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# people's VOICE



Communists organize  
against C-51... page 2

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## Tired of being "precarious and poor"

*Thousands of  
academic  
workers struggle  
for justice in  
Ontario*  
- see page 6 -



On March 14, people  
rallied against Bill C-51  
in 75 cities and towns  
across Canada.

More on page 7 inside...

Photos from  
Toronto rally  
by Ed Bil

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### Welfare run-around

Poor people in British Columbia constantly face Premier Christy Clark's "one step forward, two steps back" tactics. Here's an inside look at the fine print beneath a recent increase in earnings exemption levels.

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### Pharmacare now!

For decades, governments have claimed we "can't afford" universal pharmacare. The truth is we can't afford *not* to have such a program.

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### Who runs Ukraine?

Western politicians and the corporate media were jubilant about the overthrow of Ukraine's elected government last year. But the real power in Kiev is now held by US-trained bureaucrats, not citizens.



# Communists step up campaign against C-51

## PV Ontario Bureau

The Communist Party of Canada's campaign against Bill C-51 is stepping up across the country. "During the day of action against this police-state style legislation, our party mobilized in almost thirty cities and towns," Johan Boyden CPC Central Organizer told People's Voice. The CPC is distributing thousands of leaflets against the Bill in these communities and organizing a series of actions and events, he said.

In Nova Scotia, public meetings took place in Halifax and in rural Pictou county. A major storm prevented speaker Drew Garvie from making the Halifax event, but Jim Sacouman spoke about his experience with no fly lists because of solidarity work with Columbia. Sacouman, a retired professor at Acadia University, also spoke the week before at the

Halifax anti-C51 rally.

The next day Garvie's plane got through, and he spoke at a meeting in Westville, joined by a local representative from Amnesty International. Many in the audience were learning about both the Bill and the CPC for the first time. The meeting, organized by postal worker and activist Mark Hamilton, resolved to hold a picket outside Conservative Justice Minister Peter MacKay's office.

"Because of the overly broad definition of terrorism, which might even include a strike, the legislation could target environmentalists, aboriginal protesters, the Muslim community – even the labour movement," Garvie was quoted as saying in the New Glasgow News.

In Quebec, where the Parti communiste du Quebec was one of the first national organizations to oppose the Bill, the PCQ has organized a special movie and discussion about C-51, featuring

retired immigration lawyer and long-time CPC candidate Bill Sloan. The PCQ has also made over \$250 in "stop C-51" button sales at rallies, and published a new issue of its newspaper Clarté that exposes the anti-people content of the legislation.

PCQ leader Pierre Fontaine spoke at the March 14 anti-C-51 rally after NDP leader Thomas Mulcair, who had compared Harper's bill to the Padlock law. Fontaine noted the actual name of the legislation, "La Loi protégeant la province contre la propagande communiste," or the law to protect the Province of Quebec from Communist Propaganda. He described how the PCQ and CPC had long fought to overcome political repression including successfully defeating this legislation.

The infamous law took its nickname from the ability it granted police to padlock the offices of the party, its press, and another group accused of advocating vaguely-defined leftist and pro-labour ideals. Brought in during the 1930s, it took until the 1950s for the CPC to finally overturn the legislation at the Supreme Court.

In Ontario, party leader Elizabeth Rowley spoke at a rally in Brampton, which the local CPC club helped organize. "The attack on Parliament Hill and on soldiers in Montreal were not terrorist acts, but isolated incidents being called terrorist acts," Rowley the local Brampton Guardian newspaper.

see COMMUNISTS, p. 11



Scenes from anti-C51 protests across Canada, including Toronto (at left), Victoria (top), Winnipeg (where Miguel Figuearosa spoke on March 14), and Halifax (below).



## People's Voice Fund Drive at 28% of \$50,000 target

Just over three weeks into the annual People's Voice Press Fund Drive, we can report that we have received \$14,171, or 28.3% of our \$50,000 target. This includes \$5998 from British Columbia, \$1100 from Alberta, \$285 from Saskatchewan, \$100 from Manitoba, \$6258 from Ontario, \$105 from Quebec, \$300 from Nova Scotia, and \$25 from Newfoundland & Labrador. Thanks to all who have contributed so generously!

Just as significant, People's Voice has been in the streets as people resist the Harper government's brutal attack on civil liberties and free speech. The

March 14 Day of Action Against C-51 drew an estimate 17,500 protesters to events in 75 locations. In many of these cities and towns, recent issues of PV were circulated in the weeks and days leading up to March 14, helping to raise awareness and understanding of the threat posed by this legislation to a wide range of people and movements. Bill C-51 targets so-called "enemies" of the corporate agenda, from Indigenous land defenders, to environmentalists, civil liberties groups, trade unions, critics of Israeli apartheid, and of course the left-wing and Communist forces which speak out

most sharply against the Harper Tories and other neoliberal governments.

Seventy-five years ago, during a similar period of repression by the Liberal government of Mackenzie King, our predecessor publication, the Canadian Tribune, was launched as a forum of democratic opinion. Today, People's Voice continues to print the views of the labour and people's movements, whether or not they share our commitment to a future socialist Canada. Unlike the Canadian ruling class, we believe that all progressive and democratic voices should be heard, not just the bullying tirades of the CEOs and their far-right think tanks.

But to achieve this goal, we need your support. Please continue to donate generously, and come join us at one of the upcoming fundraisers for our Press Drive. Toronto readers will spend an evening with our editor, Kimball Cariou, on Saturday, March 28, at the GCDO Hall. Vancouver-area readers can look forward to our annual Victory Banquet, set for May 2, 6 pm, at the Victoria Drive Community Hall. The annual Mother's Day Pancake Breakfast organized by the Burnaby Club CPC is also coming up, on Sunday, May 10, at the Chilean Co-op, 3390 School Ave. in Vancouver; see page 11 for details.

## PV goes online against C-51

One of the first alternative media outlets to speak out against Bill C-51 was People's Voice newspaper. PV has launched a campaign website which you can link to at [www.stopc51.tumblr.com](http://www.stopc51.tumblr.com), containing videos and an online petition.

"This January, People's Voice ran a full-page feature on Mewa Singh, a Canadian hero, who dedicated his life to opposing racism and colonialism. He was hanged in 1915, not long after the Komagata Maru incident, for shooting a despotic immigration officer who had ordered the assassination of a prominent Indo-Canadian community activist," the petition says, asking: "Could CSIS and the federal government use such content to falsely accuse our publication of 'advocating terrorism'?"

In addition to targeting progressive media, the petition says, "We see the Bill as opening the door for a type of collective punishment of Indigenous land defenders, racialized communities, critics of corporate resource extraction, solidarity groups, trade unions, and radical political movements." Signatures are being collected online and on the street.

But this campaign is not just about the number of signatures collected, it is about increasing the online visibility of the paper as a loud voice for democratic media. Signers have come from communities where our paper is working to re-connect with the working class, such as Cambridge, Ontario; Red Deer, Alberta; and Nelson, British Columbia.

As people sign, many share comments; outspoken radical folk singer Faith Nolan agreed that the coverage of the Nelson Mandela and the African National Congress by our paper's predecessor, the Canadian Tribune, would have been illegal under this law as the Canadian government then considered Mandela a terrorist.

The site [www.stopc51.tumblr.com](http://www.stopc51.tumblr.com) also has presents series of short videos by editor Kimball Cariou explaining different aspects of the legislation. ●

## Here's my contribution to the PV Fund Drive!

Enclosed please find my donation of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ to the 2015 People's Voice Press Fund Drive.

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# B.C.'s poverty hamster wheel

*People's Voice recently received the following submission from a correspondent who wishes to remain anonymous. Anti-poverty advocates assure us that this article reflects the difficulties faced by many social assistance and disability recipients across British Columbia.*

Several times in recent months, the government of BC Premier Christy Clark has come out with "good news" about social assistance policies. But there is always "bad news" buried in the fine print, which I try to follow since my own son is among those who depend on the system for survival.

One example was the welcome end to the province's clawback of child support payments owed to parents (mainly women) who receive social assistance. After a long and well-publicized campaign by anti-poverty groups, this discriminatory clawback was finally removed in the 2015 BC Budget, allowing these families to finally receive their child support payments, totalling about \$13 million per year. But the kicker was that the government decided to "pay" for this "generosity" by laying off the employees who administered the clawback. Their union and anti-poverty groups objected that the policy change was not really "costing" the province any revenue; this money rightfully belonged to the recipients in the first place. The laid-off workers could easily have helped to improve services for social assistance and disability recipients, but that would go against the government's strategy of making it more difficult to access benefits.

That brings me to my son, a young man with life-long intellectual disabilities. After finishing high school (without a Dogwood certificate), he took college courses designed to help such students find employment. Then he was channelled into one of the myriad of non-profits linked to the Ministry responsible for

social assistance (the name of the Ministry changes every time a new Minister is appointed). Two years later, this organization was able to help my son land a part-time job, working two or three hours a week at minimum wage for a major corporation in the movie industry.

Fortunately, by that time he was receiving monthly disability assistance of \$906 per month. Unlike many in far more difficult circumstances, he lives at home with his parents, using his income to cover his share of the rent and groceries, buy his own clothes, etc. In his PWD category, there was no strict requirement for income reporting, since he earned far below the \$400 level which would require regular reports.

Then came the "good news". Late in 2014, the province raised the PWD earned income exemption to \$9600 per year. This allows those who can find a job to keep up to \$800 of their extra earnings every month. This leaves most far below the poverty line, but any increase is a good thing.

However, with this change also came more stringent reporting requirements. Like the employable category of social assistance recipients, my son would have to report by the 5<sup>th</sup> of each month his previous month's earnings. But this would be easy, since the province was implementing an online reporting system. A couple of clicks of the mouse and *voilà*, report submitted and the next cheque would be automatically deposited, not delivered by Canada Post.

OK, off to the credit union to set up the automatic deposit. Check! Online to set up his BCeID account. Check! Well, not quite. There were a few glitches, and we were instructed to finish the procedure at a particular Ministry office downtown. A few days later we went to this office. Oops, wrong address. Go to a different office over on Robson Street, they say. After lining up for half an hour at the Robson Street office (cleverly hidden above De Dutch Pancake House), we were told to try at his original Ministry office, back near

where we live.

There, they let us turn in one of the old-fashioned paper reports for the previous month. But the BCeID problem could only be handled at my son's new Ministry office (the old office was being closed in the interests of "efficiency"). So, on a drizzly, cold "welfare Wednesday" morning, we lined up for 90 minutes in the heart of the downtown eastside, the lowest-income urban postal code in Canada, getting the inside scoop from some new friends about welfare bureaucracy problems.

At last we get in, and helpful Ministry workers turn over his cheque and complete the BCeID registration process. They tell us to submit future income reports online, quite simple really, just an electronic version of the old paper report.

Mission accomplished! Well, not really.

On February 4, we submit the electronic report for January, including income based on his credit union statement. Two weeks later, an ominous email arrives from the Ministry: the report is incomplete! Finish the report or the cheque will be delayed! Or cancelled!

What??? Back at the Ministry office, they accept a physical copy of his January bank statement, and tell us in future to send an electronic version of this document or his pay stubs. Great, we know the procedure! The cheque is deposited on time. Sigh of relief.

On March 4, we submit an electronic monthly report. But oddly, there seems to be no place to attach his February bank statement. Sure enough, on March 16 we receive an ominous warning from the Ministry (see above, yada yada). Online again, there is now a procedure to attach a document proving monthly income, such as bank statement or pay stubs. One quick scan later, we click the button to send the bank statement (a 46 KB size PDF). Seconds drag by, and then an error message: Cannot send! Too many documents! File size too large - cannot exceed 1 MB!

