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people's VOICE

Manitoba election

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Ontario votes Oct. 6... don't jump from the frying pan into the fire!

UNITE AND FIGHT TO BLOCK THE RIGHT



image from hudakwastewatchers.blogspot.com

Election message from the Communist Party of Canada (Ontario)

Working people in Ontario are justly angry at the Liberal government for protecting corporate wealth and privilege while wages and living standards are falling, real unemployment is rising and the real economy is tottering on the edge of another deep recession. But electing the Hudak Tories to punish the McGuinty Liberals would be like jumping from the frying pan into the fire.

Working people can see what the Tory agenda will do to by looking at Mayor Ford's actions in Toronto. Mass lay-offs, wage cuts, privatization, deep cuts to services, user fees, tax increases for homeowners and tenants, and an all-out attack on civil, labour and democratic rights – this is Hudak's agenda for Ontario.

In August, PM Harper told Mayor Ford he hoped to "complete the hat trick" by turning Ontario Tory blue. Tory majorities in Ottawa and Queen's Park would make Big Business cheer, but spell catastrophe for working people across the province.

A Hudak government will be Mike Harris on steroids, with the federal Tories as enforcers. Hudak's Tories will drive down living standards, dismantle universal healthcare, education and social programs, eliminate public services and sell-off public assets. They will starve cities, divide communities, and fill up new super-jails with the poor, the young, Aboriginal peoples, migrants, women, trade unionists and protestors like those detained at last year's G20.

Without any doubt, the Tories are the main danger in this election, and pose the greatest threat to working people and to civil, social, labour and democratic rights...

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Ten years after 9-11

\$4 trillion and countless lives later: the true cost of the "war on terror"

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People's Voice photo by Ed Bil

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Sisters in Spirit

With over 500 Aboriginal women missing and murdered across Canada, the federal government promised to take action on this terrible crisis. But then funding for Sisters in Spirit was cut.

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BC voters dump HST

By a decisive margin, voters in British Columbia have dumped the HST. Now the fight shifts to the demand for a progressive tax system in B.C.

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Libya devastated

Six months after NATO bombs began dropping on Libya, much of the country's economic infrastructure lies in ruins. Is this a re-run of the destruction caused by the war in Iraq?

Support Sisters in Spirit Vigils in October

Resolution adopted by the Central Committee, Communist Party of Canada, Aug. 27-28, 2011

The Native Women's Association of Canada has made public the issues of violence confronting Aboriginal women and girls through the research findings of the Sisters in Spirit Research Initiative, which showed concrete evidence that Aboriginal women and girls continue to be the highest risk group in Canada relating to violence. These research findings point directly to the impacts of government policies and colonization historically, but also to the state violence perpetrated upon the groups of Aboriginal women, men and their families. The violent impacts of colonization plus a controlling Canadian state have brought about the results we have seen from the residential schools, discriminatory laws and the Indian Act, which lead to low education and few employment opportunities. The NWAC contends that "ending violence against Aboriginal women and girls lies with both men and women, with both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities. It ends with recognition, responsibility and cooperation."

The Canadian government has promised to begin a ten million dollar programme to help locate the missing Aboriginal women and solve the murder cases of so many, by funding the Sisters In Spirit initiative, encouraging the involvement of the families and friends of the missing and murdered women, and financing intense investigations aimed at ending the death and destruction. This financing would assist in providing services which are not always available to those who need help; it would allow investigation of the complexity of factors related to the missing women and girls; the services would be long-term, culturally appropriate, supportive



The annual Feb. 14 march to honour missing and murdered women in Vancouver has become a huge event, drawing thousands of supporters. (Photo: K. Cariou)

and accessible. The Aboriginal women and girls' families need practical guidance and information plus the ability to connect with other families, which gives comfort and support when needed.

While the financing was announced by Rona Ambrose, Minister for the Status of Women, it was made clear by the state that the vast amount of monies would be handed over to the RCMP to specifically deal with "missing persons". No reference was made to Aboriginal missing persons at all. Further, the federal government has attempted to eradicate the Sisters in Spirit campaign altogether, and there will be no more federal funding to continue research for the Sisters in Spirit initiative. The families and friends of the Aboriginal women and girls disappeared or murdered are devastated that they will not have the financial means or support to complete the investigations so necessary to solving these crimes.

The impact of lack of funding also extends to provincial levels. In

Vancouver on July 28, 2011, Jeannette Corbiere-Lavell, President of the Native Women's Association of Canada, called for a National Inquiry on Missing and Murdered Aboriginal women and girls.

"The Government of British Columbia has shut us out of the BC Missing Women Commission of Inquiry," President Lavell said, "and now we have no confidence that it will be able to produce a fair and balanced report. The decision of the BC government to restrict funding for counsel primarily to police and government agencies demonstrates how flawed and one sided this process has become." It is vital that NWAC's expertise and knowledge be recognized as a key piece of expertise which should be used cooperatively with the federal and provincial governments.

Communities across Canada are currently organizing for the 6th annual Vigil for the Sisters in Spirit movement to honour the lost sisters and their families and to show a united front. Over eighty cities hosted events in 2010, and

NWAC is aiming to substantially increase this number on October 4th, 2011.

NWAC has asked that all Canadians value and support their Aboriginal communities and join the struggle to bring equality to the social status of Aboriginal women. NWAC asks that all Canadians become effective allies who listen to the stories regarding these women, and take seriously the violence being perpetrated against Aboriginal women and girls daily. Due to historic discrimination by the state, Aboriginal women do not have voice or status to advance in workplaces. There are no employment advocates for

Aboriginal women, who are unable to access desperately-needed unionized jobs.

The Communist Party of Canada supports Aboriginal women and girls in Canada, and calls upon our members and the working class movement to organize and support the October 4th Sisters in Spirit events and campaigns. We support stronger, united pressure on the federal and provincial governments to directly fund and involve the families, friends and other Aboriginal organizations to end the violence once and for all, and to bring about full equality and human dignity for all indigenous peoples. ●

"Toronto Declaration" to Stop the Cuts

Over 500 people gathered at Dufferin Grove on Sept. 10, despite some threats about closure to the park, and drafted what organizers are calling a "Toronto Declaration". Organized by Toronto Stop the Cuts Network, the mass meeting went for four hours, with small groups first creating priority statements, and then voting together on the Declaration.

Discussion also focused on plans for the 26th and 27th of September when City Council will vote on budget priorities for the next three years. A demonstration at 5:30 pm on Monday, September 26th is now being planned, followed by an over night campout and a breakfast the following morning (September 27th).

The Toronto Declaration reads:

"All public services are vital to communities. We reject the attempts to divide and conquer by pitting community groups against each other in a battle for funding. We demand access to services for all irrespective of immigration status. We reject all hikes to user fees and all cuts, including but not limited to transit, daycare, elder care, public health, arts grants, housing, libraries, parks, recreation, shelters for survivors of violence, community centres, mental health services, services for psych survivors, immigrant and language services, food programs, environmental programs, farmers markets and cycling infrastructure.

"Our city is growing and service levels are already insufficient. We demand that City Council lobby higher levels of government to ensure sustainable funding to expand services in this city. Good public services ensure safe communities. We demand that the city police budget, which just increased by 12%, be cut. Those funds should shift to programs that counteract systemic oppression faced by vulnerable groups. Safe

communities need women's services, senior services, LGBTQ services, housing and youth programming. Police should be accountable to communities.

"Labour and unions are representatives of working people and should not be targeted as a special interest group. We recognize and appreciate the important history of workers struggles in this city. We reject the privatization of our public, city services. We refuse to be divided and as communities we will defend good jobs, decent wages, collective bargaining rights, worker safety and equity. A living wage is not a privilege, it is a human right."

The Declaration is online at www.torontostopthecuts.com. ●



www.torontostopthecuts.com

For information on Sisters in Spirit vigils, visit www.nwac.ca

Native Women's Association rejects Oppal's "Independent Counsel"

Vancouver, BC, Sept. 6 - The Native Women's Association of Canada has rejected the decision of Commissioner Oppal to appoint "independent counsel" to represent Aboriginal women at the Missing Women Commission of Inquiry.

NWAC is effectively shut out of the Missing Women Commission of Inquiry as a result of the Clark government's decision not to provide funding for organizations granted standing to participate in the Inquiry. In contrast, the two police departments and multiple levels of government who have standing at the Inquiry will each be represented by publicly funded legal counsel.

President Corbiere-Lavell said, "The 'independent counsel' arrangement does not give Aboriginal women real representation at the Inquiry. It does not remove the discrimination inherent in our exclusion, but rather adds to it."

Now Aboriginal women are only be able to provide suggestions to

the "independent counsel", but there is no obligation for this lawyer to follow the advice of Aboriginal women. The "independent counsel" is free to develop her own objectives and strategies.

None of the interactions between the "independent counsel" and Aboriginal women are confidential, as she may be



NWAC President Corbiere-Lavell

required to disclose all information from these conversations to the Commission or other parties.

And, if the "independent counsel" says or does something with which Aboriginal women disagree, or fails to do her job in a manner that represents the interests of Aboriginal women, we have no recourse.

NWAC provides no comment on the personal qualifications or experience of the lawyers appointed by Commissioner Oppal. The concern we are raising is the inability of the "independent counsel" to enter into a solicitor-client relationship with either individual Aboriginal women or the organizations that represent them. Aboriginal women need to be able to give binding instructions and confidential information to our own legal counsel.

The "independent counsel" was not chosen by Aboriginal women, NWAC points out, nor is she authorized to speak on their behalf. ●

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BC voters dump HST: time for progressive reform

By Kimball Cariou

In a historic political shake-up, British Columbia voters have defeated the "Harmonised Sales Tax," which was imposed by the Campbell Liberal government without consultation shortly after the 2009 provincial election.

The final result of a mail-in referendum was a resounding 54.7% "Yes" vote to "extinguish" the HST and revert to the former PST/GST, with just 45.3% voting "No". About 1.6 million ballots were sent in, over 50% of registered B.C. voters.

The outcome defied a massive pro-HST campaign by the corporate "Smart Tax Alliance" and the government. Poorly disguised as "unbiased", the Liberal campaign used millions of taxpayer dollars to convince voters that the HST would solve British Columbia's economic problems. The STA spent over \$10 million to promote the HST, which transfers nearly \$2 billion annually from the pockets of consumers to businesses.

Most media coverage of the opposition campaign focused on the anti-HST coalition headed by ex-Social Credit premier Bill Vander Zalm and NDP commentator Bill Tieleman. The mainstream media has called the result an "anti-tax" vote, giving it a right-wing spin.

But the referendum totals, broken down by constituency, show that working class voters

were far more likely to oppose the HST than those in wealthy areas. The highest anti-HST votes came in working class ridings in east Vancouver, Burnaby and Surrey, or in areas such as Vancouver Island or the Kootenays. High-income communities such as the west side of Vancouver and the North Shore saw heavy votes to keep the HST. But many Liberal-held ridings voted to reject the tax.

While the B.C. Federation of Labour was slow to enter the fray back in 2009 (leery of association with Vander Zalm) the trade union movement did much to mobilize for a "Yes" vote. From this perspective, the popular revolt against the HST was a huge success for the working class and progressive forces.

One immediate effect was a decision by new Premier Christy Clark to drop plans for an early election call. The B.C. Liberals are now far behind the NDP and even the new provincial Conservative party in the polls. Unfortunately, this means British Columbians are likely stuck with the Liberals until the spring of 2013.

The referendum result is already being used by the Liberals as a stick to clobber public services and the labour movement. On Sept 8, Finance Minister Kevin Falcon released a "financial update", using inflated figures for the transition back to the combined PST/GST.

Well known as a hard-right

corporate attack dog in the Liberal caucus, Falcon projects that the treasury will suffer a loss of \$2.8 billion more over the next three years than the previous estimates. He claims that \$2.3 billion of the loss will be due to the return to the PST/GST system.

As a result, Falcon says, "We're going to be very tough on operating expenditures."

