuelan soil, El Aissami said.

Colombia denied the accusations and on Oct. 31 announced the expulsion of a Venezuelan National Guard member visiting its territory.

Bogota has also accused its neighbour of arming leftist Colombian guerrilla groups - a charge that Venezuela emphatically denies - and not doing enough to stop drug trafficking.

Venezuela has responded that Colombia is the largest cocaine producer, accounting for 60% of global production and that its internal problems are spilling over into Venezuelan territory.

Trade between the two countries has also declined considerably after Chavez vowed to reduce trade with his neighbour following the US military agreement.

Although Venezuela remains the second largest destination for Colombian exports after the U.S., exports to Venezuela in September declined 49.5% according to a report by Colombia's Statistics Department due to the blockade imposed on Colombian agricultural products by Venezuelan authorities. Venezuela aims to substitute all imports of raw materials from its neighbour by the end of this year. ●

## US acquiesces to Israeli illegal colonies expansion

Commentary by  
Canadians for Justice and  
Peace in the Middle East  
(CJPME)

Montreal, Nov. 2, 2009 - U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said Oct. 31 in a joint press conference with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu that she wanted the resumption of peace talks "as soon as possible," without prior freezing of settlement as the Palestinians had required. She justified her position by saying that Netanyahu's proposals on restricting settlements were "unprecedented," thereby causing great discontent among Palestinians, who reiterated their refusal to resume talks with Israel under such conditions.

With this political victory, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu did not miss the opportunity to assert that the Palestinian demand for a total freeze of Israeli settlement was only a "pretext and an obstacle"

to prevent the renewal of negotiations. The Palestinians responded by saying that it was the illegal Israeli settlements in the occupied West Bank and East Jerusalem that was "the main obstacle on the path of peace." Israel has indeed refused to halt the expansion of its settlements in Palestinian territories, despite international pressure to do so.

"Approximately 500,000 Israeli settlers now live with total impunity within the illegal Israeli colonies of the West Bank and East Jerusalem, and that number is steadily increasing," says Tom Woodley, the President of CJPME. "As an occupier, Israel should not be treated differently from other states in the world, nor be excused for continuing the illegal building of colonies in Palestinian territory."

This turnaround for the Obama administration - which had previously demanded a total freeze of illegal Israeli colonies before any resumption of peace talks - is a great source of consternation for the Palestinians. "The attitude of the

Obama administration is a huge disappointment for the Palestinians. It proves that this administration is not different from previous ones", said Ziad Abu Zayyad, a former Palestinian minister. The leftist Israeli daily *Haaretz* also concluded by saying that the United States dealt with "the issue of settlements like the weather: an interesting topic of conversation, but impossible to change."

As a mediator in the peace process and a key player guarantor of the success of such negotiations, CJPME believes it is the duty of the United States - as well as the rest of the international community - to force Israel to abide by the terms of international law. CJPME believes that the ongoing expansion of illegal Israeli settlements on Palestinian land should not be tolerated during peace negotiations, as it demonstrates an ongoing contempt for international norms to promote justice and protect the basic humanitarian and human rights of the Palestinians. ●

## Leading Israeli Communist accused of assaulting officer

The Communist Party of Israel has responded sharply to accusations against one of its leading members. Criminal charges have been filed against Member of the Knesset Muhammad Barakeh, chair of Hadash (Democratic Front for Peace and Equality, the electoral coalition led by the CPI), "for attacking an official who was discharging his legal duty, insulting a public servant, assault and interfering with a policeman in the line of duty".

The CPI declared that the indictment against Barakeh was based on false testimony which Barakeh completely denied. According to the indictment, Barakeh participated in a protest against the apartheid fence near the Bil'in Palestinian village on April 28, 2005. When a soldier arrested one of the demonstrators, Barakeh allegedly choked him with his right hand and struck the soldier's hands with his left, while shouting to nearby

demonstrators, "free him, free him". For this, he was charged with assaulting a person performing a duty or function assigned to him by law, a felony that carries a maximum five-year sentence.

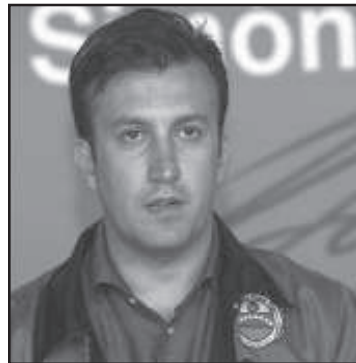
On August 5, 2006, Barakeh took part in a demonstration in Tel Aviv's Carmel Market against the criminal Second Lebanon War. When his son, Said a member of the Israeli Young Communist League (Banki-Shabiba), was detained by police officer Sharon Harpaz, Barakeh demanded to free him. For this, he was charged with insulting a public servant, a crime punishable by six months in jail.