Back at the new Ministry office, they grudgingly admit that the new electronic reporting system does not yet accept attachments. OK, here's his bank statement. "Oh, that. We don't accept those. It has

to be pay stubs."

I point out that this is the first time anyone has told us we must provide the physical pay stubs. Nothing we can do, they say, it's policy. But you could appeal it - here's the number.

Here's the thing: my son's employer does not give him physical pay stubs. This giant transnational corporation has a highly sophisticated online personnel system where wage slaves can try to access such information, but mere mortals can rarely penetrate the secrets of this website. Luckily, his workplace is just a few blocks away. Even better, a very sympathetic manager spends half-an-hour patiently walking us through the system and printing out the necessary pay stubs.

Back to the Ministry with the pay stubs. Here I point out the next problem. The province wants a monthly report, but this employer uses a two-week pay system, not monthly. The pay stub covering the two-week period starting March 26 will not be available until April 8, three days after the next cut-off for reporting.

This information is met with silence and an uncomfortable stare at the ceiling. Clearly, many recipients have already pointed out this incongruence between the province's rules and the reality of the corporate world. Finally, the Ministry worker confers with a superior. They explain that the dates on the pay stubs don't matter, just the dates of the automatic bank deposit, etc. All clear? Hmm, not really, but this has already taken three hours. We'll leave the next round for another day.

Talking later to anti-poverty advocates, we hear that many people trapped on this hamster simply submit whatever documents they have available on the 5<sup>th</sup>, and hope the Ministry accepts their report. If not, they appeal, and repeat next month. Who knows how many millions of dollars are wasted in this bureaucratic tail-chasing? All I know is that it's taking a lot of Ministry worker time to check up on my son. His earned income for February? \$85.27.

But hey, they did raise his earnings exemption limit. Hooray for progress! ●



In 2010, the Winter Olympic Games were held in B.C., at a total cost of \$7 billion including related infrastructure projects. But social assistance and disability rates have not been increased for eight years. PV file photo by Kimball Cariou.

## MAY DAY 2015 GREETING ADS

To mark May Day 2015, People's Voice will print greetings from a wide range of labour and people's organizations in our May 1-15 issue, which will be distributed at events across Canada. The deadline for camera-ready ads will be April 17; if PV is preparing the layout, the deadline is April 16. Please check with us about the format if your ad is being sent electronically.

### Ad rates (based on 5 column page):

One column-inch.....	\$15
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Three columns x 4 inches.....	\$110
Two columns x 7 inches.....	\$130
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706 Clark Drive, Vancouver, V5L 3J1  
E-mail: pvoice@telus.net

## VDLC delegates oppose Bill C-51

By Peter Marcus,  
Vancouver

Due to a fire at the Maritime Labour Centre, the January meeting of the Vancouver and District Labour Council was cancelled, and the February 17 meeting was held at the nearby WISE Hall. At that meeting, Joey Hartman was re-elected President by acclamation. Also elected were Terry Engler as 1st Vice-President, Stephen Von Sychowski as 2nd Vice-President, Paul Sihota as Recording Secretary and Tim Cheung as Treasurer, along with ten executive members-at-large. The delegates approved a resolution supporting a "Yes" vote in the current mail-in plebiscite on a 0.5% sales tax increase for transportation and

transit improvements. (The right wing Canadian Taxpayers' Federation and the Fraser Institute are opposed.) Also passed was a resolution calling for full funding of Adult Education, which the province has cut.

The March 17 meeting was back in the Maritime Labour Centre. Delegates passed a resolution against the federal Bill C51, the so-called anti-terrorist legislation, still going through the parliamentary process. Widely characterized as police state legislation, the Bill will probably target environmentalists, Aboriginal peoples, the Muslim and Arab communities, the labour movement and anyone else who protests against the policies of the Harper Conservatives and their corporate backers.

Also passed was a resolution criticizing the Christy Clark Liberals for their meagre 20 cent increase in the minimum wage, and reiterating labour's demand for a \$15 minimum wage, leading to a living wage. In Vancouver, where the cost of living is the highest in Canada due to housing costs, the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives claims the living wage is over \$22.

Ongoing labour disputes include Marine Workers and Boiler Makers Local 1 on strike against S.S.A.B. Hardox on Annacis Island for their first contract, CUPE employees locked out at Southern Rail, and instructors at Langara College, where members of the Federation of Post Secondary Educators have voted 91% to strike. ●



# EDITORIALS

## No to an expanded Iraq war

Just as anti-war activists and progressive media like People's Voice predicted last fall, Canada's participation in the latest imperialist war in Iraq quickly went from a bombing and training role to direct combat operations. Now, the PM is poised to extend the "six month" mission, and expand into neighbouring Syria. Only the most naïve observer could doubt that Canada is on the way to another disastrous Afghanistan-style war of occupation, costing billions of dollars and thousands of Iraqi and Syrian lives.

Predictably, the Tories claim that this war is necessary to "protect the women and children". Sadly, this feeble lie may prevent the NDP and Liberals from putting up more than token opposition, despite overwhelming evidence that the "responsibility to Protect" doctrine has been a disaster. The long list of R2P victims include the thousands killed in NATO's bombing of Yugoslavia in 1999, countless Afghan civilians, the million or more Iraqis dead in the wake of the 2003 US-UK invasion, the people of Libya which has been torn to pieces with the eager help of Western imperialism, and many others.

Plunging Canada into these modern day crusades only creates a more dangerous world. The biggest terrorists are not the reactionary movements which wrap themselves in fundamentalist dogmas, but the U.S., British, Canadian and other governments which brazenly encourage and finance the Taliban, Al Qaeda, ISIS and other such groups when it suits the geo-political interests of western imperialism, only to whip up fear and hatred against the same forces when this becomes politically advantageous. This cynical game brings enormous profits to the military-industrial corporations, but only death and destruction to working people. It's time to discard the R2P scam, and demand Canada's immediate and complete withdrawal from NATO and US-led military interventions, starting with the expanded war in Iraq and Syria.

## CSN defends civil liberties

The labour movement is speaking out against Bill C-51, and with good reason. Opposition ranges from the Canadian Labour Congress to national union bodies such as CUPE, to local labour councils. One of the most powerful statements came from Quebec's Confédération des syndicats nationaux (CSN, or Confederation of National Trade Unions), which has a proud history of resistance against right-wing governments and bosses.

"The labour movement is fully opposed to this legislation," Jean Lortie, Secretary General of the CSN, recently told People's Voice. Lortie said the CSN was immediately troubled by Bill and its apparent targeting of the Muslim community, and "then we realized how the context and language of the bill" could impact labour.

Citing examples of workers in the railways, ports, and airlines, or construction workers on a pipeline project, Lortie said it was entirely conceivable that a workplace action or strike might be classified as disrupting national infrastructure and therefore terrorism. He pointed to injunctions reducing the days of strikes, legislating labour back to work, and restoring "constitutional order", and referenced the historic experience of the Common Front in Quebec where, during major strike actions and social turmoil in the 1970s, three major labour leaders were jailed to "stabilize society."

"This is not about domestic issues and anti-terrorism, it is about pleasing [the Conservatives] electoral base and shutting up critical voices – starting with the First Nations and pipeline protestors," Lortie said. "We're going into the ditch with this law which violates human rights including free speech, association and the right to strike – and the Supreme Court just reminded us that striking is a fundamental right."

This crucial fight will not end with Bill C-51. The labour movement has the numbers and organization to help build a powerful coalition which can take this struggle into the next federal election and beyond.

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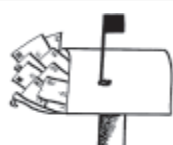
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## LETTERS

People's Voice welcomes your letters. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity, and to refuse to print letters which may be libellous or which contain personal attacks. Send your views to: "Letters to the Editor" 706 Clark Drive, Vancouver, BC, V5L 3J1 or pvoice@telus.net

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## Letters to the Editor

### Elliot Lake joins "Day of Action against Bill C-51"

Saturday March 14, 2015 marked the day for a Nationwide demonstration against Harper's Bill C-51. Tens of thousands rallied across Canada to have their voices heard and put a stop to the bill, which threatens the security and rights of Canadians. The people of Northern Ontario participated as well, gathering a large group of demonstrators in Sudbury, Sault Ste. Marie, and even in our small city of Elliot Lake, with a population of only 11,500 citizens. They were all very concerned about the bill and what it means for their future, and the future of their children and grandchildren.

We all spoke openly about what we saw going on in Canada and how desperately these issues need to be addressed. We told some of the participants about the platform of the CPC, and they were very happy to hear that there is a party who really does want to make changes and do what is best for the people. Some wanted to know what more they could do to assist in making these changes possible, so we encouraged them to continue to join in demonstrations, write to their MP, and to look into joining the Communist Party of Canada. There was a very positive energy among all of us, in spite of the circumstance that had led us to gather in the first place; as we had

all felt that we were being heard, and we were. People were honking their horns and giving a thumbs up in support. Some even pulled off the road to hear more about what we were protesting, and said they would tell others about it. Word gets around, if we speak. We have a voice! We will be heard! Being a part of this demonstration proved that to be true. We were indeed

heard, throughout Canada and beyond it's borders.

In actively participating in demonstrations, we motivate others to do the same. In standing up for our rights and freedoms, others see that they can too, and they can be that change they want to see.... In Canada and the world.

Elizabeth Sorrell, Elliot Lake, ON

### Quebec students strike again

Quebec students are in action again. In late March, 30,000 students voted to go on strike for access to education, as well as against anti-austerity measures, climate change and gender inequality. The strike will last for one or two weeks, but may be extended. It is spread across 25 student associations on six CEGEP and University campuses.

Despite freezing rain and snow, a rally of several thousand was held on March 21 in Montreal. In violation of bylaw P6, organizers refused to release their route. Continuous actions are taking place across the province during the strike week. The students have the support of the Quebec labour movement through the Front Commun and other anti-austerity coalitions. They are building mass protests for April 2 and May 1.

"The mobilization of students in Quebec serves as an inspiration for students across Canada to fight back against austerity," says Mohamed, an organizer with the Young Communist League from Toronto who attended the rally. He told People's Voice, "the students have a common agenda and common struggle."

Quebec solidaire MNA Françoise David, whose party is also supporting the broad movement, said that "More measures will affect large segments of the population, they will rebel. At some point, people will say 'no it's not possible, we want a state that takes care of the people.'"



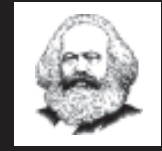
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## Marxist Theory

# A sombre day to remember Karl Marx

### Morning Star Editorial

Communists paid their respects to Karl Marx at his final resting place in London's Highgate Cemetery on March 15.

The 2015 oration marked 70 years since the defeat of Nazi Germany by an international alliance in which Britain and the United States fought side by side with the Soviet Union - an anniversary that should be cause for celebration across the world. But with the far-right once again on the march the mood was more sombre than jubilant.

The world war against fascism was a people's war. True, only one of the major combatant nations was socialist.

The Britain that fought the genocidal racist regime in Germany itself ruled a vast empire and treated many of the peoples it kept prisoner as subhumans.

But, as Russian communist Yuri Emelianov said, communists were at the forefront of the anti-fascist fight in every country. The tremendous sacrifices of the Soviet people, who played the leading role in defeating Germany, undermined anti-communist and anti-socialist propaganda in the West.

The working-class men and women who put their lives on the line for our own country were not

prepared to go back to the mass unemployment and hunger created by Tory austerity in the 1930s.

When the dust cleared on the bloodiest conflict in history 70 years ago, workers of the world

vowed: never again. Never again would we tolerate the vile politics of racism. Nor would we allow the human misery and oppression that gave rise to such repulsive ideologies.

In Britain, as in much of Europe, working people demanded a better deal. The post-war Labour government created the National Health Service and built the foundations of a social security system to protect the vulnerable and disabled. The safety net of the dole was there for those unlucky enough to be out of a job - though for decades unemployment was a rarity.