This, of course, is Liberal-speak for a new round of vicious cuts to health care, public education, and social programs, which have been repeatedly cut since Campbell was elected in 2001.

But the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives suggests that the Liberals are exaggerating the fiscal impact of removing the HST. For one thing, Falcon's numbers ignore revenue losses which would have resulted from the Liberal promise to lower the HST by two percent over the next few years.

The CCPA calculates that "the provincial treasury would have faced a shortfall of \$800 million even if the HST had survived the referendum. The real net costs of

reverting to PST/GST are \$1.5 billion, not \$2.3 billion." Even the lower figure, the think tank points out, is highly speculative.

The CCPA's research shows that the HST is simply one element of a tax system which allows the richest 20 per cent of British Columbians to pay "a lower overall/total effective tax rate than the rest of us." The transition away from a "progressive taxation" system began shortly after Campbell took office, slashing taxes and imposing user fees across the board, with most of the net benefits going to the corporations and the wealthy.

Meanwhile, working people endure a higher cost of living and higher unemployment rates than the rest of Canada. British Columbia families are also burdened with household debt levels averaging 160 per cent of income - the highest in Canada.

The fight now shifts to the need for a genuinely progressive tax system, including repeal of Campbell's huge tax breaks for the rich and the corporations. NDP leader Adrian Dix has promised a

welcome step in this direction. But only the Communist Party of BC is demanding a return to the pre-Campbell tax rates on upper-income earners and corporate profits.

Most immediately, the Liberals are now directing their fire against B.C. teachers, who are engaged in limited job actions to press for pay increases to catch up to other provinces. "Can't afford it," is the Liberal mantra, even as they refuse to consider reforms which would "tax the greedy, not the needy."

With this confrontation underway, and the next provincial budget looming, the battle lines are drawn. The next few months will be critical for the future of British Columbia. ●

BC tax numbers

A report by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives' BC Office says that in 2000, most BC families paid about the same total tax rate, with families in the top 10% and top 1% paying a little more. By 2010, the richest 20% of households were paying a lower total tax rate than the rest of us. Provincial income tax cuts introduced since 2001 deliver an average of \$9,000 per year to the richest 10% of BC households, and \$41,000 to the top 1%. Lower income households received an average tax cut of about \$200 per year, and those in middle got just over \$1,200. Between 2000 and 2010, BC tax revenues fell by 1.7% of GDP, representing a loss of \$3.4 billion. The province now relies more heavily for public revenue on MSP premiums, the carbon tax, and sales taxes, which hit lower- and middle-income households harder. British Columbians now pay more to the treasury in MSP premiums than businesses contribute in provincial corporate income taxes. ●



COPE nominations: Sept. 18

With Vancouver's civic election coming up in just two months, the Coalition of Progressive Electors will hold its nomination meeting on Sunday, Sept. 18, at John Oliver Secondary School. Registration opens at 1 pm, and the meeting starts at 2 pm.

As always, there will be a lively contest for the COPE nominations. Under the terms of an electoral cooperation agreement strongly backed by its members last June, COPE will nominate three candidates for City Council, four for School Board, and two for Park Board. Vision Vancouver, the centrist party which holds a majority on Council, has already nominated Mayor Gregor Robertson and seven candidates for council, five for School Board, and five for Park Board.

In our view, the crucial struggle in Vancouver civic politics this fall is to defeat the forces backed by the Harper Tories and the provincial Liberals who want to take over City Hall, as Rob Ford and his group did in Toronto. A victory for the right-wing NPA in these circumstances would open the door to a similar vicious assault against public services at the municipal level, and in particular

against the unions which represent municipal workers. The progressive response to this threat must be to strengthen the unity of centre and left forces at the civic level, in order to win the re-election of Vision-COPE majorities at City Council, School Board and Park

Board. This is the position of the labour movement, including the Vancouver and District Labour Council.

With this in mind, we urge COPE members to support the nomination of candidates who are strongly committed to the COPE-Vision electoral cooperation agreement, and to building COPE as the progressive political arm of working people in Vancouver.

For City Council, these candidates include incumbents David Cadman and Ellen Woodsworth, and Rafael Aquino, a young activist from the city's Filipino community who has been involved in COPE for several years (visit his website at rjaquino.ca for more information).

At the School Board level, incumbents Allen Blakey, Jane Bouey and Alan Wong have worked closely with Vision trustees to build a strong fightback against the B.C. Liberal attacks on public education. They deserve full support, along with Gwen Giesbrecht, a former chair of the city's District Parent Advisory Council and an outspoken campaigner for better schools.

There are three candidates seeking COPE's two Park Board spots, and all have excellent credentials as defenders of working people and the environment. They include West End tenant leader Brent Granby, playwright/cultural worker Marcus Youssef, and CUPE activist Donald Greenwell-Baker. Each has worked hard to build COPE for many years. COPE members will have to use their best individual judgement to pick two of these candidates at the nomination meeting.

how we see it...

Manitoba Communists campaign for People's Agenda

By Darrell Rankin

The Communist Party is pushing for a People's Agenda in Manitoba's October 4 election, a platform that represents real change from the record of past provincial governments, including the NDP.

The Communist Party is warning that the election of a Conservative majority would mean even more reactionary measures for working people and the needy, such as ignoring Aboriginal views on development and privatizing Manitoba Hydro and auto insurance.

The NDP government has turned off supporters by cutting public service wages and corporate taxes, by ending a tuition freeze, by supporting the war in Afghanistan - most importantly - by failing to halt growing poverty and the decline in better-paying jobs.

If the NDP vote drops because of this anti-working class record, the Conservatives will form the next government. Comments at Winnipeg Labour Council meetings show there is a large lack

of enthusiasm for the NDP campaign.

Real change is needed now to fix huge, festering social problems such as housing and growing poverty. Winnipeg's food banks now feed 29,500 children a month (up from 5,500 in 1997), so the Communist Party is calling for universal, free hot breakfasts and lunches in all Manitoba schools.

We are urging a massive program to build quality, public housing that would create good-paying jobs, 4,000 homes per year, and erase the failures of the private housing market.

The Communist Party's People's Agenda is a broad platform that deals with the real issues, such as jobs, education, creating a just society and saving the environment. The platform calls for raising social assistance rates above the poverty line, and the creation of thousands more good-paying jobs with a 32 hour work week with no loss in pay.

Manitoba has not yet recovered from the loss of 12,000 manufacturing jobs in 2008, a rate higher than in Ontario. As a result

youth unemployment is a real crisis. For many years, Manitoba has had the highest drop-out rates in Canada, showing education must be a higher priority.

The Communist Party's stance on Aboriginal peoples is a prominent part of our campaign, and most candidates are Aboriginal. Injustice towards Aboriginal peoples is a key reason why Manitoba is a low-wage province. Racism, sexism and other discriminations are all dangerous, divisive weapons of capitalism against workers.

Most importantly, the Communist Party's political message in the campaign connects the need for socialism with capitalism's global crisis. The capitalist class that built the railways and colonized Western Canada has no thought today other than to bail out the billionaires and spend billions more on the military.

The People's Agenda is a beginning sketch of a future socialist society. It is the best beginning.

(Darrell Rankin is the leader of the Communist Party of Canada - Manitoba) ●

EDITORIALS

Trillions and still counting

Amidst all the TV specials and acres of newspaper pages commemorating "the day that changed everything," many terrible questions were rarely asked. Most important: what has been the human, economic, and social cost of the imperialist world's response to the events of September 11, 2001? And what has the world gained from this tragic expenditure of lives and resources?

Those in power tell us that such costs should not even be considered, since "any price" must be paid to protect our alleged "freedom and security." But Canadians and people in every country need to have the full picture.

For example, the wars in Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan to the U.S. Treasury may ultimately cost \$4 trillion (*see <http://costsofwar.org>*) - about \$12,000 for every citizen of the United States. At least 224,000 to 258,000 people have died directly from warfare in these countries, including 125,000 civilians in Iraq. Hundreds of thousands more have died from the loss of clean drinking water, healthcare, and nutrition, and another 7.8 million have been displaced by these wars.

Here in Canada, a recent Rideau Institute report says that Canada will spend \$34 billion on "national security" this year alone - about \$17 billion more than if budgets had remained at pre-9/11 levels. Military spending has jumped 90 per cent, passing \$21 billion this year. Over the decade since 9/11, Canada has spent an extra \$92 billion more on "security".

Has any of this made people safer and more secure? Or should these vast sums have been invested in housing, clean water, better schools, environmental sustainability, and job creation? To ask the question is to answer. The "war on terror" of the past decade has in fact been a terrorist war against the peoples of the world, spreading death, disease, poverty and fear. It threatens all of us, and it must be ended.

Dump Ritz, not Wheat Board

In the latest example of Tory arrogance, Federal Agriculture Minister Gerry Ritz announced on Sept. 12 that he will ignore the will of farmers and legislate the Canadian Wheat Board's single desk marketing system out of existence by August 1, 2012.

The Minister's edict was issued on the same day that results of a CWB-sponsored plebiscite were revealed. Sixty-two percent of grain farmers backed the CWB single desk system for wheat and durum, which historically has provided higher, more stable prices for most farmers. A smaller number - 51% but still a majority - backed the CWB sales monopoly for barley. The voter response among prairie grain farmers was a strong 56 percent, similar to the turnout for federal elections.

Speaking for the farmers who elect the CWB Board of Directors, chair Allen Oberg responded that "We will not sit back and watch this government steamroll over farmers. We cannot stand back and watch politics trample business interests. We intend to stand our ground and uphold the farmers' decision."

Ritz, on the other hand, speaks only for the transnational private grain monopolies and the largest operators, who hope use their size in an "open market" to wipe out smaller farms. So much for the Conservative claim to speak for rural Canadians!

The Harper Tories cannot be allowed to ram through this odious legislation without a fight. Farmers and rural Canadians are not the only people affected by the Tory attack on the CWB. In the long run this agenda will accelerate the depopulation of rural areas, driving thousands of families into poverty, and strengthening the grip of agribusiness on the food we eat. We urge PV readers to take up this issue everywhere, from union locals and labour councils to community organizations. Urban-rural unity can still save the CWB!

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Volunteers and contributors for this issue:

Asad Ali, Dave Arland, Ed Bil, Johan Boyden,
Miguel Figueroa, Sam Hammond, B. Prasant,
Darrell Rankin, Liz Rowley, Gurpreet Singh, and
our mailers in Vancouver & Toronto.

Editor: Kimball Cariou Business Manager: Sam Hammond

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

LETTERS

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Budget 2001 National Security



NATIONAL INSECURITY



This cartoon from late 2001 proved tragically prophetic over the last decade.

SPEAKING FRANKLY

Sink the ship strategy, urges Nova Scotia peace activist

By Tamara Lorincz

Canadians should be challenging, not cheerleading, the federal shipbuilding strategy. Instead of putting up signs "Ships Start Here," the public should be raising critical questions.

Last year, with little parliamentary debate and a lack of public consultations, the federal government announced the National Shipbuilding Procurement Strategy (NSPS) as part of the Canada First Defence Strategy.

Under the NSPS, the federal government plans to spend \$35 billion of our tax dollars over the next 30 years to manufacture over 100 vessels. The shipbuilding procurement is comprised of \$25 billion to build combat vessels, \$8 billion to build non-combat vessels, and \$2 billion for small craft and repair work.

Three shipyards are competing for the contracts: Nova Scotia's Irving Shipbuilding; British Columbia's Seaway Marine and Industrial; and Quebec's Davie Yards. Halifax-based Irving Shipbuilding is vying for the combat vessel contract.

Why do we need combat vessels? What is the security threat assessment that justifies them? Who are our naval enemies? The NSPS does not adequately answer these fundamental questions. Protecting our sovereignty and settling maritime disputes can be more responsibly done through international law and diplomacy than combat. Patrolling our coastline can be done more economically by the Coast Guard and with new unmanned surveillance technology.