On July 22, 2006, while taking part in another demonstration against the war in Lebanon, Barakeh allegedly struck a photographer, Yitzhak Hananya, in the ribs and shoulder, after Hananya had insulted well-known peace activist Uri Avnery. For this he was charged with common assault, a misdemeanor punishable by two years in jail.

On July 7, 2007, during a protest in Nazareth, Barakeh allegedly ordered police officer Avraham Haliwa to release Hadash secretary-general Ayman Uadah from arrest. For this, Barakeh was charged with hindering a police officer in the performance of his duty, a felony carrying a maximum sentence of three years.

The Communist Party of Israel charged that it had evidence proving that during the Bil'in protest it was the police and those dressed as Arabs who attacked the demonstrators, including Barakeh, and used tear gas and shock grenades against them. Barakeh complained to the Justice Ministry's Police Investigation Department about their behaviour but the department did not investigate the complaint.

The Party said that the indictment was politically motivated and that it wanted to criminalize purely political and legitimate protest against war and occupation and to sully Barakeh's reputation. ●



Venezuelan Interior and Justice Minister Tarek El Aissami

# Canada's first international labour film festival

Imagine a world where thousands of films are made about workers and the conditions under which they live, work, fight, and succeed in their daily lives!

In just a few days, the Canadian Labour International Film Festival (CLiFF) will debut in Toronto. The launch at the Sheraton Centre at 4 pm on Sunday, November 22 (site of the Ontario Federation of Labour convention) will be followed by six evenings at Toronto's Bloor Cinema.

Then on the weekend of November 28-29 - for the first time in the world - a film festival will be a truly national event with dozens of locations across the country joining in.

From Victoria in the west to St.



John's in the east and Iqaluit in the North, labour films from Canada and around the world will be showing in theatres, union halls, municipal venues and rec rooms in all provinces and territories. All screenings are free.

Twenty-eight films made in the last three years have been selected from the dozens submitted from

around the world. Fifteen are Canadian, with six from the U.S., two from Israel (focused on Palestinian workers), and one each from China, Mexico, Pakistan, Australia and Britain.

Eight films from the National Film Board have been added to the list, recognizing the valuable contributions made by the NFB over the decades - including *The Take*, *El Contrato*, and *24 Days in Brooks*.

Locations across Canada will feature selections from the CLiFF list. Check out details at CLiFF's website: labourfilms.ca. •



Still from Min Sook Lee's "HOLD THE LINE"

## HMCS Fredericton sails to fight "Somali pirates"

By Stephen Von Sychowski

Pirate costumes were popular yet again this Halloween. But few Canadians know that only a few days before trick-or-treaters hit the streets, the HMCS Fredericton departed Halifax on an "Anti-Piracy and Anti-Terrorism" mission in the Arabian Sea.

According to Canadian military websites, the HMCS Fredericton is a "multi-role patrol frigate," which carries an aircraft and 225 sailors. It is referred to as "Stalker of the Seas." It will be continuing Canada's role in Standing NATO Maritime Group 1 (SNMG 1), which was formed in January 2005. As of late, SNMG 1 has primarily been deployed to fight pirates off the coast of Somalia.

Earlier this year, *People's Voice* reported on how the explosion of piracy off the coast of Somalia was a direct bi-product of imperialist activities in the area. Fishing villages once thrived on abundant

fish stocks off the coast of Somalia. But today a desperate situation has been brought on by illegal over-fishing by foreign corporations which depleted the area's resources. The situation was severely worsened by the dumping of toxic waste by European corporations, which has destroyed habitat and had serious health implications for those living in affected communities.

These factors combined to effectively ruin the livelihood for many Somali families. This, taken with years of grinding poverty, lawlessness, war, and uncertainty, caused by imperialist exploitation and meddling have led many Somalis to turn to desperate measures to survive. For some of these impoverished former fishermen, these measures include what has been coined by the western media as "piracy," i.e. hijacking and/or kidnapping of ships and those on board for ransom.