On the international scene, the institutions of the United Nations were set up to prevent the resurgence of war. Empowered colonial peoples rose up and soon had the old European empires on the run. How tragic it is that 70 years on, all these achievements are at risk or have already been undermined.

In Britain, Margaret Thatcher returned us to the era of mass unemployment. It has remained with us ever since. The current Tory-led government is hacking away at what is left of the welfare state, demonising the vulnerable, privatising our health service.

The United States and its allies, including Britain, have repeatedly ignored the UN to launch illegal

and unprovoked wars in Yugoslavia, Afghanistan, Iraq and Libya.

And now we are seeing the return of fascism itself. It is on the rise in western Europe, where French Prime Minister Manuel Valls has admitted the National Front may win the presidency.

But it is armed and dangerous in eastern Europe — most obviously in Ukraine. The European Union and United States saw nothing wrong in helping violent far-right thugs of the Svoboda and Right Sector parties overthrow the elected government of the country last year. They see nothing wrong now in offering equipment and military aid to white supremacist battalions which openly revere Hitler and have vowed to drive "Jews and Russians" off Ukrainian soil.

NATO's reckless advance into eastern Europe is a betrayal of agreements concluded with the Russians at the end of the cold war. Its cynical toleration of neonazi killers so long as they are pointed at its opponents in eastern Ukraine makes things worse.

It runs a very real risk of escalating into an all-out war with Russia, seventy years after victory in Europe. The politicians responsible should hang their heads in shame. ●



Marx's grave at London's Highgate Cemetery.

## Universal pharmacare "could save billions"

### By Kimball Cariou

Even before the time of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, labour radicals, Communists and other social activists have always been accused of proposing completely impractical, utopian schemes.

In Britain, the "Factory Act of 1847" to shorten the working day in textile mills to 10 hours for women and youth was furiously denounced by employers and right-wing economists. One absurd argument was that since the entire profit "earned" by capitalists was produced during the final hour of the day, this reform would bring down the whole economic system. Since that era, the working class struggle to shorten the working day and reduce the intensity of exploitation has often made gains, without destroying capitalism. More recently, the historic progress towards a shorter work day (and week) has been pushed back by the neoliberal economic offensive.

The point is that "wild-eyed" social reforms often turn out to be far more practical than the ruling class would have us believe. A partial list in Canada would include old age pensions, unemployment insurance, universal medicare, the right to organize trade unions, etc. Most such ideas were branded as dangerous threats, or at the very least, completely unaffordable. The fact that these reforms were initially raised by Communists made them even more unacceptable. Yet all of these reforms were eventually adopted in response to massive working class struggles. It's also true that the ruling class grudgingly accepted such measures in part to "prove" that revolution was unnecessary in Canada, where

many working people were favourably impressed by the gains of their sisters and brothers in the USSR and other socialist countries.

For decades, the Communist Party of Canada has advocated another such reform: the expansion of Medicare to include universal pharmacare, and dental and optical care. Predictably, right-wing economists and politicians have always called this demand a pipe dream.

But now, a study in the Canadian Medical Association Journal says that a universal prescription drug plan could reduce total spending on medications by billions, providing full coverage at an affordable price for taxpayers.

Few Canadians realize that ours is the only developed country with universal health insurance coverage which does not also offer some form of universal pharmacare. That particularly hurts the ten percent of Canadians who cannot afford to take their medications as prescribed.

The study in the March 16 *CMA Journal* says the extra total cost to government of providing universal pharmacare could range from about \$1 billion, to as high as \$5.4 billion a year, depending on how much was saved through bulk purchases of medications and other measures. Such a program would save the private sector the \$8.2 billion annually it spends on prescription drugs, mainly through employee health plans.

"When we did the analysis, we were, at first, a little bit surprised," said study author Steven Morgan, a professor of health policy at the University of British Columbia. "Wow. Canada can really save billions of dollars by covering

everybody for virtually every drug? And then we started to look deeper at the math, and it made perfect sense. You save about 10 per cent by getting better generic prices, you save about 10 per cent [on] brand name prices and you save an additional 10 per cent by encouraging more cost-effective prescribing. Mine those three things together, you save 30 per cent of a very large budget.

Therefore you're saving billions of dollars."

Morgan's numbers are based on conservative estimates. He and the other authors say that if Canada adopted policies comparable to countries like Switzerland, Italy and Spain, and achieved the rates of generic drug use seen in some provincial drug plans, a universal public drug plan would reduce total spending on prescription drugs in

Canada by \$7.3 billion per year.

They point out that U.S. studies suggest that providing free prescription increases the chance that patients will take the medicines they need. In the long run, this improves their health and reduces demands on the health-care system.

Morgan's conclusion: "Pharmacare is not unaffordable for taxpayers. Quite the opposite. It is unsustainable for taxpayers not to have a universal pharmacare system."

That's not something the Harper Conservatives, or even the federal opposition parties, really want to hear. For all the government's talk about defending taxpayers, they are far more committed to protecting the big pharmaceutical companies, which have a monopoly on one of the most profitable sectors of the entire capitalist system.

Interviewed by the CBC, Health Minister Rona Ambrose refused to say whether she would favour a pharmacare program. Instead, Ambrose wanted to talk about a bulk purchasing system for provinces to cut costs.

That sounds like a very tiny reform, mainly aimed to allow the Tories to take credit for spending cuts, while they keep slashing Medicare and the rest of Canada's social safety net. But as the population ages, the need for universal pharmacare will become more acute. In the federal election later this year, the Communist Party will put this demand high on its list of platform points. Expanded public health care is not a utopian dream - it's an urgent priority for working people, and a demand which also makes complete economic sense. ●



Norman Bethune, the Communist doctor from Montreal who led the first campaign for universal health care in Canada



# “Precarious and poor” on strike at U of T and York U

By Sam Hammond

At the end of February and beginning the first week of March, approximately 10,000 academic workers went on strike at two of Canada's largest universities. They are represented by two CUPE Locals, 3902 and 3903, who represent Units of Teaching Assistants, Graduate Assistants and Contract Faculty at the University of Toronto and York University respectively. Nine thousand are still on strike.

The issues and responses at both universities, York with about 4000 strikers and U of T with about 6000, are so close that they can be detailed in the same general overview. A good place to start is with the words of Erin Black, Union Chair at U of T, “*We are poor and precarious and need improvement in our standard of living*”. This is by no means an overstatement but what analyses will show is probably an understatement of the precarious existence of Teaching Assistants (TAs), Graduate Assistants (GAs) and Contract Faculty (CFs) at most universities.

The population that stretches from Oshawa to St. Catharines and includes the Greater Toronto Area and Hamilton contains the heaviest concentration of precarious workers in Canada. 40% of these, including immigrant workers, have some kind of university or college degree. Educated, precarious and poor. When we think of precarious workers, we might think of fast food or service jobs, but that is incorrect. They are post-graduate TAs, contract white collar workers, self-employed tradespeople, and the highest percentage are in private sector manufacturing. They are 40% of the work force.

Under the general stress of underfunding, universities have moved to a narrow customer-service business model that has

transformed academia into a corporate mentality of more user fees for less service, many-tiered remuneration categories, contract work, competition for your own job renewal and an ever increasing workload.

Ontario has the lowest per student funding in Canada, now at 2001 levels. Inflation adjustment means that it has actually declined after rising slightly in 2006. The Ontario government's own studies have advised universities that the only way to deal with the increased enrollment/declining funding crisis is to cut labour costs in collective bargaining. This is a strike of desperation staged by the victims of declining corporate taxes and the offloading of the burden onto the working people.

In an open letter to his colleagues in the English Department at U of T, Prof. Paul Downs states, “*This strike is a symptom of all the things many of us are most concerned about: the shrinking public investment in education; the corporatization of the university; the marginalization of the humanities; the rise of one or another form of precarious employment; the widespread hostility towards organized labour; and the ongoing disaster of our inability to promise PhD students in the humanities a decent chance of securing a tenure-track job after they have helped us to teach our undergraduate classes, fill our graduate classes, enhance our reputation and professional status as research professors and sustain a vibrant*

*departmental culture. This strike may not be the strike we wanted, it may be something of a blunt instrument, but it is the strike we have helped to produce and we have offered our students no alternative....*”.

The Contract Faculty at both York and U of T have settled at this writing, with some gains in the amount of tenured positions available and in the benefit package. They remain steadfast in their statements of solidarity with the TAs who, in both universities, have turned down the latest offers and continue their strikes. The students at York have circulated and signed a solidarity petition

with over 5000 names, and 300 Faculty members have signed a letter to the University Senate demanding a just settlement and criticizing attempts to resume classes. There are parallel solidarity actions at U of T where over 1000 students staged a solidarity walkout, and the Students Union, representing 50,000 students, is solid in its support. The support grows daily with over 70 Faculty Groups, Gender Studies, Academic Departments and labour unions publishing open letters of solidarity.

The Universities are 60% publicly funded, and the largest criteria for these shrinking funds is enrolment. The TA's, because they are graduate students as well as academic workers, swell the ranks of enrolment and thus become money-makers for the Universities. They generate income not only as enrolled post-graduates, but because they provide the cheap labour for the university to provide expanded curricula and programs. The fact that 9000 are still on strike after the CF settlement shows the scope of this phenomenon. Both York and U of T have made public statements that TAs are treated generously. This is similar to all the teacher-bashing that has become so popular. TAs in some faculties might receive \$17,000 plus a tuition waver (total package \$25,000), while in other faculties they might receive \$15,000 with no tuition waver (total wage \$7000). When tuitions rise their disposable income

drops.

The TA and CF negotiated hours of work are fiction, as is the administration propaganda about generous hourly rates. What is the sense of claiming TAs earn \$35 an hour when there is a cap of \$15,000 and an open-ended workload? Like most teaching professionals, they do what is necessary to maintain and service the needs of their students. To maintain passing levels in their own post-graduate courses and perform required research requires a full time presence at the campus that usually stretches into the evenings.

“Precarious and poor” living in the Toronto area requires family assistance and large debt accumulation. Years ago, although false even at that time, society and academia claimed this was an entrance ritual that led to tenure and job security. That myth has evaporated. Tenure is shrinking to a handful of positions every year, and regular work has been eroded into contract precarity. The carrot is gone and only the stick remains. These strikes are the tip of the iceberg and probably will be repeated elsewhere. The TAs and GAs at York and U of T may be deciding the direction of negotiations for the whole of CUPE on campuses across Ontario.

A tentative offer on March 18 from the University of Toronto was recommended by the CUPE 3902 negotiating committee. Over the March 21-22 weekend, 1101 union members voted to reject the tentative agreement, and 992 voted to ratify. “Our members have clearly indicated that continued strike action is necessary to achieve the gains that are necessary for long-term financial security as student workers,” CUPE 3902 spokesman Craig Smith said in a statement.

