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# people's VOICE



The campaign against  
Bill C-51 - pages 2 & 7

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## QUEBEC

### Unions and students in the fight against austerity

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### Capitalism, environmental crisis, and socialism

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### 3 Victory at York U!

Solidarity on the picket line and in the wider community was the key factor in a historic collective bargaining victory by 3700 teaching assistants, graduate assistants and other education workers at York University in Toronto.

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Alberta's long-ruling Conservatives have called an early election, and the Communist Party will have two candidates on the ballot.

### 9 Escalating war

Originally pitched as a limited, six-month mission to train Iraqi troops and bomb ISIS positions, Canada's newest war has been extended for at least another year, and expanded into neighbouring Syria.



# Quebec anti-austerity battle heating up

By Johan Boyden

Mobilizations to stop the austerity measures of Philippe Couillard's Quebec Liberal government got a boost in late March, after a meeting of the Front Commun, the Common Front of Quebec public sector trade unions. Then the student movement brought over 70,000 protesters into the streets on April 2, its largest mobilization since the 2012 strike.

In late March, the Liberal budget presented by Couillard's finance minister Carlos Leitao ended any illusions that negotiations could lead to a victory for public sector unions. Calling the budget "austerity at light speed," and a gift to big business, the labour movement condemned the proposals including a two-year wage freeze. On March 31 the Front Commun concluded further negotiations would be a dead-end and began mobilizing for a strike.

Starting from April 1, Quebec labour law requires that the Front Commun unions undertake three

months of negotiations in each sector and workplace before they can actually strike. During this time, core essential services will be defined through a series of complicated, intricate formulations. In parallel, the Minister of Labour will also have to formally appoint a mediator before there can be a strike.

## Student action

At the same time, a series of student actions have taken place, with twice-daily mobilizations by thousands in the streets. A broad range of departments are in action, such as medical students. Some colleges have been on strike for two weeks.

The Liberals apparently demanded the police forces bring down a fist on these demonstrations, culminating in one young woman, Naomi Trudeau-Tremblay, being shot at point blank range in the face with a tear gas canister. In the wake of public outrage, police activity has been more cautious.

The Universities are now bringing injunctions against the strike and expelling student activist leaders.

Nevertheless, on April 2, about 160,000 students declared a strike (including some English-language schools like Vanier College and McGill Law Students Association).

About 75,000 students flooded the streets of Montreal in another long march through the city. Protesters were joined by labour, Quebec Solidaire, other social groups including the Parti Communiste and the Ligue de la jeunesse communiste du Québec.

## Which way forward?

Many union leaders appear somewhat reluctant to adopt the strategy of a political strike, which could potentially lose control of their negotiations by politicizing them. "The more social democratic leadership of labour does not seem so upset that the students have been pushing ahead quickly to action - as it has accentuated the cleavages between the unions and students," Pierre Fontaine told People's Voice.

Fontaine, a long time trade

unionist and the leader of the Parti Communiste du Québec, noted that many sections of the students take the same view.

"They are, you could say, two sides of the same coin," he said. "That is not to say the students have unjustified suspicions about uniting with labour," he added, noting it appears that some anarchist voices within the students "desire to keep the leadership of the protest movement, irrespective of the political

see QUEBEC, page 11

## Campaign to stop C-51 continues

### PV Montreal Bureau

After the Conservatives' proposed amendments, the Communist Party campaign against Bill C-51 is continuing with mobilizations for the second round of cross-Canada demonstrations on April 18, and a Stop C-51 speaking tour in British Columbia.

The BC tour will feature CPC central organizer Johan Boyden at events in Surrey, Kamloops, Kelowna and North Vancouver, together with People's Voice editor Kimball Cariou in Vancouver, Victoria and Nanaimo. Local community organizers will speak at some of the events. (Readers can phone the PV office at 604-255-2041 for details.)

Calling the Bill "a war on democratic rights," Boyden said the amendments show that public pressure works. "The Tories are

warming up the Senate machine to fast-track the Bill," he said, describing a pre-study process usually reserved for money bills with time-sensitive provisions.

"They are trying to pass the bill before it draws more attention," he said, noting the Communist Party is fully supporting the April 18 actions, and making the link between Harper's reactionary domestic policies and a foreign policy agenda of imperialist war.

One recent tour event took place in Montreal, where retired refugee and immigration lawyer Bill Sloan spoke after a showing of a new film called "The Secret Trial Five," in which he is one of many people interviewed.

The film, which looks at the human impact of the so-called "War on Terror," is a sobering examination of the Canadian government's use of security certificates. This Kafkaesque tool allows for indefinite detention without charges, based on evidence not revealed to the accused or their lawyers. Security certificates have been used to detain five men for nearly 30 years combined.

"The powers [in Bill C-51] are open to abuse, and the police are known to abuse powers," Sloan said, describing the legislation as "based on the same national security concept as was applied in the South American dictatorships in the 60s and 70s."