While nobody wants to see

working people put into dangerous and potentially harmful situations as a result of these kinds of actions, one must view the situation in context. This is not the good guy vs. bad guy situation portrayed by the corporate media. Somali working people have been driven to acts that put both themselves and the working people onboard the ships they attack at risk. They aren't doing this for the fun of it, because they want to be like Johnny Depp, or because they are just plain nasty folks. They are doing it so their families can eat. Meanwhile, the executives of the corporations and officials of the governments which have effectively manufactured the conditions which have caused this state of affairs rest easy, condemning piracy from their cozy mansions, where the chances of being hijacked are slim.

Working class, progressive Canadians should be outraged by the dispatch of the HMCS Fredericton to join NATO's "anti-pirate" mission. Military solutions which punish the poor of Somalia will do nothing to solve or alleviate the conditions from which this situation arose. Once again, the interests of the Canadian people, and of peace and justice, are proven not to be served by our ongoing participation in NATO.

If Canada is to play a role in the region it would be better served through humanitarian aid, and through applying pressure internationally for those responsible for robbing the Somali people of their livelihood to be brought to justice and for reparations to be paid. Such policies could be part of an independent Canadian foreign policy of peace and disarmament, which the Communist Party has long advocated, and which comes in direct opposition to the policies of the Harper Tory government and the imperialist ruling class it represents. •



## CLiFF Highlights from Canada...

### Poor No More

In the present economic crisis many Canadians are destitute and many others are on the brink. Against this climate, a couple of Canadians go on a road trip to Ireland and Sweden, with comedian Mary Walsh as their guide, and get a chance to see how other countries have helped people like themselves.

### Hold the Line

The economy is being used as a tool to claw back workers' rights. Min Sook Lee's new film about the 2009 CUPE strike in Windsor, Ontario tells the story of the strike from the workers' point of view.

### You, Me & the SPP: Trading Democracy for Corporate Rule

What do secrecy, police provocateurs, an assault on democracy and infringements on citizens' rights have in common? The Security and Prosperity Partnership.

### Bus Driver

Follows Karnel Basi, a public

transit bus driver in Vancouver, along his regular route through the Downtown East Side to the heart of the city and back again. Along the way he picks up a variety of passengers, struggles to stay on schedule and keep his bus safe.

### School Zone

Humorous video that explores the benefits and protection the Ontario Secondary School Teachers Federation has gained for members through advocacy and collective bargaining.

### Dear John

Chronicles the closure of Welland, Ontario's oldest and leading industrial employer: John Deere Welland Works. The film explores what Welland has in store for its future, while helping those that worked at the plant tell their story.

### Painting Red Square

7000 kilometres from Moscow, there's another Red Square. Witness the struggle of the labour-left in Whitehorse, Yukon to find a friendly watering hole where they can share a glass with their comrades and debate which shade of red is best.

## .... and around the world



### From Israel: 6 Floors to Hell

On the outskirts of Tel Aviv, in an underground world, live hundreds of Palestinian workers who sleep in this hell in order to find a day's work in Israel and bring money home to their families in the West Bank.

### From China: HERstory: Jeritan

A story of Indonesian female migrant workers who left their homes to work as domestic helpers in Macao, China, a community consisting mainly of Chinese as well as a city of casinos and entertainment parlours.

### From Australia: Tanaka-san Will Not Do Calisthenics

Filmed in Japan, this film follows Tanaka-san who was let go from his job at Oki Electric Manufacturing Company 25 years ago when he refused to conform to militaristic working expectations.

### From Pakistan: The Invisible Force: Women Workers in Pakistan

Millions of women workers in Pakistan remain unaccounted for in official figures. Even those who are in the formal workforce face problems like lower wages for the same work as men and sexual harassment.

### From the USA: Who Killed Chea Vichea?

Chea Vichea served as president of Cambodia's garment workers' union until he was gunned down on the street in 2004. Filmed over four years, this film explores motives for Vichea's assassination and unravels a police plot that framed two men. •

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

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

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

A small party with big ideas, the Communist Party is Canada's party of socialism. A working class party, we know the future will be grim without a powerful People's Coalition that can mount a counter-offensive against the large corporations and their reactionary governments, and that can turn the tables in favour of working people, for real and fundamental change opening the doors to socialism.

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

Your donation up to \$400 will generate a \$300 tax rebate when you file your 2009 taxes, costing you just \$100. A \$500 donation will cost you just \$150. A \$750 donation will cost \$275.

Here's how it works:

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



allowable annual federal donation is \$1100, for which the rebate totals \$600.