Our next issue will include further information and analyses of both strikes. ●

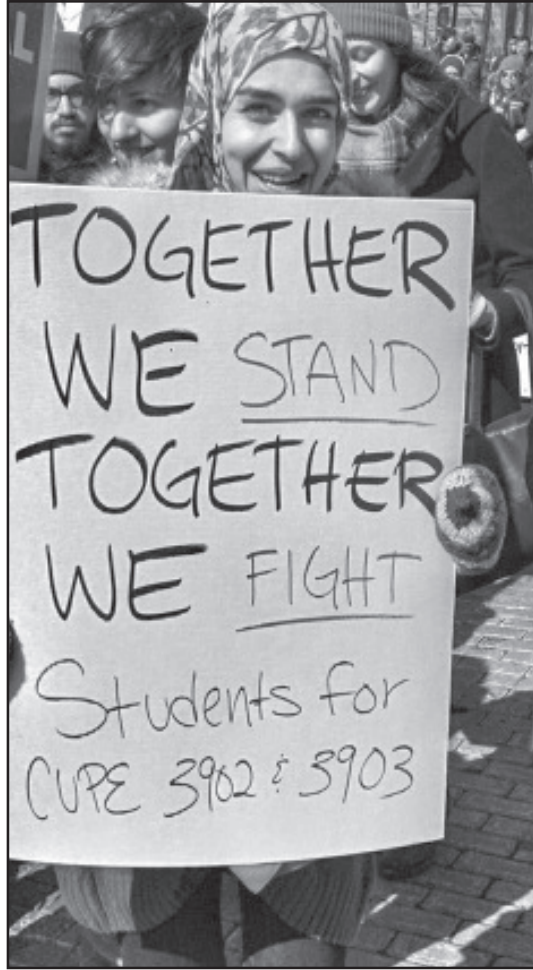


Photo from rankandfile.ca

## The time to build a united and militant student movement is now!

### Student Commission, YCL-LJC, March 2015

The Young Communist League of Canada stands in solidarity with all students struggling for free, accessible, emancipatory education and against the commodification of education. This March will see important struggles develop across Canada and we call on all students to use this opportunity to build a united and militant student movement.

Student debt and tuition fees continue to rise across the country as governments across Canada ramp up their attacks on public post-secondary education. This is directly related to the capitalist pursuit to make education a commodity designed to produce an exploitable and profitable workforce. Simply put, big business and their governments have decided they are paying too much for education, and must cut funding and better integrate education with the labour market. This means a multi-tiered, inaccessible, privatized system, corporatization of campuses, and re-framing curriculum to be tailored to employer's interests.

However, students are fighting

back! Students in Quebec are organizing towards large-scale actions to take place later this month against cuts to education and the broader austerity attacks of the Couillard Liberal government. Strike votes are occurring across Quebec leading up to the end of March when many student unions are set to go on strike. Public sector workers, women's groups, and environmentalists are also fighting back and are allies of students.

There has also been an upsurge in student action in English-speaking Canada! Some of the diverse actions that have taken place recently are:

Students at UOIT are organizing a walkout on March 24.

Ryerson students are organizing an alternative budget for a freeze in tuition fees, after a “tent city” occupation in November.

Students in Nova Scotia mobilized for day of action through the Canadian Federation of Students in January to reduce tuition fees.

Students are fighting against budget cuts at the University of Guelph and the University of Manitoba.

The “I Am A Student” Movement at UBC is mobilizing against increases in international

tuition fees and residence fees.

The Canadian Federation of Students-Ontario has called for student actions during the month of March, with some student unions such as York, Ryerson and Carleton participating in actions targeting Boards of Governors intent on increasing tuition fees.

There has also been a call for a Pan-Canadian Day of Action on March 24th in solidarity with Quebec students, many of whom will be on strike at the same time. Local student activists have picked up this call, inspired by student organizing in Quebec.

The YCL-LJC stands in solidarity with students organizing actions in March. We see an urgent need to organize across nations within Canada, with English-Canada standing in solidarity with Quebec actions. We need to ensure there is a united fightback against governments.

We support the strategy of organizing mobilization committees across Canada. The Quebec student strike taught us that the student movement needs meaningful democratic participation and the empowerment of all students. Wherever possible student unions can play a very

important role in the formation of these committees. These committees can take a variety of forms, but must involve much more participation than just a student union executive. On campuses where the student union is dominated by the right-wing and is not independent from the university, mobilization committees can also be formed effectively. Individual student activists, campus labour unions, and progressive student groups can unite to build student actions, which focus on mobilizing broader groups of students through campaigns, general meetings, direct actions, rallies, and eventually strikes.

Student struggle in English-speaking Canada is currently mostly limited to local actions. However, in order to win we need renewal at the base of the student movement through bigger and broader local actions and unity in action across campuses. Mobilization committees and grassroots activists have a role to play in strengthening the student movement through breaking out of a defensive ‘bunker mentality’,

which has developed from years of government assaults on post-secondary education and inner-movement attacks from right-wing students. Progressive activists in the Canadian Federation Students and outside should explore united actions, organizational formations and left coalitions that build on this vision of pushing a combative, united, student movement towards a higher level of mobilization. Part of the way forward is a Canadian Federation of Students that provides bold political leadership and that develops an escalating action plan including provincial and cross-Canada days of action.

Struggles internationally show that students have a role to play in building our collective struggle against austerity and ultimately, for socialism. Chilean students have recently won the battle for free education in their country, from years of student struggle. We can do this too! We can all gain strength from realizing our collective potential as the student movement continues to heat up and we win victories in Quebec and the rest of Canada. ●

<http://rebelyouth-magazine.blogspot.ca/>



# Québec joint declaration against C-51

A coalition of over 100 Quebec organizations has voiced strong opposition to the Harper government's "anti-terrorist" legislation. At a March 19 press conference, representatives of nearly every major labour, environmental and civil rights group in Quebec condemned Bill C-51, and urged members of the Quebec National Assembly to oppose the legislation. They also presented the

ments, environmental groups, Indigenous peoples, anti-capitalists, citizens fighting against climate change, etc. Moreover, some groups have already been identified in the federal government's policy to combat terrorism. Several articles of the draft law will define activities which affect the functioning of critical infrastructure (such as pipeline projects) or which interfere with

promoting the commission of terrorism offences in general", and allows for the seizure and destruction of terrorist propaganda material whose definitions are also very broad and ambiguous. The vague nature of the provisions may well undermine the freedom of expression by the effect of self-censorship.

Bill C-51 disproportionately expands the circumstances to allow preventive detention, weakens the degree of evidence necessary, lengthens the possible duration of this detention from 72 hours to 7 days, and hardens the conditions for release, all without a criminal charge. To justify such detention, it will suffice that a peace officer has reasonable grounds to believe the possibility that an activity regarded as 'terrorist' may be undertaken.

Bill C-51 brings major changes to the mandate of CSIS, which had been limited to information gathering. It may now take steps to "reduce" a threat to the security of Canada, a definition so broad that it may include activities carried out by various social protest movements. CSIS may, subject to obtain a judicial warrant, act unlawfully and even take measures that will undermine the rights protected by the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. This power is totally unacceptable. The nature of the proposed in-camera judicial review procedure has nothing to do with allowing the courts to determine if there is any infringement of a right protected by the Charter.

C-51 in fact proposes the implementation of a vast integrated system of information gathering, investigation, preventive arrests, and interventions that may be contrary to the Charter, without any control and monitoring mechanism or means to exercise real surveillance on all these activities. In this context, we fear the creation of a political police and an increase in political profiling practices.

To combat and prevent

terrorism, rather than adopting draconian measures, Governments must tackle the injustices built into system, be they political, economic, social or cultural, here and elsewhere in the world. Instead, this Bill risks labelling as terrorist individuals and organizations working to defend the common good.

While the federal Government must remove C-51, Quebec cannot

remain silent about this Bill which could deprive individuals of the protection of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. We therefore ask members of the House of Commons to defeat C-51, and those of the National Assembly to oppose this Bill.

(To read the huge list of endorsing groups, search online for "Déclaration commune contre C-51".) •

**People's Voice will continue to print a wide range of commentaries and analysis of the crucial struggle to defeat the police state Bill C-51.**



following "Joint Declaration on anti-terrorism Bill C-51".

We will not surrender to the fear campaign of the Canadian Government. We will not give up civil liberties in favour of strengthening security measures. We refuse to be manipulated in the name of security. We reject the project of the "anti-terrorist Bill C-51."

The Government is not able to explain why these new measures are necessary to ensure our safety, considering the legal arsenal currently available. Already in 2001, Bill C-36 undermined our judicial and legal system by removing, in certain circumstances, the guarantees recognized by the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. C-51 goes much further.

The Arab and Muslim communities have been particularly targeted in recent years, as evidenced by the cases of Maher Arar, Abdullah Almalki, Muayyed Nureddin and Ahmad Abou-Elmaati. C-51 also proposes to include protest move-

ments, environmental groups, Indigenous peoples, anti-capitalists, citizens fighting against climate change, etc. Moreover, some groups have already been identified in the federal government's policy to combat terrorism. Several articles of the draft law will define activities which affect the functioning of critical infrastructure (such as pipeline projects) or which interfere with

the ability of the Government to maintain economic stability, as affecting the security of Canada, paving the way for implementation of repressive measures. Also, since C-51 provides that only lawful protests will be not judged to contravene certain of its provisions, activities such as a demonstration prohibited under a municipal bylaw such as P-6, a simple "sit-in", peaceful citizens actions, or a strike that is not within the parameters of the Labour Code, would contravene these provisions.

The Bill proposes the establishment of a comprehensive system of collection and exchange of information within the Government. These proposed measures are contrary to the current rules on protection of personal information. And all this, without adequate monitoring mechanisms of intelligence activities, or for appeal by people who are the object.

C-51 proposes the creation of a new offence, "advocating or

also preventing interference with various aspects of public life or "the economic or financial stability of Canada." With this definition, a separatist demonstration in Quebec that fails to get a proper permit, a peaceful logging blockade by First Nations, or environmentalists obstructing a pipeline route could all be seen as threats to national security.

**2. It gives the government too much discretion to pick and choose which individuals and groups to target for further scrutiny.**

Bill C-51 gives the government



PV photo by Ed Bil

the ability to designate an extraordinarily broad range of activities as potential security threats. The government claims it will use good judgment when deciding which individuals and groups constitute true threats. Whether or not a group is deemed a national security threat may hinge on whether their cause is politically popular or in line with the views of the government.

**3. It will severely chill freedom of expression.**

It's unclear even to experts exactly what kinds of speech and protest activity may be considered threats to national security if the bill passes; the average Canadian has little hope of feeling confident that their legitimate political activity hasn't inadvertently crossed the line. Bill C-51's expansive language means many Canadians will likely choose not to express themselves — even in completely legal ways — rather than risk prosecution. Legitimate speech will be chilled, and our democracy will be worse off for it.

**4. It will allow government**

see SIX THINGS, p. 11



A few of the thousands of anti-C51 demonstrators at Toronto's Nathan Phillips Square on March 14. (PV photo: Ed Bil)

## CUPE calls C-51 "profound threat to freedom"

The Canadian Union of Public Employees is voicing strong opposition to Bill C-51. The union's National Executive Board meeting on March 11-12 adopted the following resolution, stating that CUPE National will:

- Register our strong opposition to Bill C-51 by writing to the Prime Minister and Cabinet outlining the very real dangers to freedom of speech, assembly, human rights, and democracy posed by the Bill;
- Provide tools to our members, including analysis and fact sheets, and ask all CUPE chartered organizations to write to the Prime Minister and Cabinet to oppose Bill C-51;
- Encourage and assist all CUPE members to contact their MP and register their concern and opposition to Bill C-51 through letters, phone calls and e-mails;
- Support the New Democratic Party of Canada in its opposition to Bill C-51 by signing their petition against the Bill and collecting signatures among CUPE members and by highlighting our support for their principled position through mainstream and social media;
- Actively work with civil society groups who are already opposing Bill C-51 and reach out to communities and organizations that find themselves made vulnerable by this Bill;
- Demand that the Canadian Labour Congress join with civil society organizations and participate in events to demonstrate the union movement's opposition to Bill C-51; and
- Make every effort to expose the contradiction between the stated intent of Bill C-51 and this government's undermining of public safety and the health of communities by cutting funding to public services such as policing, food inspection, environmental protection and transportation regulation that actually ensure public safety.