Why are warships even a national priority? The federal government is running an annual deficit and

increasing the national debt. With these financial constraints and a limited budget, the government should be first investing in national social and environmental programs that meet the most pressing human security needs of Canadians, such as affordable housing, mental health, post-secondary education, childcare, and renewable energy. The federal government could also spend money on caring for sick and homeless veterans and cleaning up the thousands of neglected Department of National Defence contaminated sites across the country.

Politicians and industry supporters often cite the job creation potential of the shipbuilding program. However, a 2007 economic study entitled "The U.S. Employment Effects on Military and Domestic Spending Priorities" by the University of Massachusetts found that more jobs could be created with \$1 billion in government expenditures in health care, education, and construction than in the military.

Moreover, do we really want our next generation workforce building warships and naval combat systems? Imagine instead our young people proudly employed retrofitting homes, installing clean energy technologies, expanding public transportation, upgrading wastewater treatment systems, running organic farms, and restoring polluted rivers.

In March, the Pembina Institute released a report "Reducing Pollution, Creating Jobs" explaining how the federal government could create a national green collar job strategy and grow the economy while protecting the environment and tackling climate change. Canadians could be put to

work helping our country transition to a low-carbon future and prepare for the sustainability challenges of the 21st century.

Former U.S. President General Dwight Eisenhower's 1953 critique of military procurement is still relevant today, "Every warship launched, every rocket fired signifies, in the final sense, a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and not clothed. This world in arms is not spending money alone. It is spending the sweat of its labourers, the genius of its scientists, and the hopes of its children. This is not a way of life at all in any true sense."

The federal government should sink the ship strategy.

(Lorincz is a member of the Halifax Peace Coalition and the Nova Scotia Voice of Women. This letter first appeared in the Halifax Chronicle-Herald.) •

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Conditions improving for united mass action

Special to PV

Meeting on August 27-28 for the first time since last May's federal election, the Central Committee (CC) of the Communist Party of Canada called for "united mass action at the Canada-wide level directed against the main political instrument of the capitalist offensive, the Harper majority government."

Looking at the international scene, a wide-ranging report adopted by the CC stresses that the systemic capitalist crisis which broke out in 2007 continues to erode the living standards of working people everywhere.

As the report notes, "the worsening global economy has ignited a fierce debate within bourgeois circles". Various policies - interest rate changes, currency devaluation, stimulus spending - have been tried without success. A progressive option would need a radical redistribution of wealth from the banks, corporations and the super-rich, to increase wages and benefits and to expand public services and programs. But the ruling class refuses to contemplate any "reform" which involves higher taxes on profits and wealth, preferring instead to intensify exploitation, inflate the "debt bubble" and accelerate militarism and war.

At other meetings over the past several years, the CPC leadership has welcomed the growing popular movements in Latin America as a sign of resurgent socialist ideas. This meeting examined a new phenomenon: the wave of mass democratic and anti-dictatorial struggles across North Africa and the Middle East. While these struggles are not directly anti-imperialist as in Latin America, they are rooted in socio-economic grievances such as high unemployment, record food prices, and grinding poverty.

The most significant of these struggles has been the revolutionary upsurge which swept away the Ben Ali regime in Tunisia, and then Hosni Mubarak in Egypt.

On the other hand, events in countries such as Libya and Syria have been more complex, as imperialism seeks to take advantage of internal disputes to maintain its domination of the region. The CC report sharply condemns the NATO war against Libya, and Canada's "disgraceful participation" in this action to impose a US-friendly client state.

Addressing the situation in Cuba, the CC report notes that recent changes in that country do constitute a tactical economic retreat, but also that these reforms

are intended to increase efficiency and stimulate growth. "We are confident that the Cuban Communist Party and the Cuban state will do everything possible to mitigate the negative impact of these changes, and to safeguard Cuba's socialist character now and into the future," the report says, calling for further study of these developments.

This global situation is the context for post-election moves by the Harper Tories, including aggressive attacks on the right to strike and bargain collectively; the impending "austerity" social cuts; the push to deprive the Canadian Wheat Board of its single-desk selling authority; the racist "crime bill" which criminalizes Aboriginal youth; and the announcement of a foreign policy review to entrench the militarist policies adopted in recent years.

This dangerous situation, warns the Communist leadership, requires a wider fightback and a comprehensive set of progressive demands and alternatives to unite the labour and democratic movements. The CC report is critical of arguments that "nothing has really changed" under a Conservative majority, or that Canadians can "ride out" the Tory assault.

But as the report states, there are two opposing tendencies within the labour movement. One is a top-down strategy imposed by the class collaborationist Georgetti leadership of the Canadian Labour Congress, which focuses on preparing the conditions for an NDP election victory in 2015.

However, reports from around the country indicate that the demand for stronger resistance is gaining momentum at the local and provincial levels. In Ontario, for example, the OFL leadership is taking the lead to bring together a "common front" of labour and community groups to oppose the Hudak Conservative austerity plan, and a powerful battle is brewing against the cutbacks being pushed by Toronto Mayor Rob Ford and his far-right group on city council. The labour movement in British Columbia has played a key role in the successful campaign to increase Canada's lowest minimum wage, and the referendum defeat of the hated HST. Quebec unions are moving to build a broader movement against the Charest Liberals, and similar struggles are emerging in other provinces.

These developments, estimates the CC, improve the possibilities to map out a united and comprehensive fightback plan, with a focus on opposing Harper's budget cuts and defending public services. Communists in the labour

and people's movements will play an important role in building pressure on the CLC leadership to move in this direction. As several provincial elections begin this fall, Communists will be on the ballot in Ontario and Manitoba to demand people's alternatives to the right-wing agenda.

The CC meeting also looked at progress in party-building efforts across the country, such as big changes to the CPC's website which have been met with many compliments. Other improvements have been made in the party's ideological and educational work, and in the functioning of important commissions and other bodies.

The federal election interrupted plans for celebrating the Party's 90th anniversary this year, but these activities will resume in the fall, including a speaking tour by CPC leader Miguel Figueroa. The CC agreed that the economic crisis opens up new opportunities to win members, calling for increased public visibility but also greater efforts to maintain political and organizational unity.

At the same time, the CC noted the rising anti-communist offensive by the ruling class, aimed at dividing working people at this critical time. One example was provided by Toronto city councillor Giorgio Mammoliti, whose vicious red-baiting was met with sharp condemnation by the CPC and other democratic forces.

Several special resolutions were also adopted by the CC meeting, including a call for increased anti-war actions on the occasion of the

10th anniversary of the imperialist occupation of Afghanistan, a statement of solidarity with the "Sisters in Spirit" actions by Aboriginal women's groups, and a demand for public ownership of the steel industry.

One important resolution expresses the CC's view on the difficult situation within the Communist Party USA. The resolution, "Lessons from our History", outlines the struggle two decades ago to block an attempt by the Communist Party of Canada leadership of that time to liquidate the party. This episode, says the resolution, serves as a warning of similar ideological and political

debates in today's international communist movement. Voicing agreement with criticisms raised by the fraternal Communist parties of Greece and Mexico, the CC resolution warns that the political line of the present CPUSA leadership will objectively lead to its liquidation as a revolutionary working class party. The resolution pledges the CPC's commitment to its fundamental Marxist-Leninist principles, as contained in "The Road to Socialism" and the decisions of party conventions.

The full documents of the CC meeting are available on the Party's website, www.comunist-party.ca or www.parti-communiste.ca.

Workers ready to fight back



Workers across Canada are pushing back against the Harper Tory/corporate attack on collective bargaining and labour rights. This photo of locked-out Postal Workers was taken at a June 22 rally in Toronto. (PV photo by Ed Bil)

Negotiate a just settlement with locked out Steelworkers, or nationalize US Steel now!

Statement adopted by the Central Committee, Communist Party of Canada, Aug. 27-28, 2011

Steelworkers in Hamilton have now been locked out by US Steel for more than 10 months, with no end in sight, no negotiations, and now threats by the company that they will crater their Hamilton operations.

Since negotiations began last year, US Steel has insisted the union accept the de-indexing of retirees' pensions, the introduction of defined contribution pensions for new hires, and a two-tier wage system. In other words, the company is demanding the 900 working union members sell out their 9,000 retired members, and all future workers - that is, the city's youth who depend on the steel industry for their livelihoods.

To their credit the locked out Local 1005 members have stood firm through more than 300 days on the picket lines, as well as through company provocations and bad faith bargaining, including:

- * closing two blast furnaces in Hamilton, while opening two new furnaces in the US;
- * price fixing;
- * taking coke out of Hamilton to working mills in the US, while

lying that the coke was for Canada's Lake Erie works;

- * ignoring City of Hamilton directives to fix the sewer system;
- * refusing to bargain a collective agreement for 10 months;
- * attacking the union's bargaining committee;
- * threatening to close the Hilton Works, which would leave thousands without jobs or income.

US Steel, another predator transnational corporation, signed an agreement with Investment Canada when it bought the Hilton Works promising to maintain production, employment, and investment (including pension investments) at the same levels for at least three years, as a condition of purchase.

US Steel has breached this agreement time and again, and has been taken to court by the Canadian government after massive public pressure finally forced the Harper government's hand. It was during these court proceedings that documents proving US Steel's price-fixing came to light.

One of the first acts of the Harper government after the federal election was to end the lock-out at the post office with back to work legislation, and to threaten similar legislation against striking workers negotiating with Air Canada. It's on the public record that this Tory majority can act quickly and

decisively when it comes to protecting corporations and attacking workers.

We demand that the federal government use its authority to uphold Canada's interests, and the rights of unionized workers at US Steel in Hamilton, by directing US Steel to immediately commence negotiations for a collective agreement with Local 1005 USW; and further to take over US Steel's Canadian operations immediately if it fails to negotiate in good faith, and to resume operations at full capacity with the same size workforce, investment, productive capacity and production levels as existed when US Steel took over the steel mills four years ago. This means rebuilding the two blast furnaces shut down last winter, maintaining the coke ovens, and restoring basic steel-making in Hamilton.

We stand 100% with Local 1005, its locked out members and retirees, and with the people of Hamilton who have stood up to US Steel's bullying, lying and economic terrorism with courage and tenacity. We call on the labour and democratic movements to close ranks in support of Local 1005, and to increase pressure on the federal government and US Steel to get back to the bargaining table and negotiate a just settlement now. ●



The uprising in Tunisia sparked a series of upheavals in North Africa and the Middle East.

On October 6: For real, progressive change in Ontario, vote Communist!

The best outcome of Ontario's Oct. 6 election would be a minority government with the ballast on the left. Minority government is vulnerable to public pressure to adopt progressive legislation and block reactionary proposals. The NDP could provide some of that ballast, but working people can't depend on the NDP without a strong left shift in its policies, including unqualified support for the right to strike, for significant corporate tax hikes, and repeal of the HST. The same is true of the Green Party.

The election of Communists and other progressives committed to fight for a People's Agenda aimed to meet people's needs, not feed corporate greed, is the surest way to block the Big Business parties, their right-wing agendas, and their reactionary corporate sponsors.