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

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

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

## Ontario Launches PV Sub Drive: goal of 87 new readers by February

The Ontario People's Voice Committee has launched a new subscription drive, as part of a bold plan to build the communist press. 2009 is the 87th anniversary of the Communist press in Canada, so the committee has agreed to work toward a net increase in circulation of 87 subs across Ontario. The campaign begins in November and will wind up at the Communist Party's Central Convention in February.

The subscription drive is a bold one, with a challenging goal - but one that is achievable with the effort and assistance of all *People's Voice* clubs and supporters. Working with club press directors

and using Press Forward, the province's press-building newsletter, the Ontario People's Voice Committee will work collectively and creatively toward achieving their goal. The committee has two trophies to be won - for the club and individual with the biggest overall increase during the campaign.

Lenin wrote, "The press should be not only a collective propagandist and a collective agitator, but also a collective organizer of the masses." Now, as much as ever, a strong communist press is needed for the working class to unite, fight back and advance - build the *People's Voice*!

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

### The Organized Working Class: Key Element of the Fightback

*People's Voice* is reprinting excerpts from the Draft Resolution for the 36th Central Convention of the Communist Party of Canada, which takes place Feb. 5-7, 2010, in Toronto. Here are some of the Resolution's sections on the labour movement.

The attack on the working class and their institutions, particularly on labour unions, did not start with the current economic crisis. The hostility to organized labour is an intrinsic part of capitalism in the antagonistic relations between exploiters and exploited....

The main thrust of the attack has been against the manufacturing industrial base in Ontario and to a lesser degree in Quebec. British Columbia has not been ignored; over the last few years over 120 mills have closed and raw unprocessed logs are being shipped for processing, mostly in the United States. The Campbell government, which has consistently attacked labour and social programs, is set to launch another offensive claiming their re-election as a mandate. In every province, the attack against labour, against social programs, pensions and working conditions, the sell-out of resources, de-industrialization and loss of sovereignty are escalating phenomena that require organized response.

There have been many militant struggles in recent years, both by public sector and industrial workers. There have even been significant actions by unorganized workers.

Hundreds of thousands of industrial workers, disenfranchised and ejected from their plants, are having a hard time trying to conduct the fightback and handle unemployment simultaneously. The fact that our industries, energy and resources are largely foreign-owned or controlled further complicates matters, because the attack is orchestrated from outside our borders, as in the case of the Steelworkers fighting the Brazilian Vale Corporation. Inside our borders, health care workers, teachers and other public workers have been under attack by provincial governments.

However, generally speaking the fightback has been slow to develop. There are many reasons for this, including the intensity, speed and escalation of the assault.

Another is the weakness of the left in the labour movement, which puts the need to build our Party on the agenda. The Cold War attack on the left and the socialist states also ushered in the dominance of right wing social democracy as the main ideology of the trade union leadership, with some sizable elements of open bourgeois support. This has definitely hampered attempts by organized workers to develop extra-parliamentary political struggles to resist plant closures and economic attacks as militantly as the French or the Greek workers.

But workers have not been passive in the face of the attack. There has been notable resistance by public workers and educators in Atlantic Canada. The anger of GM workers who closed down the GM Head Office in Oshawa showed their ability to mobilize, and was repeated in Windsor. The CUPE

workers who took on the City Councils in Metro Toronto and Windsor put up a stubborn defence of their benefits and wages. The Steel Car Workers in Hamilton defied lock-out and refused to give in without a fight. The embattled Steelworkers in the US Steel (Stelco) chain have fought innovatively and well for many years; currently the same union is squared off against the Vale Corporation in Sudbury, Voisey's Bay and Port Colborne.

The British Columbia struggles for the last ten years have been difficult and hard fought; the 2004 strike by the Hospital Employees Union almost sparked a general strike, and the next year the BC Teachers defied the Campbell Liberals and the courts to force the government to negotiate. CUPE civic workers in Vancouver held out for months in 2007 against an attempt by the NPA Mayor and Council to gut their contracts; their courageous strike helped defeat the NPA in the 2008 civic election. Currently the paramedics in BC are on strike, but forced to work as an essential service. The BC ferry workers are facing an impending attack and preparing a defence.

The CSN in Quebec put out a militant proposal for demonstrations on May 1st, the international day of working class solidarity. There are smaller strikes and skirmishes going on across the country. Their struggles are not reported in the corporate media, except in many cases as lost causes or objects of sneering ridicule.... ●

(Visit [www.comunist-party.ca](http://www.comunist-party.ca) to view the entire Draft Resolution.)