BECAUSE:

- Bill C-51 profoundly threatens the civil liberties and democratic freedoms of all people living in Canada, including the freedom of expression, assembly, security of the person, freedom from unlawful search, and freedom from arbitrary arrest;
- Bill C-51 gives sweeping powers to CSIS to collect and share private information and to detain without due process, significantly changing the mandate of CSIS and overriding the rights of Canadians currently protected in the criminal justice system;
- "National Security", as defined to include interference with critical infrastructure and threats to economic and financial stability, renders trade unionists and activists who engage in strike action and other forms of legitimate dissent vulnerable to unjust surveillance and criminalization; and
- Bill C-51 is a systematic effort to create a culture of fear by targeting minority and marginalized communities which serves to silence legitimate dissent to government policy and threatens to undermine our solidarity as workers struggling to create a more equal society.

By Alyssa Stryker and Carmen Cheung, March 11, 2015, *The Tyee.ca*

At over 60 pages, Bill C-51 — the Anti-Terrorism Act — is a heavy read. The bill proposes a myriad of radical changes to Canadian law and to Canada's national security apparatus, many of which seriously jeopardize the rights and freedoms of Canadians while promising little improvement to public safety.

Canada's privacy commissioner, ex-CSIS officials, former prime ministers and international whistleblower Edward Snowden have all raised alarm about the bill's impacts on Canadians' freedom and privacy. Lawyers at the B.C. Civil Liberties Association have gone over the bill paragraph by paragraph, and we've outlined the parts of this document that concern us most.

**1. Bill C-51 drastically expands the definition of 'security.'**

When you think of being secure, you likely think of being safe from physical danger. But Bill C-51 defines security as not only safeguarding public safety, but





# GLOBAL CLASS STRUGGLE

## Outcry over Uber "women's jobs"

Protests by a coalition of trade unions and civil society groups has led UN Women to disassociate itself from a partnership with 'ride booking' app provider Uber just over a week after its March 10 announcement.

The unions and NGOs acted speedily to persuade the United Nations organisation to reconsider a strategic partnership with the company that would supposedly create 'a million' jobs for women drivers.

Brigitta Paas, ITF (International Transport Workers' Federation) vice president, commented: "There was an immediate rejection by unions and NGOs of this idea of a million jobs that we knew were likely to be insecure, ill paid, and potentially unsafe. We informed UN Women that although Uber says it operates in 55 countries around the world, almost 40 percent of national or local governments in those countries have said 'no' to the company one way or another. We are heartened to see that the groundswell of opinion has paid off. UN Women has listened to our arguments and moved to disassociate itself from Uber and its plans.

The global trade unions and civil society supporters warned that it is far from certain that Uber's promise to create 1 million jobs would actually promote gender equality. Women's economic empowerment, they said, is dependent on access to decent work: fair wages, job security, safety at work, social protection for families, freedom to organize.

Uber's own research revealed drivers' average annual earnings of \$15,000 (US) and a proliferation of part-time work. By classifying drivers as 'independent contractors', Uber denies them basic protections, from minimum wage pay to health care and other benefits on the job. Women already make up a high proportion of the precarious workforce, and increasing informal, piecemeal work contributes significantly to women's economic disempowerment and marginalization across the globe.

## Strike at banana plantations

A strike that has brought activity to a halt since January on three major banana plantations on Costa Rica's southern Caribbean coast, along the border with Panama, has forced the governments of both countries to intervene against corporate abuses.

More than 300 labourers, mostly indigenous Panamanians working on plantations for a branch of the U.S. corporation Fresh Del Monte, have been on strike since Jan. 16 to protest harassment of trade unionists, changes in schedules and working conditions, delayed payment of wages and illegal dismissals.

"The company laid us off on Dec. 31, and when it rehired us on Jan. 3 it said we were new workers and that any modification of the work applied to us. But according

to legal precedent, to be considered a new worker at least a month has to go by," Federico Abrego, one of the striking workers from Panama. Abrego and most of the strikers belong to the Ngobe and Bugle indigenous groups, who live in a self-governed indigenous county in Panama across the border from Costa Rica, where many go to find work. Between 70 and 90 percent of Panama's 417,000 indigenous people live in poverty, according to a 2014 United Nations report.

Observers say the latest conflict between workers and Fresh Del Monte is the result of decades of accumulation of land on Costa Rica's Caribbean coast, mainly by large foreign banana producers,



but in recent years by pineapple growers as well. The area where the strike is taking place is the second-poorest among the country's 81 municipalities.

Two years ago there was a big strike at local plantations over the subhuman conditions, poor wages and immigration problems, and a union was founded. In December, the collective agreement expired, and when they renewed it, the company infringed the rules by setting up a new union, dismissing all of the workers, and only rehiring back those who were in the new union. As companies expand production in the area, they have increasingly treated the land they lease as private property. The concentration of land ownership has forced many families to sell their land and become hired labour.

## Pay gap still 22% in Germany

March 20 was "Equal Pay Day" in Germany, symbolizing how far into 2015 women worked for free this year to earn the same wages as men. The day arrives later in Germany than in most of the European Union, where the gender gap is narrower. In Germany, the gap, which measures gross hourly wages of men and women, stood at 22% in 2014, unchanged over the previous five years, according to the government statistics agency. That is little improvement over the stubborn 23% gap for the years 2006 to 2009.

The gap may not be surprising, since in the capitalist western part of the country, married women couldn't open their own bank accounts until the 1950s and needed their husbands' permission to work outside the home until 1977. There is still a widespread view that only a female can be a family's primary caregiver, and

right-wing parties support financial incentives to women who keep their children at home rather than in daycare.

The pay gap exists despite the fact that gender equality is anchored in the constitution. The gap of 22% is unadjusted; it doesn't account for the fact that there are still typical careers for men and women. But according to the Goethe University's economic and labour institute IWAK in Frankfurt, the average gross income for full-time banking and insurance sector employees is 11% higher for men than for women. In health and social sectors, where many women gravitate, the gender wage gap is 21% for full-time workers, it said.

The statistics agency estimates that different sectors and careers, as well as an uneven distribution of demands for management and qualifications, account for around two-thirds of the gap. The remaining one-third of the gap is present despite workers doing the same jobs with equivalent qualifications—in other words, it appears to represent outright pay discrimination.

## Pickers strike in Mexican Baja

While the agricultural industry in Mexico's Baja California coastal fields over the past two decades, many workers still earn wages in the range of 110 pesos per day, about \$8. Refusing to accept this exploitation, thousands of farmworkers hit the streets to protest low wages recently, in their first strike in decades. Pickers not only stayed out of the fields, but they also stood shoulder to shoulder blocking the main highway at San Quintin, stalling traffic for hours and all but stopping the harvest at the height of the season.

The demonstration was led by newly formed alliance of produce industry groups dedicated to improving conditions for farmworkers in Mexico. The International Produce Alliance to Promote a Socially Responsible Industry, was established in February, after the Los Angeles Times documented widespread labour abuses at Mexican export farms.

Hundreds of police and soldiers dispersed crowds with rubber bullets and tear gas in running skirmishes that have resulted in more than 200 arrests. Some detainees were corralled in a field surrounded by police for 17 hours before being released. By the next morning, they were back protesting outside a government building in San Quintin where dozens of others remained in custody.

The strike, which began March 17, shut down schools and stores across the region and focussed attention on labour abuses at agribusinesses that export millions of tons of produce to the U.S. every year. Among those targeted are U.S.-based BerryMex, which grows strawberries and raspberries sold under the Driscoll label.

Farmworkers are seeking higher salaries, government benefits and overtime pay. They want agribusiness to stop sexual abuse

of female pickers at the hands of field bosses. Farmworker leaders and government and industry officials met on March 19 at a nearby hotel, but little progress was reported.

The arid land around San Quintin is one of Mexico's largest export regions, stretching along 80 km of coastal plains and valleys and employing tens of thousands of pickers. Most of them are indigenous people originally from southern Mexico, who have watched as agricultural fields bloom inside state-of-the-art agribusiness greenhouses. Some of the region's biggest growers are politically connected, having served in the Baja California state government.

## New walkouts hit Grasberg mine

Freeport McMoRan's Grasberg copper mine in Indonesia, the world's second-largest for the metal by capacity, reopened March 21 after a worker roadblock stopped production for five days and helped push the metal to a two-month high.

Grasberg has faced stubborn labour militancy in recent years. Workers seeking higher wages held a strike in 2011 and the mine was closed for months following a tunnel collapse in 2013. In the latest walkout, the protesters, who the union said numbered around 100, had been demanding bonuses as an incentive for not taking part in a work stoppage last year. Shipments of concentrates from stockpiles continued during the closure.

Freeport Indonesia said it was continuing a dialogue with the

workers on their demands. The company has not given any estimate on how much the closure had cost Freeport.

## Police attack teacher protest

West Bengal police and troops from the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) used batons on March 20 to attack teachers protesting outside the main gate of the headquarters of Eastern Coalfields Limited (ECL). Around 12 teachers were injured, including a 70-year-old retired woman, and another five were arrested for "creating a disturbance against law and order".

Centre of India Trade Unions (CITU) district secretary and former Communist MP Bansa Gopal Chowdhury condemned the incident. "Teachers are the pillars of our nation and should not have been beaten up by police publicly like criminals and animals," he said.

ECL has used declining enrolment to justify shutting eight of the 164 primary schools operated by the publicly-owned company. About 200 teachers from the closed schools had gathered outside the ECL headquarters to demand their unpaid salaries and pensions. But the company claims that it cannot meet these demands.

Krishna Chatterjee, a protesting teacher, said, "Police and CISF jawans mercilessly beat up the elderly teachers who were demonstrating peacefully to press for their demand." (Formed in 1983, the CISF is the world's largest industrial security force, under the control of India's Ministry of Home Affairs.)

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

## Join the Communist Party of Canada



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

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Hamilton, ON, L8H 2K3  
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# "Venezuela is not a threat"

*Letter to the people of the USA, by Nicolas Maduro and the Government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, March 17, 2015*

We are the people of Simon Bolívar, our people believe in peace and respect for all nations.

More than two centuries ago, our fathers founded a Republic on the basis that all persons are free and equal under the law. Our nation made the greatest sacrifices to guarantee South American people their right to choose their rulers and to enforce their own laws today. The historical legacy of our father, Simón Bolívar, is always remembered. Bolívar was a man who gave his life so we would inherit a nation of justice and equality.

We believe in peace, national sovereignty and international law.

We are a peaceful people. In two centuries of independence, we have never attacked another nation. Our people live in a region of peace, free of weapons of mass destruction, and in freedom to practice all religions. We uphold respect for international law and the sovereignty of all people of the world.

We are an open society. We are a working people, we care for our families, and we have freedom of religion. Immigrants from around the world live among us, whose diversity is respected. We have freedom of press and we are enthusiastic users of social media.

We are friends of the American people: the histories of our people have been connected since the beginning of our struggles for free-

dom. Francisco de Miranda, a Venezuelan hero, fought with the American people during their independence fight. We share the idea that freedom and independence are fundamental elements for the development of our nations.

The relations between our peoples have always been peaceful and respectful. Historically, we have shared business relations in strategic areas. Venezuela has always been a responsible and trustful energy provider for the American people. Since 2005, Venezuela has provided "heating oil" through subsidies for low-income communities in the United States, thanks to our company CITGO. This contribution has helped tens of thousands of American citizens survive in harsh conditions, giving them relief, and necessary support in times of need, evidencing how solidarity can create powerful alliances across borders.

Incredibly, the U.S. government has declared our country a threat

to its national security and foreign policy.

In a disproportionate action, the government of Obama has issued a "National Emergency" declaring Venezuela as a threat to its national security (Executive Order, 03-09-2015). This unilateral and aggressive measure taken by the United States Government against our country is not only unfounded and in violation of basic principles of sovereignty and self-determination under international law, but also has been unanimously rejected by all 33 nations of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States and the 12 member states of the Union of South American Nations. In a statement on March 14, 2015, UNASUR reiterated its firm rejection of these coercive measures that do not contribute to the peace, stability and democracy in our region and called on President Obama to revoke his Executive Order.