A PEOPLE'S AGENDA Platform of the Communist Party in the 2011 Ontario election

Good Jobs for All

- Fair trade, not free trade - protect Canadian jobs and sovereignty
- Nationalize US Steel and restart Canada's basic steel industry
- Build public transit and a Canadian car that's small, affordable, fuel efficient and environmentally sustainable
- Expand value-added manufacturing and secondary industry: build a machine tool industry, appliance industry, agricultural implements, and ship-building
- Rebuild aging provincial-municipal infrastructure
- Expand public services and social programs
- Enact plant closure legislation with teeth
- Enact a shorter work week with no loss in take-home pay

Raise Wages and Living Standards

- Raise the minimum wage to \$19
- Rescind the public sector wage freeze
- Raise pensions, lower the voluntary age to 60
- Introduce a livable Guaranteed Annual Income
- Immediately double social assistance and disability rates; eliminate claw-backs; restore the Special Diet Allowance
- Protect wages and pensions in bankruptcy proceedings
- Fight to increase EI to 90% of previous earnings for the duration of unemployment; cover all unemployed

Affordable Housing and Rents

- Build 200,000 units of affordable social housing over 5 years
- Increase funding for shelters, transition housing
- Legislate real rent controls and a Tenants' Bill of Rights
- Eradicate mould and bedbugs
- No evictions or utility cut-offs due to unemployment, strike or lock-out
- Stop the sell-off of public housing and land

Expand Labour & Democratic Rights

- Call a Public Inquiry into the G20
- Put police under civilian control
- Enact anti-scab laws; ban strikebreaking
- Extend labour rights and protections to rural and farm workers, migrants, and temporary foreign workers
- Enact a Labour Bill of Rights guaranteeing the right to strike, picket and organize

Enact Democratic Electoral Reform

- Enact Proportional Representation - Make every vote count!
- Lower the voting age to 16
- Sharply reduce election spending limits
- Allow permanent residents to vote in local elections

Strengthen Health and Safety Laws

- Enforce stronger health & safety laws
- Reform Workers' Compensation to protect injured workers; substantially increase compensation
- Public Auto Insurance Now!

Universal, Quality Public Education

- Fund one universal, quality, public, secular school system, open to all
- Deliver needs-based funding formula
- Expand Early Learning to every school
- Ban user fees and fund-raising for school essentials; stop the fire-sale of public schools and land
- End standardized testing & streaming
- Reduce class size, enact equity in staffing and curriculum
- Adequately fund adult and continuing education
- Strengthen local autonomy and democracy
- Eliminate tuition fees
- Increase funding for universities and colleges
- Stop streaming universities into research or teaching
- End corporate incursions

ONTARIO COMMUNIST CANDIDATES



ELIZABETH ROWLEY
Brampton-Springdale



CATHY HOLLIDAY
Toronto-Centre



DIMITRIS KABITSIS
Don Valley West



STUART RYAN
Ottawa-Centre



MIGUEL FIGUEROA
Davenport



DREW GARVIE
Guelph



SALEH WAZIRUDDIN
St. Catharines



ANTHONY GRACEY
Hamilton-Centre

Meet the Communist Candidates in Ontario!



Election Rally: 7 pm, Sat., September 24
GCDO Hall - 290 Danforth Ave., Toronto
Food, Cash Bar, Music... 416-469-2446 for info

Quality Public Health Care

- Stop privatization - end Public Private Partnerships
- Enforce the Canada Health Act
- Ban private clinics. Abolish LHINs
- Reverse delisting. Cover dental, eye care, drugs, and long-term care
- Deliver needs-based funding for public hospitals and healthcare
- Rescind balanced budget legislation
- Recognize the credentials of internationally trained physicians and healthcare workers

Universal Quality, Public Childcare

- Build an accessible, affordable, quality, public childcare system
- Implement \$7 per day/per child fees
- Create thousands of subsidized childcare spaces now
- Require ECE diplomas for childcare workers; raise wages

Full Equality for Women

- Legislate universal pay and employment equity; close the gap
- Make abortion services universally accessible in free standing clinics and all hospitals.
- Stop Hudak's anti-choice agenda
- Introduce legislation & programs to end violence against women

Just Settlement of Aboriginal Land Claims

- Push for just settlement of Aboriginal land claims; stop Hudak's plan to end Aboriginal land reclamations by force
- Recognize Aboriginal self-government and self-determination
- Act now to improve health, education and living standards of Aboriginal peoples

A New Deal for Municipalities

- Deliver adequate, stable funding in statutory grants, or provide cities with the powers to tax corporate wealth
- Transfer 50% of gas and road-user taxes to cities
- Cut property taxes by 75% - upload education, health, housing, welfare and public transit costs
- Fight for status for municipalities in Canada's Constitution

A Transportation Policy for People

- Increase federal-provincial funding for public transit
- Create a crown corporation to build public transit systems and rolling stock
- Expand GO Transit service and routes; reduce fares
- Abolish road tolls; expand light rail transit
- Restore transit workers' right to strike

Tax the greedy, not the needy

- Repeal the HST. Abolish retail sales taxes
- Introduce a progressive tax system based on ability to pay
- Eliminate taxes on incomes under \$40,000
- Double corporate income tax rates and rescind tax cuts
- Restore the capital tax; raise capital gains taxes
- Collect billion\$ in unpaid corporate taxes
- Enact wealth and inheritance taxes on estates over \$750,000

Jobs - Not Bombs!

- Get out of Libya and Afghanistan now
- Withdraw from NATO & NORAD
- Convert military to civilian spending



RICK GUNDERMAN
Ancaster-Dundas-Flamborough-Westdale

Equality Rights for All

- End racial profiling
- Enforce hate crime laws
- Strengthen equity in education, employment, healthcare and housing
- Support gay-straight alliances in Ontario schools
- Enact transgendered rights; provide legal funding to court challenges
- Fight to eliminate racist immigration and refugee laws

Energy & Environment Policies for Future Generations

- Nationalize energy and natural resources
- Develop publicly-owned solar, wind and thermal energy; phase out nuclear and coal fired power; protect jobs
- Develop an east-west power grid and two-price system for export and domestic use
- Cut residential hydro rates by 50%
- Stop the sell-off of municipally-owned utilities
- Demand closure of Alberta Tar Sands

Enhance Food Security! Protect Farm Communities!

- Stop bank foreclosures
- Guarantee long-term, low-cost loans to family farms, co-ops
- Protect marketing boards; guarantee prices and affordable farm inputs
- Abolish factory farming and genetically modified food
- Fight for Canada's food sovereignty and security
- Roll back prices on food essentials
- Protect farmland from urban sprawl and landfills

www.votecomunist.ca

Authorised by CFO, CPC (Ontario)

Vision of the "New Libya": Visit the "New Iraq"

By Felicity Arbuthnot,
Global Research,
September 3, 2011

"Patriotism is the virtue of the vicious." (Oscar Wilde)

As Eid, the great post-Ramadan celebration of that month of abstinence, self sacrifice and reflection, dawned on Libya, marked there this year on August 31, the NATO "liberated" country, after seven months, looks a lot like "liberated" Iraq after eight years.

Queues of cars now wait for petrol in another oil rich country; other queues form, carrying containers for water. The multi-billion dollar development of Libya's vast underground aquifers had been dubbed the "eighth wonder of the world." Libya's water supply infrastructure has been systematically bombed. Shops are without food.

The all is: "absolute disaster", according to an eminent legal observer, very familiar with the country.

And with electricity largely off, those seeking knowledge as to whether friends and relatives are alive, injured, fled, dead, find internet, and phones dead.

As the terribly injured overwhelm

hospitals, many are bombed, damaged or without power and pharmaceuticals. No power: no incubators, life support machines or surgery.

Another country with a modern, developed infrastructure reduced to a pre-industrial age - with the rebuilding contracts reportedly already being divvied out in the West.

NATO members, however, eat, as their bombs destroy humanity and vital necessities for the living. Over a "working lunch", on the 14th of April, they "deplored violence" and underlined the "need ... to restore water, gas, electricity and other services."

Still depriving others of the means to cook, or of any semblance of normality, at another "working lunch" (June 8, 2011) they further discussed their: "clear mandate to protect civilians (and) populated areas ... taking the utmost care to avoid civilian casualties." This as: "Tripoli experienced what were perhaps the heaviest daylight bombardments by NATO since the air strikes began in March." (*Guardian*, June 8, 2011)

As they masticated and munched, they vowed to bring "a speedy resolution ... to put an end to the violence", under "Operation

Unified Protector." They are delusional and arguably psychotic.

Just twenty four hours later, on the 9th of June, the decade long destruction of Afghanistan eclipsed Libya. NATO Defence Ministers met to declare it: "NATO's top operational priority." General David Petraeus, returned from the ruins and about to be confirmed as CIA Head: "explained ... progress."

A number of lunches later, on August 23, NATO spokeswoman, Oana Lungescu, re-affirmed their "mandate to protect civilians."

How this squares with hitting: "over five thousand [official figures] legitimate targets [in a] 24/7 operation [with] over twenty thousand sorties", is confusing.

The actual number of strikes has not been reported. Its in the tens of thousands.

Equally so is how destruction of services essential to maintaining life, State institutions, schools, hospitals, archeological sites and treasures, attacking of all which is

"Queues of cars now wait for petrol in another oil rich country; other queues form, carrying containers for water. Libya's water supply infrastructure has been systematically bombed. Shops are without food."

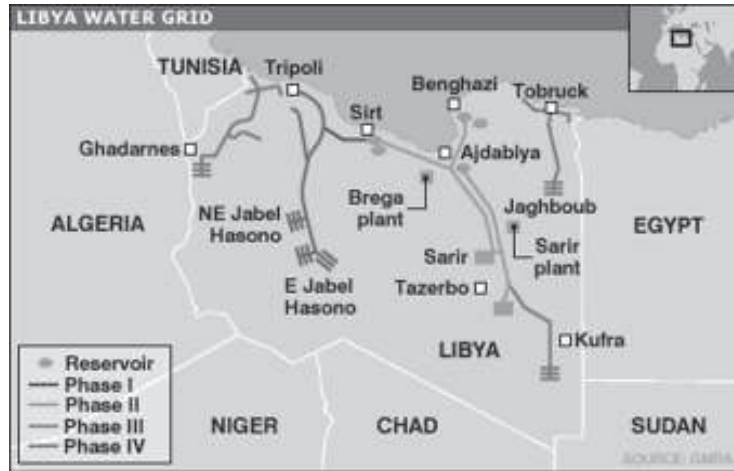
illegal under swathes of international law, are included in this "legitimacy."

By September 1, NATO operations from March 31 had reached: "a total of 21,090, including 7,920 strike sorties."

In context, this latest "shock and awe" brigandage is being rained down by a 28-country alliance, on a country of 7 million. The population of Tripoli is over 1 million (or was, until unknown numbers of souls were liberated from their lives in a bombardment which started with the unleashing of 110 Cruise missiles, on March 20, eight years to the day of the start of the Iraq invasion.)

Coincidentally, the considerably Western backed and funded "uprising" in Benghazi, which preceded the bombing, began on February 15, the eighth anniversary of millions, in the largest global peace rally in history, from Manchester to Melbourne, Hong Kong to Honolulu, rallying against an attack on Iraq.

The invaders though, have "learned from past mistakes." The "New Libya" will not be like the "New Iraq." It is surely beginning to look chillingly like it. A legitimate head of State again has a million dollar bounty on his head and is



The Libyan water grid, damaged by the NATO bombing campaign.

"wanted dead or alive." Since "boots are on the ground" only unofficially, the pack of playing cards with the "most wanted" on, has not yet been printed. But times are hard, and in 2003, the United States Playing Card Company, commissioned by the US Defence Intelligence Agency, received orders for 750,000 of the packs within a week.

Further, if the US and UK were blindly ignorant of Iraq's social and tribal complexities, those of Libya are more so in orders of magnitude.

Just prior to the Iraq invasion, General Colin Powell was quoted as telling George W. Bush, that after the onslaught: "You will own twenty seven million people, Mr. President."

At the "Friends of Libya" gathering in Paris on September 1, hosted by Prime Minister Cameron and President Nicolas Sarkozy, a gloating, unnamed British official is quoted in *The Economist* as saying that: "NATO's involvement in the Libyan uprising means that now we own it."

(For the omen-prone, watching Western threats to an ever rising number of countries, Syria and Iran currently topping the list, September 1 marks the 62nd anniversary of the German invasion of Poland, and the Second World War.)

Sarkozy - recipient, claims Qaddafi's son, Saif al-Islam, of his family's funding for his 2007

French Presidential election campaign - is widely reported to have been promised one third of Libya's oil by the insurgents, the "National Transitional Council", prior to NATO involvement. With "Friends" like these, Libya certainly needs no enemies.

"The international community will be watching and supporting" Libya, said Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, adding requirements to the new Libyan constitution. There is a "clear road map to democracy." Afghan and Iraqi puppets, now joined by Libyan ones.