# What's Left

## Vancouver, BC

**COPE Pub Night**, beer and politics with COPE elected officials, Wed., Nov. 18, 8 pm, Original Joe's, 500 W. Broadway.

**Amy Goodman, host of Democracy Now!**, on a speaking tour to launch her book, *Breaking the Sound Barrier*. Thur., Nov. 25, 7 pm, Alice McKay Room, Central Library, benefit for college and community radio stations. Book sales by People's Co-op, for more information see [www.peoplescoopbookstore.com](http://www.peoplescoopbookstore.com).

**Women Speak Out on Palestine and Gaza**, Friday, Nov. 27, 7 pm, SFU Harbour Centre, Room 1900 (515 W. Hastings). Speakers:

Palestinian-American activist Huwaida Arraf, MP Libby Davies, Dr. Sunera Thobani, suggested donation \$5-10, organized by Canada Palestine Association, [www.cpavancouver.org](http://www.cpavancouver.org).

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

## Winnipeg, MB

**What is the Communist Party?** Two meetings for people interested in joining, late November & early December, dates when most people can attend. Pre-register at 586-7824 or [cpc-mb@mts.net](mailto:cpc-mb@mts.net).

## Toronto, ON

**Education Not Deportation!** Support the right of non-status children to attend school, video launch, theater, assembly, Friday, Nov. 20, 10:30-12 noon, endorsed by: Education Not Deportation Ctee., Parkdale Newcomer Network, OSSTF-D12, Elementary Teachers of Toronto, No One Is Illegal-Toronto.

**Community discussion on Immigration**, Sat., Nov. 21, 6 pm, Oakridge Community Centre, 63 Pharmacy Ave., Scarborough, presented by South Asian Women's Rights Organization.

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

**Stars of Ballet**, featuring dancers from Ballet Nacional de Cuba, Tue., Dec. 8, 7 pm, Living Arts Centre, 4141 Living Arts Drive, Mississauga. Tickets \$25-90, contact 1-905-306-6000.

## Joya Book Tour

**Afghan woman MP Malalai Joya**, outspoken critic of the NATO occupation, is touring Canada to launch her new book, "A Woman Among Warlords." Her itinerary includes:

**VANCOUVER**: Sat., Nov. 14, 7 pm, St. Andrew's Wesley Church, 1022 Nelson St., organized by StopWar.ca.

**VICTORIA**: Sunday, Nov. 15, 2 pm, University of Victoria, David Lam Auditorium, hosted by Victoria Peace Coalition.

**WINNIPEG**: Monday, Nov. 16, 7 pm, University of Winnipeg, Convocation Hall, organized by Peace Alliance Winnipeg.

**TORONTO**: Wed., Nov. 18, 7 pm, Trinity-St. Paul's Centre, 427 Bloor West (TTC Spadina), donation \$5 to \$10, Toronto Coalition to Stop the War.

**MONTREAL**: Tue., Nov. 24, 7 pm, à la salle Marie-Gérin-Lajoie de l'UQAM (métro Berri-UQAM), Organized by Le Collectif Echec à la guerre and the Fédération de femmes du Québec.

**OTTAWA**: Thursday, Nov. 26, 7 pm, Centretown United (507 Bank St), Ottawa Peace Assembly.

## 2010 PV Calendar Now On Sale!

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

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

tice, equality and socialism.

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

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

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



## People's Voice deadlines:

**DECEMBER 1-31 issue: Thursday, Nov. 19**

**JANUARY 1-15 issue: Thursday, Dec. 10**

**Send submissions to PV Editorial Office,**

**706 Clark Drive, Vancouver, V5L 3J1,**

**<[pvoice@telus.net](mailto:pvoice@telus.net)>**

# Federal pension reforms a drop in the bucket

## PV Commentary

The pension reform proposals announced on Oct. 27 with much fanfare by Federal Finance Minister Jim Flaherty will only affect federally regulated private pension plans, representing about 7% of pension plans and 10% of retirement savings in Canada.

While the changes may improve the security of pensioners covered by these plans, it will do nothing for millions of Canadians who are not covered and whose pensions are evaporating in corporate bankruptcies and insolvencies, lapsed corporate contributions, and collapsing pension plan investments.

The Canadian Labour Congress responded to the announcement with a call for comprehensive reform to protect and improve the pensions of all Canadians, and a national summit bringing together governments and other stakeholders to do it.

"We believe the best way forward is to increase benefits available under the Canada Pension Plan, to improve benefits under the Guaranteed Income Supplement so that no senior lives in poverty, and to provide a national system of pension insurance. People who have spent their lives contributing to our country should not be left to fend for themselves in retirement," said CLC President Ken Georgetti.