We reject unilateralism and interventionism.

President Obama, without any authority to interfere in our internal affairs, unilaterally issued a set of sanctions against Venezuelan officials with potentially far-reaching implications, interfering in our constitutional order and our justice system.

We advocate for a multipolar world. We believe that our world must be based on the rules of international law, without interference in the internal affairs of other countries. We are convinced that the relationship of respect between all the nations is the only path for strengthening peace and coexistence, as well as for ensuring a more just world.

We honour our freedoms and uphold our rights.

Never before in the history of our nations has a U.S. president attempted to govern Venezuelans by decree. It is a tyrannical and imperial order and it pushes us back into the darkest days of the relationship between the U.S. and Latin America and the Caribbean.

In the name of our long-term friendship we alert our American brothers and sisters, lovers of justice and freedom, of the illegal aggression committed by your government on your behalf. We will not allow our friendship with the people of the U.S. to be affected

by this senseless and groundless decision by President Obama.

We demand:

1) The U.S. Government immediately cease hostile actions against Venezuelan people and democracy.

2) President Obama abolish the Executive Order that declares Venezuela a threat to U.S. national security, as has been requested by the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR).

3) The U.S. Government retract its libellous and defamatory statements and actions against the honourable Venezuelan officials who have just obeyed our laws and our constitution.

Our sovereignty is sacred. The principles of the founding fathers of the United States of America are followed today with the same dignity by the people of Simón Bolívar. In the name of our mutual love for national independence we want the government of President Obama to think about and rectify this dangerous precedent.

We are convinced that the defense of our freedom is a right we shall never give up because the future of the humanity lies also in our country. As Simón Bolívar said: "The freedom of the New World is the hope of the universe". "Venezuela is not a threat, but a hope." "Independence or nothing." ●



Vancouver rally in solidarity with Venezuela. (Photo: Roberto Diaz)

## The Facts: Gender Inequality and Violence Against Women and Girls

Source:  
[www.advocatesforyouth.org](http://www.advocatesforyouth.org)

All over the globe, violence and discrimination against women and girls violates their human rights and severely compromises sexual and reproductive health. Harmful practices, including female genital cutting/mutilation, femicide, gender-based violence, and early marriage, damage girls' physical being and self-worth by reinforcing gender-based marginalization and inequality. Gender inequalities and biases pervade cultures worldwide, preventing women and girls from fully realizing their rights to reproductive health and equality.

Discrimination against women and girls often begins at conception. Girls can be perceived as a financial burden for the family due to small income contributions and costly dowry demands. In India, pre-natal sex selection and infanticide accounted for the pre-natal termination and death of half a million girls per year over the last 20 years.

In the Republic of Korea, 30 percent of pregnancies identified as female fetuses were terminated. Contrastingly, over 90 percent of pregnancies identified as male fetuses resulted in normal birth. According to China's 2000 census, the ratio of newborn girls to boys was 100:119. The biological standard is 100:103.

The rate of femicide (murder of women and girls) has significantly escalated.

In Mexico, the high murder and disappearance rate of young women in Ciudad Juarez has received international attention.

In Guatemala, the number of femicides rose from 303 in 2001 to

722 in 2007, with the majority of the victims between 16 and 30.

"Dowry deaths" are responsible for the murders of thousands of women every year, especially in South Asia, because their dowry was considered insufficient. In India alone, there were almost 7,000 dowry deaths in 2005, with the majority of victims aged 15-34.

"Honour killings" continue to take place in Pakistan, Turkey, Jordan, Syria, Egypt, Lebanon, Iran, Yemen, Morocco and other Mediterranean and Gulf Countries.

In Pakistan nearly 500 women a year are the victims of Honour killings. In a study of female deaths in Egypt, 47 percent of female rape victims were then killed because of the dishonour the rape was thought to bring to the family. In 2002, 315 women and girls in Bangladesh endured another form of violence, acid attacks. In 2005, even after the introduction of more serious punishments for the crime, over 200 women were attacked.

Physical and sexual abuse of girls is a serious concern across all regions.

In Nigeria, a treatment centre reported that 21 percent of female patients requiring treatment for sexually transmitted infections were under fifteen years old.

In South Africa, one in four men report having had sex with a woman against her will by the time he was 18 years old. Research among young women in sub-Saharan Africa found that partner violence and the fear of abuse stopped girls from saying "no" to sex and jeopardized condom use.

In the United States, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that 20 percent of young women experience intimate partner violence. ●

## Climate change threat needs a socialist response

By Rob Gowland, from *The Guardian*, weekly paper of the Communist Party of Australia

The British news-paper *The Guardian* has come out fighting on the subject of climate change. The paper's editor-in-chief Alan Rusbridger in a statement says that "climate change stands out as perhaps the single most important issue now facing humanity" and notes that "climate change will probably, within the lifetime of our children, cause untold havoc and stress to our species."

*The Guardian* also published an extended excerpt from Naomi Klein's award-winning and best-selling work, *This Changes Everything*: "We know that if we continue on our current path of allowing emissions to rise year after year, climate change will change everything about our world. Major cities will very likely drown, ancient cultures will be swallowed by the seas, and there is a very high chance that our children will spend a great deal of their lives fleeing and recovering from vicious storms and extreme droughts. ... There are ways of preventing this grim future, or at least making it a lot less dire. But the catch is that these also involve changing everything. For us high consumers, it involves changing how we live, how our economies function, even the stories we tell

about our place on earth.

"What if," she asks, "we realised that real disaster response means fighting inequality and building a just economy – that everyone working for a healthy food system is already a climate warrior? So too, are people fighting for public transit in Brazil; housing and immigrant rights in the United States; battling austerity in Europe; extraction in Australia; pollution in China and India; environmental crime in Africa; and the bad trade deals that lock in all these ills everywhere."

As readers of our *Guardian* know, "fighting inequality and building a just economy" means doing away with capitalism and replacing it with Socialism, for there is no other way to achieve that aim. People who want to build a just economy while retaining capitalism (which is predicated on inequality and exploitation of the many by the few) are doomed to disappointment.

Klein also dismisses "the assertion that we have been held back [in combatting climate change] by a lack of technological solutions." She points out that "Power from renewable sources like wind and water predates the use of fossil fuels and is becoming cheaper, more efficient, and easier to store every year. The past two decades have seen an explosion of ingenious zero-waste design, as well as green urban planning. Not

only do we have the technical tools to get off fossil fuels, we also have no end of small pockets where these low carbon lifestyles have been tested with tremendous success."

She wants to see the same kind of approach used to achieve "the kind of large-scale transition that would give us a collective chance of averting catastrophe" and is puzzled by the fact that apparently it continues "to elude us".

She rejects the idea that it might be "human nature" holding us back. "In fact," she says, "we humans have shown ourselves willing to collectively sacrifice in the face of threats many times". We could point to the extraordinary sacrifices of the Soviet people in defeating fascism, but Klein uses examples drawn instead from the Anglo-US experience in the same conflict. "To support fuel conservation during World War 2, pleasure driving was virtually eliminated in the UK, and between 1938 and 1944, use of public transit went up by 87% in the US and by 95% in Canada. Twenty million US households were growing victory gardens in 1943, and their yields accounted for 42% of the fresh vegetables consumed that year."

What is holding us back, of course, is the fact that capitalism makes its top priority not the well-being of humanity or even the planet, but the pursuit of profit. ●



# Human rights ignored in Khadr's 13 year imprisonment

By Kathleen Copps, at [rabble.ca](http://rabble.ca), March 17, 2015

Those who value human rights, a fair judicial system and the rule of law, find it incomprehensible that Omar Khadr is still incarcerated. Soon he will again be turning to Canadian courts, which have so often, in his long struggle for justice, ruled in his favour.

In the next few months, a number of legal challenges finally could result in his freedom. With these cases on the horizon, every Canadian committed to basic tenets of justice and democracy is urged to help cover Khadr's mounting legal costs.

For over a decade, Khadr's lawyer Dennis Edney, has defended Khadr on a pro bono basis, at great financial and emotional cost. The Free Omar Khadr Campaign has launched a fundraising campaign in order to help cover current legal expenses.

Because mainstream media has so often been a mouthpiece for our government's demonization of Khadr, Canadians have been exposed to a perversion of truth that has had tragic consequences for Khadr. We have accepted falsehoods which have legitimized ongoing violations of his rights, and failed to hold our government accountable - not only for failing to protect Khadr, but, in fact, being complicit in his torture.

"There is no greater betrayal of Canada than for our government to be implicated in the torture of a Canadian citizen," said Edney in a speech at Carleton University. "And we have all become complicit by our silence."

Despite ten years of torture in Guantanamo and several Federal and Supreme Court rulings in Khadr's favour, our government, rather than redressing the violation of those rights, insists on his continued incarceration. Khadr, currently imprisoned at Bowden Institute in Innisfail, Alberta, is now 28 years old, and July 2015 will mark his 13th year of imprisonment.

On March 24 and 25 a bail application will be heard by the Court of Queen's Bench of Alberta, requesting that Khadr be released pending the outcome of his case before the U.S. Military Commission. The appeal of his 'conviction' and dismissal of the 'charges' are severely hampered by bureaucratic processes and will likely take years to be heard.

Fortunately in recent rulings, the US Court of Military Commission Review struck down the convictions of other Guantanamo detainees, thus giving strong indication that Khadr could also win his appeal.

According to Professor David Glazier's recent publication which focuses on the validity of military commission charges: "The only war crime present in Khadr's Guantánamo courtroom appears to be denial of a fair trial, and the perpetrator is the government, not the defendant."

If Khadr's bail application is successful, Edney and his family are hoping they will be able to welcome him into their home. Edney's wife, Patricia, a manager with Alberta Health Services, has visited Khadr since his transfer

from Millhaven to Edmonton in 2013 and has a great deal of respect and confidence in him.

Khadr has been invited to continue the educational opportunities offered by the dedicated professors at King's College University who have provided Khadr with an education even during his years in Guantanamo. They are part of a strong community of support Edmonton has established for Khadr - a network of teachers, friends, professionals and members of various faith communities who hold Khadr in high regard and admire his personal qualities and strength of character...

In 2014, Edney was successful in persuading the Alberta Court of Appeal that since the U.S. had sentenced Khadr as a juvenile, he should be transferred to a provincial institution where he can access the benefits of the Youth Criminal Justice Act.

The Conservative government appealed the decision of the Alberta Court of Appeal. In so doing, it continued a pattern of challenging every decision favourable to Khadr over the past ten years, plundering millions of dollars of Canadian taxpayer money. The Supreme Court will hear the appeal on May 14, 2015.

In June 2015, Khadr will be applying for parole. His legal team has formally put the warden, David Pelham, on notice that he is

obligated under the Correctional and Conditional Release Act to make a security assessment of Khadr. Refusal to do so makes Khadr's chances of parole somewhat grim.