When it comes to the rebuilding of Libya, "investors can't call the tune", was one theme, it must be "Libyan led."

UK Foreign Secretary William Hague blew that lie. Britain, he said: "would not be left behind." Much focus was on rebuilding the oil industry. Heaven forbid that

too, follows the Iraq model, with the bereaved, dispossessed and invaded blowing up the pipelines - and contractors.

It also transpires that the UK's surely mis-titled "International Development Minister", former oil trader, Alan Duncan, allegedly, had a hand in, and connections to Swiss based energy giant Vitol, which established links with the NTC rebels, whilst starving Qaddafi's troops of transportation fuels.

Vitol President, Ian Taylor, has allegedly donated very large sums to Cameron's Tory Party. Opposition MPs are citing a possible covert "Libyan Oil Cell", an allegedly billion dollar deal, questioning whether Duncan's fingerprints are on it.

As to the Conference, there was one dissenting voice. Bertrand Badie, an expert on international relations, told Xinhua: "I think this conference is a very bad sign, because [it consists in] starting a process of state building by an international conference dominated by western powers ..."

But even he did not mention



mind-bending illegalities.

The half day carve up (sorry, "Meeting") regarding assets of another sovereign land, was followed by "a dinner", according to a US State Department spokeswoman.

Incidentally, the Paris Cabal took place on the 42nd anniversary of the Free Officers Movement bringing Qaddafi to power on September 1, 1969.

"You are either with us, or you are with the terrorists", said George W. Bush on November 1, 2002. Ten years is certainly a long time in politics. There are many who would say they are now funded by the same US and protected by the might of NATO.

Activist Sandra Barr has compiled just a small snapshot of a vast tragedy. A few incidents amongst uncounted others, "collateral" humanity, to add to a pitiless 20-year rampage through

mortality, legality, basic values and all the normal hold precious:

13 May 2011: The murder of 11 Muslim Imams in Brega.

30 April 2011: Bombing of the Downs Syndrome School in Tripoli.
30 April 2011: The bombing of a Gaddafi residence, murdering Saif Gaddafi, his friend and 3 Gaddafi children.

12 June 2011: The bombing of the University of Tripoli. Death toll not yet established.

22 July 2011: The bombing of the Great Man-made Waterway irrigation system, which supplies Libyans with their drinking water.
23 July 2011: The bombing of the factory which makes the pipes for the water system, and the murder of six of its employees.

8th August 2011: The bombing of the Hospital at Zliten. Resulting in the murder of a minimum, of 50 human beings, many of them children. The bombing of hospitals is against all international laws, and a most grievous crime.

9 August 2011: The bombing of the village of Majer, resulting in the murder of 85 civilians. 33 children, 32 women and 20 men.

The persistent ongoing bombing of the civilian population in Zliten and Tripoli, death toll not yet established.

David Cameron has admitted that UK special services have assisted the terrorists on the ground, in defiance of the UN mandate. Today, Cameron has gone further, admitting that British forces played a "key role."

Ms Barr demands that the ICC take a stance. Sadly, it would amaze if they did.

On May 1, Muammar Qaddafi's youngest son, Saif al-Arab, and three grandchildren were reported killed in an allied airstrike on Tripoli. Another nauseating anniversary:

George W. Bush, declaring: "Mission Accomplished" - the destruction of Iraq.

One can only pray that we do not hear another sickening, "Viceroy" Paul Bremer wannabe, declaring: "Ladies and gentlemen, we got 'im." With accompanying kangaroo court and lynchings.

The "New Libya", it seems, with its formerly free, high quality health care, is in serious trouble.

This full page advertisement by *Medicins sans Frontieres* (Doctors without Borders) appeared in the *Mail and Guardian* (South Africa, Sept. 1):

"Tripoli, Libya: Months of conflict have put extreme strain on the Libyan health system. We desperately need more staff" - Jonathan Whittall, MSF Emergency Coordinator Tripoli, August 23.

MSF URGENTLY NEEDS: Trauma surgeons, Orthopaedic Surgeons, ER Doctors, OT Nurses, Obstetricians and Midwives. Available for short term contracts (3-4 weeks) - able to leave IMMEDIATELY."

Another "Liberation", another unimaginable, international, criminal tragedy.

Felicity Arbuthnot is Global Research's Human Rights Correspondent based in London. ●



Libyan boy examines rubble of a bombed hotel.



GLOBAL CLASS STRUGGLE

Swazi labour protests escalate

Labour groups in Swaziland, sub-Saharan Africa's last absolute monarchy, mounted a week of protests during September. About 5,000 protesters marched on Sept. 9 in the capital, Mbabane, to demand political change. Earlier in the week, about 1,000 university students started throwing stones at security forces, who reacted by firing tear gas and beating demonstrators.

The protests "have been a great success because we were able to reach out to the people outside the cities," said Barnes Dlamini, president of the Swaziland Federation of Trade Unions. "It's unfortunate that the police action against our COSATU colleagues led to their deportation."

Police clashed with protesters in Siteki, a town in the southern African nation's eastern region, on Sept. 7. Some leaders from the Congress of South African Trade Unions joined to force the country's king to relinquish powers and end a ban on political parties. The unions also want Tibiyo TakaNgwane, an investment company controlled by King Mswati III that isn't taxed, to be nationalized.

Mswati, 43, appoints the country's prime minister, while its lawmakers aren't allowed to belong to political parties. He has ruled the nation for 25 years, and has a personal fortune of \$200 million, according to Forbes magazine.

Swaziland, Africa's third-biggest sugar producer, is struggling to emerge from a fiscal crisis that sparked riots in April. Neighbour South Africa agreed in August to give the government a 2.4 billion rand (\$331 million) loan to help it plug a budget shortfall. The government is freezing civil servant salaries and cutting student allowances.

The landlocked country of 1.2 million people raised taxes and cut state spending this year after losing a third of its revenue when the global economic crisis slashed income from a regional customs union. Swaziland, which also borders Mozambique, is in a customs union with South Africa and its currency is pegged to the rand.

The money from South Africa is conditional on the Swazi government holdings talks with "all stakeholders" in the country, according to Pravin Gordhan, South Africa's finance minister. COSATU, part of an alliance with the ruling African National Congress, is opposed to the loan.

Country-wide rallies planned for India

India's main trade union federations, including the Congress Party-backed INTUC, have decided to stage a country-wide agitation on November 8 including a 'jail bhara' stir to press for implementation of their charter of demands including compulsory registration of trade unions.

A decision to this effect was taken at a national convention of labour groups, where the unions also decided to hold dharnas (political hunger strikes) in all state capitals against the apathy of the central government which has "turned a deaf ear to their demands for long".

"If Anna Hazare's fast can compel the government to act against corruption, the trade unions can fight vigorously to change the policy of the government," said senior trade union leader and MP Gurudas



Dasgupta.

National secretary of United Trade Union Congress Abani Roy said the fight for securing the rights for the workers should be carried out on a "sustained" basis and "unitedly" so as to build pressure on the government to act. Major trade unions like Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh, Indian National Trade Union Congress, All India Trade Union Congress, Hind Mazdoor Sabha, Centre of Indian Trade Unions, All India United Trade Union Centre participated in the convention, which issued a declaration demanding an end to inequality against "contract workers".

Bahraini court frees hospital staff

A Bahraini court allowed 20 medical and paramedical staff charged with inciting anti-government sentiment to go home on Sept. 8 pending the announcement of its verdict on September 29. The National Safety Lower Court said that the decision to free the doctors was made upon a request from their lawyers.

Charges brought against the doctors and paramedical staff include forcefully occupying a public facility, illegal possession of weapons, inciting others to overthrow the existing political dispensation, seizing medical equipment among other charges, Yousuf Rashid Flaifal, the military public prosecutor, said.

The trial of medical and paramedical staff, mainly from the Salmaniya Medical Complex, Bahrain's largest hospital, follows events that took place there during four weeks of protests for democracy in February and March. Doctors and their supporters braved huge difficulties and provided invaluable care for people injured during demonstrations and clashes.

Public opinion against sale of state assets

Ireland's 2011 Equality Survey carried out by Independent think tank, TASC, has found that more people oppose the sale of state assets, such as ESB (the Electricity Supply Board), Bord Gais (the natural gas distributor) or Bard na Mona (involved in peat harvesting and other energy projects), than support the controversial proposal. Just 31% of respondents believe that state assets should be privatised, as against 42% who strongly disagree/disagree with the proposition, while 27% did not know or expressed no opinion. The Irish trade union movement has hailed the survey results as evidence that the government does not have popular support to proceed with the sellout of such assets.

Publication of the results came as the cabinet discussed a memorandum detailing which State assets could be sold to raise revenue. It has been reported that among those under consideration for possible disposal are the Government's remaining 25% stake in Aer Lingus and a stake in the ESB.

TASC Director, Dr. Nat O'Connor said: "Public opinion is clearly sceptical of privatisation. Instead of merely focusing on potential once-off yields, the privatisation debate needs to focus on the full costs and benefits to the public and the economy from the current and potential future deployment of State assets and enterprises. These calculations must comprise the triple bottom line of economic, environmental and social costs and benefits."

"The once-off benefit accruing from such sales must be weighed against the risks, for example potentially higher energy costs, lost income streams and reduced employment. The IMF's latest suggestion - that we sell off 5 billion euros worth of assets, the implication being that some or all of this should go towards paying down Ireland's debt - would have marginal impact on our overall debt sustainability, given our debt is projected to reach around 200 billion euros at its peak... Our state assets, in particular successful indigenous enterprises such as the ESB, have the potential to help drive our economic recovery," O'Connor added.

Release Palestinian journalists held in Israel

The International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) has joined the call by its affiliate in Palestine, the Palestinian Journalists Syndicate (PJS), and Al Jazeera for the immediate release of journalist Samer Allawy who was arrested and detained by Israeli soldiers on August 9. Samer, who is Al Jazeera Bureau Chief in Afghanistan, was arrested on the West Bank border with Jordan after spending his vacation with family in Nablus.

"The Israeli authorities have

failed to provide any reason for Samer's arrest and we urge them to release him to his family and colleague," said Jim Boumelha, IFJ President. "His detention is a violation of his fundamental rights which must end forthwith. We fully support the PJS and Al Jazeera's efforts to secure his release."

The PJS and Al Jazeera organised a joint demonstration on Sept. 7 outside the prison near Ramallah where Samer is held. Protesters also asked Israeli authorities to free Nawaf al Amer of Al Quds satellite channel, Amer abu Arfa, correspondent of Shehab News Agency and journalist Mohamed Bacharat who are in Israeli prisons.

PJS President Abdelnaser Najjar accused the Israeli military of holding Samer in an attempt to obtain information about his work in Afghanistan for the Qatari based television network.

"This crackdown on Palestinian journalists is unfortunate because it denies people across the divide access to impartial and responsible information," added Beth Costa, IFJ General Secretary. "The PJS tireless efforts to promote professional journalism in Palestine should be supported by responsible politicians, instead of



Fiji's dictator Bainimarama

being sabotaged on the basis of prejudice and repression."

Fiji regime acts against trade unions

The Bainimarama regime in Fiji has issued a decree removing the rights of Fijian trade unions and their members. The Essential National Industries (Employment) Decree 2011 requires existing unions to re-register under new rules, makes existing collective bargaining agreements void and all but eliminates the right to strike - in any industry that the government may designate at any time. The decree was enacted on Sept. 9. The Fiji Trade Union Congress says the laws effectively abolish all trade unions in Fiji and also effectively ban any public meeting of any type - including for worship at many churches.

Fiji has been under a military dictatorship since 2006. In 2009 the Public Emergency Regulation gave powers to the government to ban any and all assembly in Fiji. Specific articles of the regulation gave police sweeping authority to limit freedom of movement and to arrest and detain citizens. The military government has also issued several decrees specifically aimed at curtailing labour rights.