Nortel Network workers, who have organized mass protests on



## Presenting the Lincoln Pensioneer

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Parliament Hill and Queen's Park through September and October in hopes of goading governments into action to save their pensions, will get no relief from Flaherty and the Tories. Like those of the vast majority of workers, their

provincially regulated pensions go up in smoke when their employers go bankrupt.

Bankruptcy laws put workers' pensions at the bottom of the list, as corporate creditors move in to devour the carcass of the bankrupt

company. After the big dogs have eaten, there's rarely anything left and the workers - whose pensions are their deferred wages - are left with nothing.

The Communist Party of Canada has been campaigning for more

than a year, demanding the federal government take immediate action to protect the pensions, savings and jobs of workers all over Canada from the effects of the global economic crisis.

Like the Employment Insurance reforms, it's far too little, far too late, according to the CPC.

"What's needed urgently is a universal public pension plan with substantially increased pensions, and a reduced voluntary pension age of 60 for men and 55 for women", says the CPC. "In order to get it, Canadian workers and the organized labour movement will have to build a mass movement to fight for pension reform and to defeat this government which has done everything in its power to assist the corporate sector to cut workers wages, pensions and benefits. This is going to be a major battle for labour and the people's movements; the same as the battle to maintain and extend medicare and universal social programs in Canada." ●

## "Capitalism erects many walls": Aleka Pappariga

The newspaper *Working Russia*, organ of the Communist Workers Party of Russia-Revolutionary Party of Communists (RKR-PC) - addressed the following question to the General Secretary of the Communist Party of Greece (KKE), Aleka Pappariga: "On the 20th anniversary since the fall of Berlin Wall we are witnessing an intensification of the anticommunist hysteria, of the attack on Communist Parties and communist ideals in Russia as well as in other European countries. What is your comment on this development?" Aleka Pappariga gave the following answer:

"These days international imperialism continues and intensifies its campaign to distort the big contribution of the socialism we used to know, focusing on Berlin and the anticommunist events on the fall of the Wall. At the same time the governments and the bourgeois

parties as a whole make persistent and coordinated efforts to present capitalism as an eternal system that ensures freedom and democracy and meets the people's needs as well...

The anticommunist attack is launched by those who 20 years ago characterised the counterrevolution as "world-historic event", by those who declared the coming of a new era of peace, security and prosperity. The experience accumulated over this period has reversed these proclamations, and proved that their content was fake. Let us remember what international opportunism, which still says that capitalism can be humanised, used to say in that period.

Over these 20 years many walls have been erected in front of the peoples. The intensification of exploitation, the unjust wars, the capitalist economic crisis, the restriction of basic rights, unemployment, poverty, the spread of drugs and criminality,

the waves of immigration, the death of millions of people of thirst and diseases are the results of the capitalist steamroller whose god is profit and not the human needs. It is a huge lie to argue that the fall of Berlin Wall, the counterrevolution united the people of Europe and brought freedom. The only freedom it brought was that of the EU and NATO imperialists and all the

East and West Berlin (which was in the territory of People's Germany and few people are aware of this fact) closed when the tanks of NATO entered the territory of people's Germany and headed towards the centre of Berlin. It was in that period that the defence minister of West Germany, Franz Josef Strauss, declared that people should be prepared for a civil war in Germany. It was in that period that subversion and sabotages in the economy of People's Germany intensified. It was imperialism that imposed the erection of the Wall, the conflict between capitalism and socialism.

The socialism of the 20th century, which was constructed in the USSR and the other countries of Eastern Europe, had not been a society without shortcomings, while erroneous strategic choices especially in the 1950s and 1960s brought about destructive consequences for the workers' state power.

In its 18th Congress the KKE studied these mistakes and levelled criticism with the aim to contribute to the ideological shielding of the communist movement and improve its struggle nowadays. At the same time it does not submit to the bourgeoisie that demands the KKE stop defending the historical achievements of socialism, it does not "throw the baby out with the bathwater" as opportunists do.

We call upon the working class to search for the truth about socialism and reject the anti-communist propaganda that identifies socialism with fascism and aims to prevent the people from drawing true conclusions. We call the working class to struggle along with the communists and the popular strata in towns and villages; this struggle makes the capitalists tremble and put the communists on trials and prohibit their action in several countries. This struggle paves the way for the people's economy and power. Socialism is necessary and relevant. ●



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