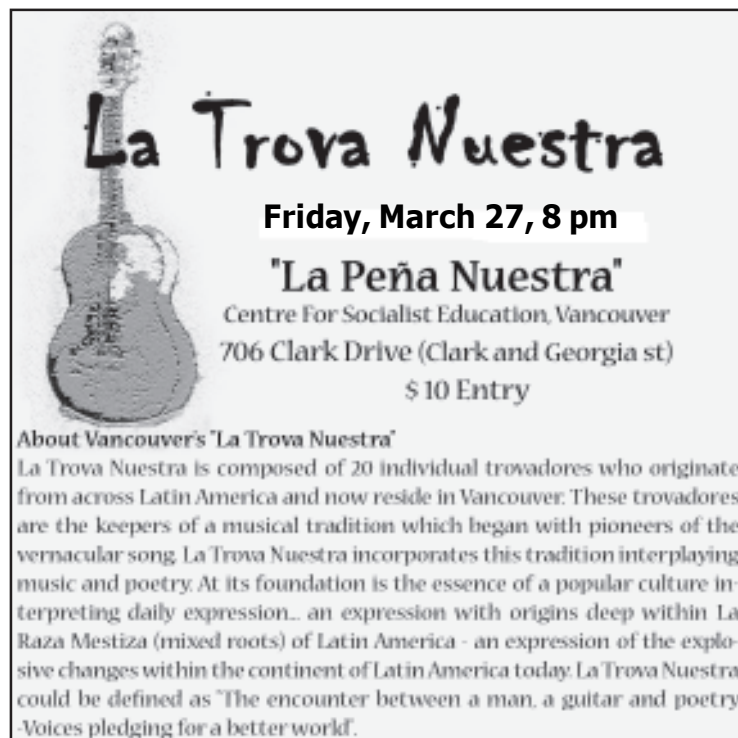
A number of professionals including the Corrections Services ombudsperson, Khadr's parole officer and Dr. Stephen Xenakis, a psychiatrist and retired brigadier-general with the U.S. Army, who spent hundreds of hours interviewing Khadr; as well as a cross section of Canadians, have all recommended Khadr be classified as a minimum risk.

In the event parole is denied, lawyers will file for a judicial review of that decision.

The tragedy of Khadr's years of abuse, torture and continued incarceration, is a dreadful reminder of what is at risk when fundamental rights are awarded to some, denied to others. Citizens have an obligation to be vigilant and outspoken, especially, as in the case of Khadr when our own government violates our human rights, international laws and threatens our own security.

At a time, when legislation like Bill C-51 will further jeopardize our fundamental rights, Edney's struggle for Khadr is a defence of the rights of all Canadians and deserves our support. ●

For more information: [www.freomar.ca](http://www.freomar.ca)



**La Trova Nuestra**  
Friday, March 27, 8 pm  
"La Peña Nuestra"  
Centre For Socialist Education, Vancouver  
706 Clark Drive (Clark and Georgia st)  
\$10 Entry

**About Vancouver's 'La Trova Nuestra'**  
La Trova Nuestra is composed of 20 individual trovadores who originate from across Latin America and now reside in Vancouver. These trovadores are the keepers of a musical tradition which began with pioneers of the vernacular song. La Trova Nuestra incorporates this tradition interplaying music and poetry. At its foundation is the essence of a popular culture interpreting daily expression... an expression with origins deep within La Raza Mestiza (mixed roots) of Latin America - an expression of the explosive changes within the continent of Latin America today. La Trova Nuestra could be defined as "The encounter between a man, a guitar and poetry -Voices pledging for a better world".

## Revolutionary Culture Calendar 2015



To order a copy of the People's Voice 2015 Revolutionary Culture Calendar, send \$15 (includes postage and handling) to People's Voice, 706 Clark Drive, Vancouver, BC, V5L 3J1.



## MUSIC NOTES

By Wally Brooker

### Legend & Common speak out at Oscars

The Oscar acceptance speech for Best Original Song by R&B singer, John Legend, and hip-hop artist/actor, Common, was one of those moments when the reality of the crisis of American democracy breaks through the fog of the mainstream media. After having just performed 'Glory', their theme song for director Ava DuVernay's acclaimed film, *Selma*, the Oscar recipients drew the parallel between the courageous civil rights campaign led by Martin Luther King Jr. fifty years ago and the contemporary struggle for racial justice in America. Referring to the Edmund Pettus Bridge, site of the Bloody Sunday incident dramatized in the film, Common said, "This bridge was once a landmark of a divided nation, but it is now a symbol of change". He left it to Legend to drive the point home. "We wrote this song for a film about events that took place fifty years ago", the singer said, "but Selma is now, because the struggle for justice is right now. We know the Voting Rights Act that they fought for 50 years ago is being compromised today. We live in the most incarcerated country in the world. There are more black men under correctional control today than were under slavery in 1850." Look online for the official video, with lyrics, of 'Glory'.

### SXSW: No to 'Hipster Apartheid'

The U.S. Campaign to End the Israeli Occupation has blasted SXSW, the annual Austin-based festival of film, music, and interactive media, for its participation in the Israel government's "Brand Israel" propaganda campaign. Local groups, including, Austin Artists Against Apartheid, Jewish Voices for Peace-Austin, and Code Pink-Austin, have joined in the protest, launching a "No Hipster Apartheid" petition campaign against the festival, which blithely ignores the Palestinian call for boycott, divestment, and sanctions. SXSW, held annually in March, attracts more than 130,000 visitors to Austin and they spend a lot of money. In recent years SXSW has been criticized for abandoning its original grassroots focus and becoming increasingly commercial. Its board of directors has no qualms about helping to put a pretty face on Israel, scheduling events with slogans like "Israel: Land of Creation" and "Israel: Small Country, Big Ideas". The "Brand Israel" marketing campaign was launched in 2006 to combat growing global solidarity with Palestinians. Its founders have specifically targeted liberal communities with a strong "creative class" for their message. For more info visit [www.electronicintifada.net](http://www.electronicintifada.net).

### Celebrating Ewan MacColl

The centenary of Ewan MacColl is being observed in the U.K. with a host of tribute concerts, radio broadcasts, and feature articles. MacColl was a folk singer, songwriter, poet, actor, playwright, record producer and cultural organizer, as well as a labour activist and militant communist. He was born James Henry Miller on January 25, 1915 in Manchester, the son of a socialist iron worker and Gaelic-speaking charwoman. As an unemployed teenager Miller educated himself at the public library, joined the Young Communist League, and immersed himself in writing songs and scripts for agitprop theatre. His partner for many years was actress and director Joan Littlewood. The two became influential figures in England's alternate theatre world, establishing what eventually became the world-famous Theatre Workshop. While Littlewood went on to become the doyenne of radical theatre in the U.K., MacColl (who changed his name in 1945) branched out into folk music. In 1953 he founded the Ballads and Blues Club in London's Soho district, and exerted a powerful influence on the 60's folk revival. In 1961 he married the young American folksinger Peggy Seeger (Pete's half-sister). Their partnership, musical and personal, flourished until MacColl's death in 1989. Besides their recordings together, they founded and hosted the Critics Group, an innovative collective of folk music and theatre artists who met regularly in the sixties and early seventies. Ewan MacColl's most famous compositions are 'The First Time Ever I Saw Your Face' and 'Dirty Old Town', but all of his recordings are worth exploring, both for his consistently fine singing and for his passionate commitment to the working class. For more info: [www.ewanmaccoll.co.uk](http://www.ewanmaccoll.co.uk).

### Todd Serious 1974-2015

Western Canada's rock music community lost a bright light when Todd Jenkins (aka Todd Serious), lead singer for the punk band The Rebel Spell, was killed in a March 7th rock-climbing accident in Nevada. He was 41. Jenkins was described in a *Georgia Straight* tribute as "one of the most articulate and passionate members of the Vancouver punk scene". His lyrics covered a wide-range of social and ecological justice issues, including police brutality, prisons, colonialism, native rights, and animal rights. Since the band's inception in 2002, The Rebel Spell has produced four albums: *Expression in Layman's Terms* (2003), *Days of Rage* (2005), *It's a Beautiful Future* (2011), and *Last Run* (2014). They've also released an EP: "Four Songs About Freedom" (2007). For info: [www.therebelspell.com](http://www.therebelspell.com).



## St. Catharines Muslim community holds "Je Suis Moi" panel on Islamophobia

By Asad Ali

ST CATHARINES - After several Muslim university and high school students experienced Islamophobia in the classroom and in public places, including a teacher instructing that terrorism is based on Islam, they organized a public forum titled "Je Suis Moi". The forum was through the auspices of the Islamic Society of St. Catharines as well as the Qamar Foundation, a youth-oriented charity.

In addition to youth panellists detailing their local experiences, the event included spoken word performances. A "community leaders" panel included a historian, a social scientist studying media monopolization, a speaker from the Canadian Peace Congress, as well as the imam (prayer leader) of the local mosque and a specialist in

inter-faith dialogue.

Historian Dr. Samah Marie gave examples from Islamic history of co-existence and religious diversity which contradict Islamophobic myths being inflamed by media coverage of the "Islamic State". Communications specialist Dr. Scott Henderson talked about the danger of monopolistic concentration of media in Canada which makes it difficult to challenge racism. Saleh Waziruddin of the Niagara Coalition for Peace and an executive member of the Canadian Peace Congress explained that the biggest misconception was that radicalization comes from religion, as those who have been arrested said they were radicalized by the wars. FBI and European data shows Muslims are responsible for only 6% of terrorist attacks in the US and 2% in Europe over the last 10 years.

In response to an audience question he explained that "Jihadist" is an Islamophobic term because it uses a pillar of the faith, Jihad which means struggle, as a derogatory term.

Audience members asked about how to stop people from going to Canada to the "Islamic State", and answers ranged from pointing out the greater number of Canadian troops being sent by the government, as well as the need to address racism and the wars as causes of radicalization. The context of the impending danger from Bill C-51, driven by Islamophobia and racist coverage in the mainstream media, was spelled out at the forum, as well as the need to counter it through panel discussions such as "Je Suis Moi" as well as demonstrations and letters to the editor. ●

## Communists speak out against C-51...

"Most Canadians aren't even aware of what is in the bill," Rowley said. "The Conservatives really want to declare war on civil liberties in this country. They want to declare war on you."

Rowley has also appeared on panel discussions in Ottawa and at the University of Guelph. In Ottawa she was joined by a representative of the Canadian Peace Alliance.

The connection between the attack on democratic rights and the struggle for peace will be highlighted as part of a mid-April speaking tour organized by the British Columbia Provincial Committee of the CPC. The tour will visit Nanaimo, Victoria, Vancouver, Surrey, Kelowna, and Kamloops, featuring Johan Boyden as well as, in several locations, BC organizer Hassan Azimikor. By this time, the Bill may be under discussion in the Senate.

Miguel Figueroa, the CPC leader, has already been to Winnipeg, where he spoke at a large rally, and

then Edmonton. "Capitalism is in a deepening crisis," Figueroa told the Winnipeg rally, noting both the systemic crisis of capitalism and the most recent downturn starting in 2007-2008.

"What happened when austerity was imposed, in a very sharp way?" Figueroa asked. "People started to fight back, and that's why they are bringing in this agenda, to repress the right of descent, to intimidate the working

people, and make us cower and retreat. The struggle against C-51 and the struggle to defend and extend social rights, individual rights and liberties is in a very fundamental way connected to the struggle to move our country in a fundamentally different direction, to put people before profits, and to build the kind of Canada the people need, deserve and in fact have every right to win," he said to loud cheers from the crowd. ●

### 23rd Annual People's Voice Victory Banquet

Saturday, May 2, 6:00 pm  
Victoria Drive Community Hall  
2026 E. 43rd Ave, Vancouver

Full details in next issue. To reserve tickets (\$20), ph. 604-254-9836 or 255-2041

## Six things you should know...

continued from page 7

**institutions like Health Canada and the Canada Revenue Agency to share information about you with the RCMP.**

The proposed Security of Canada Information Sharing Act (part of Bill C-51) would allow government institutions — including non-security-related institutions like Health Canada and the Canada Revenue Agency — to share information amongst themselves without a warrant if they believe the information may be relevant to national security.

Given that no one wants to be seen as responsible in case of a security breach, the default will be to share as much information as possible. Massive information sharing does not mean better security. Not only does this jeopardize the privacy of the individuals whose information is being shared, but it may actually make it harder for investigators to detect real security threats: when looking for a needle in a haystack, it hardly helps to add more hay.