"This is an international disgrace," said the Maritime Union of Australia. "We are closely watching what happens in Fiji and will judge harshly the actions of any company that uses the decree to undermine wages, conditions or union rights." The MUA and other Australian unions have been part of ongoing solidarity action and support for Fijian unionists.

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

Send me information on the Communist Party of Canada



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

Central Committee CPC
290A Danforth Ave, Toronto, ON, M4K 1N6
416-469-2446 <info@cpc-pcc.ca> www.comunist-party.ca

Parti Communiste du Quebec (section du Parti communiste du Canada)
5359 Ave Du Parc, Suite "C"
Montreal, QC, H2V 4G9
Email: pcq@cpc-pcc.ca Tél: 438-338-8890

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

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

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

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

Ottawa CPC
Tel: 613-232-7108

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

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

Hamilton Ctee. CPC
265 Melvin Ave., Apt. 815
Hamilton, ON, L8H 2K3
Tel: 905-548-9586

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

Slovak government on anti-communist rampage

By *Emile Schepers,*
People's World

The government of the Slovak Republic, a coalition of four right-wing parties (led by Prime Minister Iveta Radicova of the Slovak Democratic and Christian Union-Democratic Party) has approved draconian legislation that could end up sending members of the country's Communist Party and

other leftists to prison for up to three years because of their beliefs and speech.

The law would criminalize any promotion of, or professions of sympathy for, communism, as well as denial of the crimes of the previous socialist governments of the former Czechoslovakia. It seeks to equate support for communism with support for Nazism. It is scheduled to go into force Sept. 1,

though constitutional challenges are being mounted and protests are planned. Besides the Communist Party of Slovakia, other democratic currents in the country are denouncing the law.

This is not the first attempt by the Slovak right to legitimize fascism by attacking communists. A 2006 law makes opponents of the former communist-led government eligible for special government financial aid and includes anti-communist actions going back to Oct. 6, 1944.

Alexander Rehak, Emeritus Professor at the University of Bratislava, explains why this is troubling. After the Munich agreement of 1938, Hitler invaded Bohemia and Moravia (the "Czech" part of Czechoslovakia) directly and set up a puppet state. The Nazis also fomented the breaking away of Slovakia, which came under the rule of a clerical fascist, Monsignor Jozef Tiso, who became a key ally for Hitler, and participated in the Holocaust by facilitating the deportation of Slovak Jews.

In 1944, communists, Slovak

military personnel and others organized the Slovak National Uprising against the German occupation and the collaborationist government of Tiso. On October 6 of that year, Czechoslovak and Soviet troops attempted to force the Dukla pass in the Carpathian Mountains, so as to move from Poland into Slovakia to link up with the Slovak National Uprising and defeat the Nazis and their Slovak collaborators. Unfortunately, the effort failed, and the uprising was crushed with many deaths.

Because of this, opponents of the 2006 law complain that people who were basically on the pro-Nazi side toward the end of the Second World War, even perhaps Tiso (who was hanged after the war), could end up being exonerated and even given material rewards.

The new anti-communist law in the Slovak Republic is one of several such attempts in former socialist bloc countries, including the Czech Republic, Poland and Hungary, where right-wing politicians hold power. In each

country, the left attributes the eagerness to attack the communists to a need to distract attention from the current rulers' own failed policies. The Slovak Republic is a good example of this: the right-wing government is implementing a particularly fierce program of austerity.

The World Federation of Democratic Youth issued a statement on the Slovak anti-communist law, which summed this up: "Aware that the current system is unable to provide the people of Slovakia the 'well-being, justice and democracy' that was promised during the early nineties, the dominant classes need to chase and eliminate all forces that, in an organized way, can fight against the destruction of social, political and democratic rights that the capitalist restoration has meant... On this occasion, we express our solidarity with all democratic formations in Slovakia, particularly with our comrades of the SZM [Slovak Socialist Youth League]."

Progressive people everywhere are asked to raise their voices in protest against this anti-democratic measure.

(NOTE: The Slovak experience is similar to the situation in Poland, where an amendment to Article 256 of the Penal Code banned "totalitarian symbolism," a phrase covering communist symbols and even Che t-shirts. On July 18, 2011, the Polish Constitutional Tribunal struck down this amendment, ruling that it violates the principles of freedom of expression and of acquiring and disseminating information.) ●

Remembering a hero who fought real war against terror

By *Gurpreet Singh*

Even though terrorism entered the sensibilities of North Americans after 9/11, over 300 leftists lost their lives fighting against this menace in India almost three decades ago. Among them was Comrade Darshan Singh Canadian, a towering communist leader of Punjab state who had spent 10 years in Canada.

Born as Darshan Singh Sangha, he came to be known as Canadian even after he left for India in 1947, and lived there until his assassination by religious extremists on September 25, 1986. Canadian, whose 25th martyrdom day falls this month, had challenged the ideology of Sikh separatists who were seeking a "Khalistan" theocratic homeland in Punjab, close to the Indo-Pak border.

The insurgency launched by the Sikh militants was being sponsored by the Pakistani spy agency, ISI, which had the patronage of the CIA. Clearly, it was a proxy war against India from across the border, where training camps were organized to turn Sikh militants into seasoned killers. The US and other Pakistani allies turned a blind eye to this open subversion.

Ironically, both Pakistan and the US are now engaged in war with Islamic militants who were also trained on Pakistani soil. While the US establishment acted against terrorism only after the September 11 attack on New York, 300 communists were systematically killed during a decade-long pro-Khalistan movement for opposing religious sectarianism and terrorism.

Canadian came to Canada like any other ordinary immigrant for a prosperous life. However, he left shortly after India gained independence from the British rulers in 1947. During his stay in Canada, he helped win the right to vote in BC for his fellow Indo-Canadians, who were disfranchised in 1907. Ironically, many contemporary Indo-Canadian elected officials rely on the pro-Khalistan lobby for votes. Canadian also supported the freedom struggle back home. After all, his native village in Punjab was a breeding ground of revolutionaries.

Canadian also played a significant role in finding recruits among the Indo-Canadian community for the labour movement. While in Canada, he joined the Young Communist League and the Communist Party. Upon his return home, he joined the Communist Party of India and gradually got elected to the Punjab legislative assembly.

His old associates in Canada remember him as a witty and simple-hearted human being. Even as an elected official he was very accessible and often raised issues of the common people in the house. A vocal critic of terrorism, he risked his life by travelling across Punjab during the height of bloody militancy and speaking without fear. Some feel that his interpretation of the Sikh philosophy was more genuine, whereas the fundamentalist brand of Sikhism distorted the image of one of the most secular and broadminded religions.

Canadian also wrote many thought provoking articles that challenged religious fanaticism. He was equally critical of the ultra-leftists and pulled no punches in his essays. He clearly saw imperialistic designs behind the extremist forces getting support both from Pakistan and the US. It's a separate matter that the Khalistani extremists also targeted the ultra leftists, including Paash, a revolutionary poet whose birth anniversary falls in September.

If he wished, he could have stayed in Canada to enjoy a more comfortable lifestyle. Instead he chose to return to a developing nation to serve the poor and downtrodden. He died as a true secular fighter without compromising his ideals. In a nutshell he fought a real war against terror, facing the enemy which had international support from the same forces now waging a full scale "war on terror" only to further their business interests.

(Gurpreet Singh is a well-known journalist and researcher based in Surrey, British Columbia, and an occasional contributor to *People's Voice*.) ●



Slovak Communists rally against repression.

Malema hearing continues in S. Africa

PV Vancouver Bureau

Disciplinary hearings conducted by the African National Congress against a controversial ANC Youth League leader resumed nearly two weeks after violent protests by supporters of Julius Malema.

Malema is accused of violating ANC policies by calling for South African intervention to overthrow the government of neighbouring Botswana. While the ANCYL leader is seen by some as a militant advocate for nationalization of South Africa's mining sector, he is also a wealthy man who is closely connected to the country's business community.

The August 30 protests outside Luthuli House, the ANC's Johannesburg headquarters, included the burning of the ANC flag, T-shirts bearing President Jacob Zuma's face, and posters of South African Communist Party leader Blade Nzimande. Demonstrators hurled bricks at police and journalists, and smashed nearby shop windows. Police fired back with rubber bullets, water cannons and tear gas.

In a statement on these events, the South African Communist Party noted that it has tried to avoid comment on internal ANC

processes. But the party was compelled to respond, considering the "well orchestrated desperate campaign in the media to link the SACP leaders" to the disciplinary processes against Malema and other ANCYL executive members.

"This lie is extremely unfortunate and indicative of apartheid era operatives tactics that sought to always portray the ANC leadership as being controlled by the communists," said the SACP. "This is the work of those who have caved in politically and are prepared to perfidy the SACP and its leadership at all cost."

The burning of Nzimande posters, the statement said, "feeds into this anti-communist agenda. This is an extreme form of provocation that can only be spearheaded by reactionary and counter-revolutionary forces who have no space in our movement."

To those who seek to splinter South Africa's governing alliance, the SACP replied, "The ANC-led alliance remains committed to the fight against poverty, inequality, unemployment, exploitation and corruption. For these the SACP will participate and mobilise our people in a principled fashion. Communists have remained principled in the unity of the alliance and the progressive forces including for progressive internationalism." ●

The statement also criticised supporters of Malema who use the Polokwane struggle to justify their conduct, referring to a pivotal 2007 conference which elected Zuma and shifted the ANC's strategy to the left: "The run up to Polokwane was characterised by a principled fight and mobilisation against the abuse of state institutions to settle political scores."

The SACP urged "calm and total respect of the ANC process," and warned that "We should not confuse militancy for anarchy or disorder for democracy. We hope the ANC will act decisively to quell this and restore the authority of the organisation as opposed to individual and personality cult."

The South African Young Communist League has taken a similar position, rejecting attempts to impose policies through violence. In an August 17 statement, the YCL condemned any "media trial" as a violation of Malema's legal rights. But the same statement urged full investigation of a detailed list of corruption allegations facing the Youth League leader, warning against "those who speak popular language to hoodwink the masses of our people for the benefit of the few." ●



DVD shatters North American media myths

South of the Border, Cine Libre Studios, directed by Oliver Stone, 2010, 90 minutes

DVD review by Tim Pelzer

The North American mass media has done its best to paint Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez as an erratic dictator who has curbed democratic freedoms and supported terrorism. Director Oliver Stone's *South of the Border* eloquently shows that this picture is a fabrication.

According to Stone, Chavez is an authentic social reformer who is intent on building a compassionate, just society in Venezuela. Stone poses critical questions to Chavez, who is open and non-defensive. He is shown around the country and views first



Oliver Stone (left) with Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez

hand Venezuela's development efforts, including new agricultural projects where the government has given idle land to families to grow

food and raise livestock. Chavez says the country is now producing food that it used to import. Poverty rates have plummeted while

economic growth and development have been high, according to Stone.

Stone also sheds light on Chavez's humble origins. Born into a poor family, Chavez later joined the army, rising to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel in a paratrooper unit. In 1989, the country's right-leaning social democratic government ordered the military and police to fire on unarmed protesters opposing neo-liberal cuts to public services, resulting in several hundred deaths. An outraged Chavez, who believed the military was there to protect the people and not kill them, launched an armed effort to overthrow the government. The 1992 coup, which was not widely supported by the armed forces, quickly collapsed and Chavez was jailed for two years. But Chavez became a hero among the poor. After his release, he ran for president in 1998, and has been re-elected ever since.

Stone also discusses the efforts by the US and Venezuelan upper classes to oust Chavez from office, such as the 2002 coup. While Venezuela is a big focus of *South of the Border*, a welcome aspect of Stone's documentary is his effort to show and explain the changes occurring across Latin America. He flies to Argentina, Bolivia, Paraguay, Brazil and Cuba, interviewing the left wing, or left leaning, presidents of these countries about the roadblocks and resistance they have faced.