**5. Canada already has a troubling**

**regime of preventative arrest and detention; Bill C-51 proposes to make it even worse.**

Currently the Criminal Code permits the police to arrest, detain and impose restrictions (such as a curfew or travel ban) on someone who has never been (and may never be) charged with a crime if they have good reasons to believe a terrorist activity will be carried out if these actions aren't taken. Bill C-51 would lower the threshold for these actions to situations where the police believe that a terrorist activity might be carried out. It also doubles the amount of time an individual can be detained without charge. Innocent people could be arrested and detained on mere suspicion of future dangerousness.

**6. It would give CSIS the power to act like a police force, while still allowing it to operate secretly as an intelligence gathering service.**

Bill C-51 would radically redefine the role of CSIS to include the ability to act on — rather than merely to collect — security intelligence. This ignores the lessons of history. The 1960s and

1970s saw serious rights abuses undertaken by the RCMP under its "security intelligence" mandate. CSIS was created in the 1980s for the express purpose of separating Canada's intelligence agency from its police force.

As an intelligence agency, CSIS is permitted to conduct much of its work in secret, and the details of most of its activities are never revealed publicly. But that's precisely why CSIS should not be permitted to also operate as a police force: this secrecy means that rights violations by CSIS are more difficult to detect — and once detected, more difficult to remedy — than if they were the result of actions undertaken by law enforcement agencies.

Carmen Cheung is a lawyer with the British Columbia Civil Liberties Association. Alyssa Stryker is the organization's caseworker. During Cheung's testimony at the House of Commons committee hearings on Bill C-51, Conservative MP Rick Norlock asked whether she is "fundamentally opposed to taking terrorists off the streets." ●

## What's Left

### Nanaimo, BC

**Stop Bill C-51**, forum with CPC Central Organizer Johan Boyden, Saturday, April 11, ph. 604-254-9836 for details.

### Victoria, BC

**Stop Bill C-51**, forum with CPC Central Organizer Johan Boyden and PV Editor Kimball Cariou, Friday, April 10, ph. 604-254-9836 for time and location.

### Vancouver, BC

**La Trova Nuestra**, evening of Latin American music, admission \$10, 8 pm, Fridays, March 27 and April 24, CSE, 706 Clark Drive.

**Left Film Night**, 5 pm, Sat., April 4, at the CSE, 706 Clark Drive. Two films, "Fidel", and then "Mi Amigo Hugo" (documentary on Hugo Chavez by Oliver Stone). Ph. 604-255-2041 for details.

**Stop Bill C-51**, public forum with CPC Central Organizer Johan Boyden, Tuesday, April 14, 7:30 pm, Centre for Socialist Education, 706 Clark Drive.

**People's Voice Victory Banquet**, Sat. May 2, 6 pm, Victorial Drive Community Hall,

2026 E. 43 Ave., tickets from PV office, 604-254-9836.

**Mother's Day Pancake Breakfast**, proceeds to People's Voice, Sunday, May 10, 10 am-1 pm, Chilean Co-op, 3390 School Ave. All you can eat, \$15 adults, (\$8 under 12), see ad this page for details.

### Surrey, BC

**Stop Bill C-51**, public forum with CPC Central Organizer Johan Boyden, Sunday, April 19, 6:00 pm, 7566-120 St., (PICS Hall), ph. Harjit, 604-543-7179 for info.

### Toronto, ON

**Dinner and Evening with Kimball Cariou**, People's Voice Editor. Live music, food, cash bar, \$10, Sat., March 28, 7 pm, 290 Danforth Ave. (Chester Subway). Ph. 416-469-2481 for info.

**Meet PV Editor Kimball Cariou**, 2 pm, Sunday, March 29, at 209 Oakwood. Come and talk shop with our Editor, and find out how you can help build a stronger fight for working people's rights! Call 416-469-2481 for more info.

A People's Voice petition against Bill C-51 can be signed online at <http://stopc51.tumblr.com/>.

## People's Voice deadlines

April 16-30 issue: Thursday, April 2

May 1-15 issue: Tuesday, April 16

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



Take your mom  
out for breakfast!

**Sunday, May 10**

ANNUAL  
**PANCAKE  
BREAKFAST**

**10 a.m.**

(last call for pancakes - noon)

**\$15 (kids under 12 \$8)**

Enjoy the 'All You Can Eat Breakfast' inside: Bistro seating downstairs OR outside: patio seating under the tent. No stairs to climb!



**\*\*Note new location:**  
Chilean Co-op  
common building  
3390 School Ave., Van.  
(near Kingsway and Tyne)

For information contact Linda, 604-421-7056



# Imperialism's trusted governess

By Zoltan Zigedy, <http://zzs-blg.blogspot.com/>

Her face is on the cover of *Bloomberg Businessweek* (3/9-3/15/2015) next to a dramatic headline: Putin vs. the Accountant. Her name is Natalie Jaresko. And, if Bloomberg's Brett Forrest is to be believed, she and some of her colleagues may hold the fate of Western Ukraine in their hands. As the Minister of Finance, she must find a way to salvage an economy that is in free fall.

Forrest paints a flattering, sympathetic picture of a feisty expatriate determined to rescue Ukraine economically and from the clutches of the evil Putin. Jaresko is encountered visiting hospitalized Ukrainian troops wounded while attacking the resistance fighters in Eastern Ukraine or, as Forrest prefers: consoling "convalescing veterans of recent battles against Russian forces and their proxies in the Ukrainian East. 'When did you serve?' she asks, moving slowly from room to room. 'How were you wounded?'"

Apart from recounting Jaresko's mimicking of the obsequious and opportunistic condescension of veterans displayed universally by Western politicians, Forrest offers a calculated adulation of the Minister that conjures many less laudatory questions and suspicions.

For someone who holds the fate of Ukraine in her hands, Jaresko appears to be somewhat of a carpetbagger. Her appointment to lead the Finance Ministry came before she was granted Ukrainian citizenship, a fact that would only be curious outside of a government where two other cabinet members were also not citizens when appointed: her counterpart in the Ministry of Economy and Trade, Lithuanian Aivaras Abromavicius, and Minister of Health, Georgian Alexander Kvitashvili. Jaresko, a US citizen, has two years to renounce her US citizenship. She and her other imported colleagues were appointed by Prime Minister Arseniy Yatsunyk, the infamous "Yats" vetted by foul-mouthed US Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs, Victoria Nuland.

Obviously the US and the EU had to scramble after they encouraged and supported the

coup deposing the elected President in February of 2014. They had to reach outside Ukraine to find reliable clients to support the hastily elected candy baron, Petro Poroshenko. The story of the

entrusted with this task surely had the confidence of highly placed officials in the US government.

Her 1995 venture was absorbed by a new investment management firm, Horizon Capital, which she



Ukraine's finance minister Natalie Jaresko.

clumsy construction of the post-coup government from non-nationals, careerists, and unstable rightists would make for an entertaining episode of *House of Cards* if Western journalists had the spine to tell it.

So what has Jaresko done to deserve a phone call from Nuland? Er, Poroshenko?

Her credentials begin with a master's degree from the Kennedy School at Harvard, a training ground for those tasked with delivering the US ruling class message to friends and foes alike. Doors opened immediately at the State Department's Soviet Affairs division. She coordinated her work at the State Department with all of the big national and international trade and economic organizations. When Ukraine left the Soviet Union, Jaresko was perfectly suited to operate on the US State Department's behalf at the newly installed US Embassy. Her position - Chief of the Economic Section - was a trusted position of a type often calling for close collaboration with covert agencies.

She parlayed that experience into the creation of an "investment" vehicle for Ukrainian businesses funded by USAID, again a position of great trust and associated in many countries with US influence peddling. Documentation of the modest seed capital from USAID - \$150 million - can be found at <http://johnhelmer.net/?p=12317>. One would expect that a 30-year-old

founded in 2006. Journalist John Helmer documents the consistent losses of Horizon Capital in his detailed report on *Dances with Bears* (12-03-2014). Despite his discovering only two years of modest gains in a decade, both *Bloomberg* and *Forbes* laud the success of Horizon Capital.

Helmer also discovers the fallout from Jaresko's divorce from her spouse and business partner. Her former husband, Ihor Figlus, has accused her of saddling him with debt from "improper" loans. Their contentious relationship continues. Helmer comments: "It hasn't been rare for American spouses to go into the asset management business in the former Soviet Union, and make profits underwritten by the US Government with information supplied from their US Government positions or contacts. It is exceptional for them to fall out over the loot."

Jaresko's own account of her recruitment bears telling: "...representatives from a head-hunting firm hired by the new government, WE partners, visited Jaresko at the Horizon Capital offices. They discussed candidates for various government posts before asking her if she would be willing to serve..." (*Bloomberg Businessweek*)

While some may find it odd that an independent, sovereign state would engage a US-based (parent company: Korn Ferry) head-hunting firm to fill top political

posts, Jaresko explains: "I think the president and prime minister wanted me to bring [my] experience." Within a week, she was vetted and appointed.

Anticipating skepticism, Bloomberg's reporter, Brett Forrest, notes that "Jaresko's appointment... provides fuel to conspiracy theorists..."

Indeed.

His apologetics continue: "No matter their origin, these ministers - and the numerous Poles, Germans, Canadians, and other foreigners who've joined the government in senior and mid-level positions - are pulling the same oar." Forrest joins a host of Western journalists and commentators who find no contradiction in a rabidly nationalistic government staffed with foreigners.

Despite generous aid from the US, the EU, and the IMF, Ukraine has experienced a 21% loss of industrial production, a 69% drop in the value of the currency against the dollar and a 6.9% decline in

GDP in the last year.

Estimates of Ukraine's debt go as high as \$40 billion. Recently, Jaresko announced that investors should expect a "haircut" which "...will probably involve a combination of maturity extensions, coupon reductions and principal reductions."

Compare the matter-of-fact reporting of this announcement in papers like *The Financial Times* or *The Wall Street Journal* to the hysterical media response to the faintest hint of a possible reduction in Greek sovereign debt. Clearly assuming client status, selling your sovereignty to imperialism, earns generous debt forgiveness.

Despite the media-spun fairy tales about Ukraine's struggle for democracy and independence, the facts challenge that narrative. Behind the curtain of deceit and fabrication is a motley crew of foreign agents, corrupted officials, oligarchs, and neo-Nazis. But one would never know it from the Western media. ●



Anti-fascist rally in Kharkov

## Ukraine: Donbass leaders warn Kiev against autonomy U-turn

By Ben Chacko, *UK Morning Star*

The leaders of Donetsk and Lugansk warned on March 18 that changes to a Ukrainian law on granting regional autonomy could prompt an end to the ceasefire in the country.

Alexander Zakharchenko and Igor Plotnitsky, who head the two Donbass regions controlled by anti-fascist forces resisting the Kiev regime, said amendments to a Bill passed by the Ukrainian parliament on March 17 marked an attempt to get out of the Minsk agreement. "We agreed to a special status for the Donbass for a renewed Ukraine, although our people wanted total independence," they said in a joint statement. "But Ukraine did not renew itself."

A key objection is a clause insisting that Kiev authorities conduct elections in the Donbass before any special status can take effect. Zakharchenko and Plotnitsky won the leadership of their regions in elections last November 2, with 78 and 63 per cent of the vote respectively, but Ukraine does not accept those elections as valid.

The Ukrainian Foreign Ministry said granting autonomy without Kiev supervising its own elections in separatist areas would "legitimise unlawful rebel governments."

But Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said Ukraine's "decree" meant "only when these territories are led by somebody suitable for Kiev will special status come into effect."

Meanwhile, Ukraine's Communist Party has denounced a new government Bill aimed at curbing protests. The Bill, which would see participation in "unauthorised" demonstrations punished by up to three years' imprisonment, was a bid to "legitimise violence against anyone who opposes war, militarisation and the rehabilitation of fascism," the party said. ●

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