Bolivia's Evo Morales explains how the US planned to assassinate him and other top political and military leaders. The other Presidents explain that the political turn to the left on the continent was motivated partly by the desire to free themselves from US

domination. Rafael Correa tells how he told the Americans to disband their military base and leave Ecuador. When the US objected, Correa said that his government would allow the US to keep its base only if the Ecuadorean armed forces were given the right to set up a base in Miami.

Stone also provides running commentary on his impressions. One observation is that the Venezuelan government, contrary to what the North American media says, does not censor the private media, and there is freedom of expression. Stone calls the Venezuelan media "Fox news on steroids," constantly criticizing Chavez and his government, often making ridiculous, outlandish claims.

Stone's playfulness and sense of humour enhances the documentary's appeal. After interviewing Morales, Stone challenges the Bolivian president - a soccer aficionado and player - to a game of soccer. In another scene, Stone brandishes a sword in the presidential palace in Caracas, and challenges a smiling Chavez to a duel.

The extras section includes extended interviews with President Fernando Lugo of Paraguay, Christina Kirchner of Argentina and her husband, former President Nestor Kirchner, Chavez, Morales, and Brazil's former President Lula de Silva, making the DVD even more attractive. While Raul Castro appears at the end of *South of the Border*, it is a pity that Stone did not include a longer interview with the Cuban president.

South of the Border is an entertaining and informative documentary about the turn to the left in Latin America. ●

Ten years of imperialist occupation and war in Afghanistan

Resolution adopted by the Central Committee, Communist Party of Canada, Aug. 27-28, 2011

October 7, 2011, will mark the tenth anniversary of the U.S. and British missile attacks which launched the imperialist occupation of Afghanistan. The Chretien Liberal government of Canada quickly joined this racist war of aggression, which continues with no end in sight. In fact, the war in Afghanistan has been a key part of the broader imperialist strategy, aimed at military-political domination of the region and control of its vast resources.

The Central Committee of the Communist Party of Canada, meeting in Toronto as the war began, unequivocally condemned the US/UK aggression. A statement by the CPC on that day said, "While claiming that they are targeting Taliban military forces and those accused of masterminding the Sept. 11 attacks, the imperialist powers are bringing new deaths and suffering to the people of Afghanistan, for whom we express our sorrow and solidarity at this difficult moment." Our party warned that the U.S., which has engaged in frequent military aggressions against other countries, had no moral or legal right to launch its war of revenge against the Afghan people.

The views of our Party have been confirmed repeatedly by the events of the past decade. We called for an immediate halt to military aggression in favour of a meaningful search for political and peaceful solutions involving all forces in Afghanistan - a demand which today is widely backed by international and Afghan public opinion. We rejected the hypocritical claims that the western military actions were "humanitarian" in nature, as proven by the subsequent deaths of many thousands of Afghan civilians at the hands of the

occupation forces. We pointed out that the Taliban and Osama bin Laden were largely the creations of massive CIA intervention in Afghanistan during the 1980s, and that their rivals for power were equally pro-imperialist and reactionary, a view which was confirmed by the corrupt, brutal record of the Karzai warlord regime in Kabul.

Despite an unrelenting militarist propaganda campaign, a solid majority of Canadians have consistently agreed that Canada's military forces should be



Afghan woman holds poster showing family members killed in a 2008 U.S. military raid.

withdrawn from Afghanistan. This majority opinion has been ignored, first by the Liberal government which launched the Kandahar military mission, and then by the Harper Tories. Even after 2006, when the three opposition parties in Parliament all expressed support for an early return of the troops, partisan bickering blocked any serious attempt to compel the Harper government to bring a quick end to Kandahar mission.

That deadly mission has now officially ended, only to be replaced by deployment of 1000-plus Canadian troops for so-called "training" of Afghan military and police forces. But the 2014 date for this extension remains open-ended and vague, and Canadian troops will be stationed across the country, not just in Kabul as originally promised. Clearly, Canada remains

one of the military powers actively engaged in a combat role in Afghanistan.

The costs of this imperialist blunder have been enormous, from the huge numbers of deaths among the Afghan people themselves, to the 157 deaths of Canadians. Well over \$2 billion has been wasted by the Canadian military, and there have been increasing political pressures to silence dissent against the war. Canadian forces have been involved in the abuse of prisoners, and the Harper Tories have done their best to block public scrutiny of such scandals. Despite media reports of new hospitals, clinics and schools supposedly built in Afghanistan with the assistance of the Canadian military, there is little to show on the ground in terms of real infrastructure. Claims that millions of Afghan girls receive an education thanks to the occupation have been based on wildly-inflated figures. Just a significantly, the war in Afghanistan has been used to craft a wider international role for NATO. Canada's participation in Afghanistan and Haiti has been escalated into an openly expansionist foreign policy doctrine, aimed at bringing this country into new wars such as the current illegal NATO intervention in Libya. This militarist policy, including massive purchases of new fighter-bombers and a hugely expanded navy, will cost Canadian taxpayers an estimated \$500 billion over the next two decades.

The tenth anniversary of the October 2001 aggression is a time to renew calls from all anti-war and democratic forces in Canada to end our country's disastrous military role in Afghanistan. We demand: Bring all the troops home now! Support peaceful and political solutions to the crisis in Afghanistan! No more imperialist wars! Slash military spending by 75% - fund civilian needs, not military profiteers! Canada out of NATO - close Canadian military bases overseas! ●

BC Teachers refuse to accept "net zero"

By Kimball Cariou

The school year has started with BC Teachers' Federation members engaged in job actions, including refusal to do certain types of administrative work and supervision. But classes are underway, despite dire warnings of chaos by anti-teacher forces.

Premier Christy Clark has directed the BC Public School Employers Association to refuse any net increases in the current round of bargaining. This "net zero" strategy means that any improvement must be balanced by giving up existing conditions in other areas of the collective agreement.

Back in 2002, when Clark was education minister during Gordon Campbell's first term in office, the Liberals stripped from the collective agreement many provisions that would presumably have been on the table to trade under the "net zero" directive.

Many of these working conditions clauses were achieved as a trade off in bargaining during the 1990s, for lower class sizes, limits on class composition, and staffing formulas for learning specialists like librarians and

special education teachers. This put B.C. teachers further behind in salaries, and left no contractual provisions that could be traded.

A zero increase would widen the huge gap between the salaries of teachers in the prairies and Ontario. An Alberta teacher, for example, already makes about \$20,000 a year more than a teacher with equivalent training and experience in B.C. - and has a lower cost of living.

As BCTF President Susan Lambert points out, "Salaries for B.C. teachers rank eighth in Canada, while the cost of living is among the highest in the country. Teaching requires five years of university training and new teachers on average spend three to five years working as teachers on call at an average annual salary of less than \$15,000."

The current "Phase 1" job action by the teachers is expected to continue during efforts to advance the collective bargaining process. But the inside word is that BCPSEA is blocking attempts to begin negotiations on the substantial issues in this dispute.

see TEACHERS, page 11

CUPE forum tackles CETA

The first-ever Eastern Municipal Conference of the Canadian Union of Public Employees wrapped up with a public town hall forum on CETA - the Comprehensive Economic Trade Agreement being negotiated behind closed doors.

CUPE National President Paul Moist told the crowd of about 300 that CETA is unlike any trade deal ever negotiated.

"CETA is about access by the European Union to all levels of government and procurement, the services that all of our governments put out for tender. Be it federal, provincial, local government, crown corporations, public transit, airlines, health and social services - most things that were exempted from the free trade agreement with the United States and the agreement between Canada, Mexico and the United States - are being put on the table," said Moist.

Intellectual property protection extensions in CETA mean that Canadians will pay almost \$3 billion more annually for prescription drugs to protect European multinational pharmaceuticals.

Council of Canadians National Chairperson Maude Barlow said that Europeans want permanent access to resources. "It's a grab for diamonds, gold, oil, natural gas,

uranium, potash, nickel, coal - and fish," said Barlow. "Europe is seeking to remove export restrictions on raw fish and to gain full access by European companies to buy up fishing licenses currently restricted to Canadians."

A recent study by the World Bank said that by 2030 the world demand for water will outstrip supply by 40 per cent. "Are we going to declare our water in the world to be a commons, a public and human right? Or are we going to put it on the market like running

shoes or Coca-Cola to the highest bidder?" asked Barlow. "CETA will enable resources like water to be a marketable commodity."

(With files from <http://cupe.ca>)



Canadian Peace Alliance calls Convention 2011

The next Convention of the Canadian Peace Alliance will take place Friday, Oct. 14 to Sunday, Oct. 16, 2011, at Ryerson University in Toronto. Formed in the mid-1980s, the CPA has affiliates across the country, acting as the umbrella coalition for the anti-war movement in English-speaking Canada. It works closely with Montreal-based *Echec a la Guerre*, which plays a similar coalition role in Quebec.

A callout from the Alliance says, "The Convention is a great

opportunity for activists to get together, share strategies and plan our work to build the broadest and most effective peace movement in Canada.

"Since we last met in 2008, the war in Afghanistan has deteriorated, Canada has extended its troop deployment and anti-war sentiment has grown. We have organized multiple speaking tours with international activists, notably Malalai Joya to tell Canadians the real story about life for the Afghan people. We have also watched as the Harper government has systematically tried to silence voices for peace and social justice in Canada. We have marched to end the siege of Gaza and in solidarity with the Tamil people and the Egyptian Revolution. We have developed a campaign to redirect military spending to human needs rather than war.

"Each of these efforts requires more work to shape the political debates in Canada. Join us at the CPA convention to discuss next steps and to share your experiences building the peace movement."

Registration costs are \$75 (waged) and \$40 (unwaged/students). For details, visit the Peace Alliance website, www.acp-cpa.ca, or call 416-588-5555.

People's Voice deadlines

October 1-15 issue: Thursday, Sept. 22

October 16-31 issue: Thursday, Oct. 6

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

Russian Hall opens season in Vancouver

Dear members and friends of the FRC,

It's time to start the new season of cultural activity at the Russian Hall. The FRC mixed folk choir will have its first meeting of the 2011-12 season on Thursday, Sept. 29, at 7:30 pm at the Hall. We are thrilled to welcome our new choir director, Larissa Divakova, who is well-known to most of you.

Your participation in the choir will be much appreciated. We assure you that singing is good for your health, and for your spirit. Singing beautiful songs in Russian and other languages, meeting old friends and making new ones is a great way to enrich your life.

For further information please contact John Niechoda at (604)879-1513 or email Larissa Divakova at divakova@gmail.com.

Join us and be part of the great activities and events at our cultural centre, our Russian Hall!

Sincerely, the Federation of Russian Canadians Executive
600 Campbell Ave., Vancouver, BC, V6A 3K1

What's Left

Burnaby, BC

An evening of your favourite songs, with musicians Tom Hawken, Linda Chobotuck and Joyce Holmes, plus full turkey dinner and dessert, Sat., Sept. 24. Doors 6:30 pm, Program 8 pm, 5435 Kincaid Street. Info and RSVP Anna 604-294-6775. \$20/person, kids under 12 \$10, limited seating. Proceeds: Burnaby Club.

Vancouver, BC

Annual Women's Housing March, Sat., Sept. 17, 1:30 pm, from Cordova and Columbia, organized by Downtown Eastside Women Centre Power of Women Group. Followed at 4 pm by street party to stop condos on the 100 Block, music and food.

COPE policy and nomination meeting, Sunday, Sept. 18, John Oliver Secondary, 41st & Fraser (note location change). Register 1 pm for nominations starting 2 pm. For info ph. 604-254-0400 or www.cope.bc.ca.

Left Film Night, "GASLAND", documentary on the impact of natural gas "fracking" industry, 7 pm, Sun., Sept. 25, Centre for Socialist Education, 706 Clark Dr. Free admission, call 604-255-2041 for info.

Protest Dick Cheney, ex-US Vice President book event, Monday, Sept. 26, 6 pm, Vancouver Club, 915 West Hastings, organized by StopWar peace coalition.

People's Co-op Bookstore AGM, Friday, Sept. 30, 7 pm. For membership and info, visit the store, 1391 Commercial Drive, 604-253-6442.

Saskatoon, SK

Indigenous Young Women: Speaking our Truths, Nov. 18-21 conference. Info: 1-888-948-1112 or Natasha@girls-actionfoundation.ca, or google "Girls Action Foundation".

Winnipeg, MB

Radical BookFair & DIY Fest, Friday Sept. 23, 7 pm, panel discussion in Mondragon, and music show. Sat., Sept. 24, 11 am-5 pm, book tables on Albert St. with workshops nearby. Sun., Sept. 25 fundraising brunch in Mondragon plus book tables on the street noon to 4 pm, DIY workshops in nearby spaces.

Ottawa, ON

David Rovics concert, University of Ottawa Alumni Auditorium, Sunday, Oct. 2, 7 pm. Tickets \$10-\$20 sliding scale, proceeds to Canadian Boat to Gaza. For info email Larryatcpccarleton@yahoo.ca. Co-sponsored by Rosa Luxembourg and Carleton University CPC clubs, Young Communist League, Students for Palestinian Human Rights (U of Ottawa), Students Against Israeli Apartheid (Carleton U), Independent Jewish Voices, Exile, and others.

Toronto, ON

Stop Ford's Cuts, Monday, Sept. 26, 5:30 pm, rally at City Hall to defend communities, public services, and good jobs!

Meet the Communist Candidates in Ontario, election rally, Sat., Sept. 24, 7 pm, GCDO Hall (290 Danforth Ave., Chester subway). Food, cash bar, music, everyone welcome. 416-469-2446 for info.

Globalization and world inequality, ten-week study course, Mondays, 7-10 pm, Sept. 27-Dec. 6 at the Labour Education Centre (LEC), cost \$120, for info visit www.laboureducation.org or www.mlec.org.

St. Catharines, ON

What are our real choices this election?, forum with Saleh Waziruddin (Communist candidate in St. Catharines) and Liz Rowley (Ontario Communist leader), Sat., Oct. 1, 2 pm, St. Catharines Library Bankers Room, 54 Church St.

Brampton, ON

Meet the candidate, discuss the politics, with Brampton-Springdale Communist candidate Liz Rowley, Sunday, Oct. 2, 2 pm, Soccer Centre Community Room 2, 1495 Sandalwood Parkway East. Call 416-469-2446 for info.

Montreal, QC

Palestinians And Jews United, boycott/disinvestment/sanctions picket, every Saturday, 1-3 pm, outside Israeli shoe store "NAOT", 3941 St-Denis Street.

Support the 2011 PV Fund Drive for \$50,000.

Send your contribution today!

FALL SUPPER and MUSIC EVENING



Saturday September 24th
5435 Kincaid Street, Burnaby

Doors: 6:00 pm.

Turkey (& salmon) Dinner: 6.30 pm
with dessert/coffee/tea incl.

Program: 8 ish

Labour/political/peace songs and music lead by

Tom Hawken, Linda Chobotuck, & Joyce Holmes,
then the floor is yours to sing, or make a request til we run out of songs... (bring your instruments, voice and join in)

\$20 (children under 12 \$10)

→RSVP: Anna 604/294-6775
annabj@shaw.ca

Teachers reject "net zero"...

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10 - Recent statements by the Premier and Finance Minister Kevin Falcon indicate that the defeat of the Harmonized Sales Tax by B.C. voters will be used as a club to impose further "belt-tightening" on education and health care, and new tax hikes on working people. It appears that teachers will be the first targets of the new regime. In fact, given her history, Premier Clark may well be hoping to use the teachers as a political punching bag to bolster her sagging support in public opinion polls.

The result could be another sharp confrontation between the government and the teachers, who fought the Liberals to a standstill with their courageous two-week strike back in 2005. The BCTF had strong support from other unions during that dispute; even greater solidarity will be needed this time around. ●

Health Coalition puts the heat on Ontario parties

Special to PV

Moving to make health care a priority issue in Ontario's election campaign, the Ontario Health Coalition organized a mass rally at Queen's Park on Sept. 13. Buses from across the province brought demonstrators into Toronto, taking the demand for clear commitments to safeguard local health care services directly to the political parties.

Polls show that health care ranks at the top of the public's agenda. But while every political party will promise to fund and improve health care, "lip-service is not enough," warns the OHC.

The Coalition says that Ontarians need clear commitments on key issues. These include: full-service local hospitals safe from fear of service cuts, closed ERs and rural hospital closures; the right to access comprehensive chronic care whether a patient is in hospital, a nursing home or home care; action to address severe front-line staffing shortages; improvements and new capacity

built in public and non-profit agencies and institutions.

Comprehensive health care for Ontario patients and seniors, says the OHC, means chronic, rehabilitative, long term and home care that Ontarians can rely on to be there when we need it. The Coalition has been campaigning for equitable non-profit and public care; rather than P3s, this means building capacity in public non-profit hospitals and long term care homes, and restoring public/non-profit home care.

Earlier this year, the Health Coalition circulated over 100,000 leaflets which made powerful points about health care and taxes:

"Since 1990, Ontario has cut corporate taxes and taxes for the wealthiest, faster and deeper than anywhere in Canada. Who benefits? A study by economist Marc Lee looked at what tax cuts have meant for Canadians. Almost all Canadians see no benefit from tax cuts. Only the top 10% of the income scale (individuals earning \$120,000-\$266,000 or more per year) have profited from the tax

cuts that began in the early 1990s. Ontario now funds our hospitals less than almost anywhere else in Canada. As a result hospital beds are cut, services moved out of local communities, and overcrowding is rampant."

Ontario Communist leader Elizabeth Rowley, a candidate in



Dr. Norman Bethune, early Communist campaigner for universal health care

the Brampton-Springdale riding, was at the OHC rally to campaign for her Party's health care platform.

"People in Ontario face a clear choice in this election, with respect to public health care," said Rowley. "One the one hand, we can continue down the path of underfunding, delisting, privatization and profiteering. This is the path that erodes public health care and takes Ontario back to a time when good health was a privilege of the rich. Or, we can take the path that reverses privatization, that strengthens universality of health care, and that expands coverage to include pharmacare, dental and vision care."

Rowley noted that the Communist Party has championed the cause of public health care since the party's formation in 1921. "In the 1930s Dr. Norman Bethune, a leading member of the Communist Party of Canada, campaigned long and hard for universal, public medicine. The struggle for socialized health care has always been a key part of our Party's history and the history of the working class in Canada. We

have no intention of sitting idly by while health corporations and the political parties that serve them undo what millions of people fought to win and protect."

The Communist platform includes emergency and long-term action to preserve and expand public health care in Ontario:

- * Stop privatization and end Public Private Partnerships;
- * Enforce the Canada Health Act, ban private clinics and abolish LHINs;
- * Reverse delisting of services and expand health coverage to include dental and eye care, drugs and long-term care;
- * Deliver needs-based funding for public hospitals and health care, and rescind balanced budget legislation;
- * Recognize the credentials of internationally trained physicians and health care workers;
- * Make abortion services universally accessible in free standing clinics and all hospitals;
- * Act now to improve health, education and living standards of Aboriginal Peoples. ●

Activists uncover shocking abuses in Afghanistan

By Tom Mellen, Morning Star

US-backed militias are killing, torturing and raping Afghan civilians with impunity, a New-York based rights group charges. Human Rights Watch has released a 102-page report entitled *Just Don't Call it a Militia*, which found that village-level paramilitary units which the US is funding and arming in an effort to subdue resistance forces have been implicated in a slew of horrendous abuses.

The study was based on over 120 interviews with victims of abuses and family members, village elders, witnesses and others. Among the cases documented was the gang-rape of a 13-year-old boy in Baghlan province by members of the Afghan Local Police (ALP). The youngster was allegedly kidnapped by four ALP members before being brutalised in the home of a subcommander. No one has been arrested.

In another incident the ALP were accused of beating teenage boys and hammering nails into the feet of one. And in western Herat province an ALP unit reportedly "raided several houses, stealing belongings, beating residents and illegally detaining six men."

Around 7,000 people have joined the ALP since it was set up a year ago, with the authorities aiming to recruit a total of 30,000 to the force. HRW quotes an "international civilian official" in Kabul as saying that the force "is the exit strategy."

HRW Asia director Brad Adams said: "Kabul and Washington need to make a clean break from supporting abusive and destabilising militias to have any hope of a viable, long-term security strategy." Adams stressed that "poor governance, corruption, human rights abuses, and impunity for government-affiliated forces all are drivers of the insurgency." ●

Build a movement for change, says TUC leader

Reports from the Morning Star

Speaking on Sept. 12, British TUC general secretary Brendan Barber issued a rallying call to trade unionists and the wider public to build a movement against the government's "angel of destruction" policies.

In his annual address to TUC delegates in London, Barber warned Con-Dem ministers that a "movement for change" was growing in Britain.

"Our NHS is not for sale. Not now, not tomorrow, not ever," said Barber. "We are seeing the biggest NHS reorganisation with a very damaging Bill going through Parliament. Fifty thousand NHS jobs are on the line. It's marketisation and privatisations on a huge scale, wrapped up in words like localism."

He attacked the government's plan to slash services to reduce the budget deficit, saying "It's clear the government won't eliminate the deficit and the global economy is on

the brink of a crisis bigger than the financial crisis. Whether the economy technically goes into double-dip recession or not, what we can look forward to is bumbling along the bottom for years to come."

Barber called for investment in Britain's ailing manufacturing industry to provide jobs and growth, and expressed solidarity with Bombardier workers in Derby fighting to keep a key train-building contract in Britain.

"We have led the fight against the government agenda, whether it's fighting to save local libraries or campaigning for a decent benefit system, we represent all the interests of working people," he said. "We have to build a mass movement for change which cannot be ignored by any political party."

Delegate speeches at the TUC indicate growing resentment towards the ongoing legal injustices inflicted on trade unionists and an awareness that cabinet ministers are already examining more ways to hamstring workers.

The legal framework within which trade unionists have to operate in Britain is not based on justice or fairness. Its motivation is class-based. It is intended to weaken working people's organisations so that they are hampered in their efforts to defend or improve conditions, employment, pay and pensions.

In short, anti-union laws are a weapon in the hands of the employer class to secure maximum profits at the expense of their workforce and to weaken workers' resistance.

The billionaire capitalist media characterises the trade union movement as a self-centred sectional force interested only in its own membership and is unconcerned about the rest of society. Nothing could be further from the truth. As GMB leader Paul Kenny made clear, trade union campaigns have been crucial in pushing society to turn away from homophobia and racism.

And while trade unions are quite justified in taking action to win pay rises and better conditions for their own members, they are also vital to broad-based initiatives to defend services on which the rest of society depends.

The mandate-free Con-Dem coalition government is intent on pursuing its ideologically driven goal of a slimmed-down state to reduce the tax burden on big business and the rich. But that slimmed-down state translates into wholesale attacks on comprehensive education, the NHS, local authority services, welfare benefits and the public sector.

Even non-union members, including the unemployed, retired people and those on benefits, have a vested interest in seeing stronger unions. Such is the coalition's all-encompassing attack on the very fabric of society in its crusade to overturn the postwar gains of the welfare state and NHS that few will emerge unscathed if it proceeds unchallenged.

Resistance will be essential to prevent a historically significant reversal for the working class and its allies. Nothing concentrates the ruling class mind more than a wave of industrial action in opposition to its policies, but strikes are not the only weapon in the unions' locker.

The massive protests by students, despite several premature obituaries for student militancy, and the huge March 26 trade union protest in London are indications of a groundswell of public opinion against the coalition cuts programme.

The task facing the unions is to transform opinion into action that is effective in frustrating the cuts agenda. If the government refuses to countenance trade union rights in Britain on a par with the rest of Europe, then the unions have a right and a duty to resist that repressive approach.

That can mean solidarity walkouts in defiance of the law or mass civil disobedience. The methods may vary, but resistance must pervade all union activity. ●

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