As an international human rights activist, Sloan has visited many countries in Latin America, Africa and Asia. In 2001, as President of the American Association of Jurists, he testified at a parliamentary committee about Bill C-35, concomitant legislation to the first anti-terrorism law, Bill C-36.

"The first draft of Bill C-35 in 2001 [which was significantly amended in committee] would have given police similar kinds of powers we are seeing today in Bill C-51," Sloan said, such as preventative arrest and increased surveillance powers.

Both anti-terrorism bills came in shortly after the events of 9/11, and the Quebec City protests at the Summit of the Americas in April 2001. Sloan was involved in defending activist Jaggi Singh and others detained at Orsainville prison after the massive anti-FTAA protests.

"When I visited inmates during the Summit of the Americas, every morning I would note the signatures of three FBI agents [who] spent their day interrogating

people," he told the parliamentary committee.

All this legislation owes its legal heritage to what Sloan called "the Brazilian doctrine - where everything is justified for national security, with a very wide and over-broad definition."

He notes that C-51 could be described as building a kind of ante-chamber leading to fascism. "Of course, there are gradations," he says. "It starts off with dirty tricks, then some go a little bad. But we already have cops abusing power and killing people."

Sloan pointed to recent events in Newfoundland, where an investigation by the Premier's protection squad led to the shooting death of Don Dunphy, who had made a vague utility threat on twitter. Dunphy described himself on twitter as "a crucified injured worker from NL Canada where employers treat injured like criminals."

"If you give the police more power, they are not going to do less," Sloan said, arguing that C-51 will create an organizational basis for the most dangerous and reactionary elements in the police forces, which are currently somewhat isolated, to further consolidate, coordinate and recruit.

Sloan's message echos that of the Ligue des droits et libertés. In an interview with People's Voice last month, Dominique Peschard, spokesperson of the Ligue, said the law violates both the Canadian and Quebec Charters, based on the international covenants for social and political rights.

"Acts which are prejudicial to the security of other states are also included in the bill. So people who promote the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions campaign for Palestine, which the Canadian government has already said is a threat to Canadian security: does that mean that these people will be subjected to this law?" Peschard asked.

Former student leader Gabriel Nadeau-Dubois told the Canadian Press that Bill C-51 could have had a serious impact on the morale of the 2012 student strike, noting that the police crossed the line many times during that social protest movement. Québec Solidaire, the Parti Québécois, and Liberal Premier Philippe Couillard have also criticised the Bill. Last month the Parti Communiste du Québec was the only political party to sign on to a declaration of about 100 labour and community groups in Québec against C-51.



Quebec police tear gas attack against Naomi Trudeau-Tremblay

## People's Voice Fund Drive at 37% of \$50,000 target

After the first five weeks of our annual People's Voice Press Fund Drive, we have received a total of \$18,526, or 37% of our \$50,000 target. This includes \$7943 from British Columbia, \$1300 from Alberta, \$385 from Saskatchewan, \$100 from Manitoba, \$8368 from Ontario, \$105 from Quebec, \$300 from Nova Scotia, and \$25 from Newfoundland & Labrador.

Our Editorial Board thanks all the supporters, cooks, and cultural performers who organized a great evening on

March 28 at the GCDO Hall in Toronto. PV Editor Kimball Cariou spoke about the struggle against Bill C-51 at this event, which raised over \$1100 towards the Ontario provincial target in the Fund Drive.

Kimball Cariou will be on the road again after this issue goes to the printer, joining CPC Central Organizer Johan Boyden at anti-C-51 forums in Victoria, Nanaimo, Vancouver and Surrey over the next couple of weeks. Subscribers can bring fund drive contributions to these events, to help Canada's leading

socialist newspaper carry on our 93-year tradition of upholding free speech and the interests of the working class.

B.C. readers can also look forward to our 23rd annual Victory Banquet, May 2, 6 pm, at the Victoria Drive Community Hall, 2026 E. 43 Ave. in Vancouver. This year's keynote speaker will be Micheal Vonn, policy director of the BC Civil Liberties Association. Vonn has been a prominent public spokesperson for the BCCLA in the struggle for free speech, so don't miss this chance to hear her speak. Tickets are \$20 (students/unemployed \$12) from the PV office. The annual Mother's Day Pancake Breakfast organized by the Burnaby Club CPC is on Sunday, May 10, this year at the Chilean Co-op, 3390 School Ave. in Vancouver; see page 11 for details.

Finally, remember that our annual May Day issue will feature greetings from dozens of trade unions, solidarity movements, CPC clubs and other groups. Make sure your organization's greeting ad arrives on time! They all count towards our Fund Drive totals.

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



# An historic victory at York University

By Sam Hammond

In the previous issue of People's Voice, we were forced to leave our reporting of the massive TA and GA strikes at U of T and York Universities in mid-strike. At our publishing deadline, the spotlight was on the U of T, while negotiators at York, although engaged as we will see, were relatively silent.

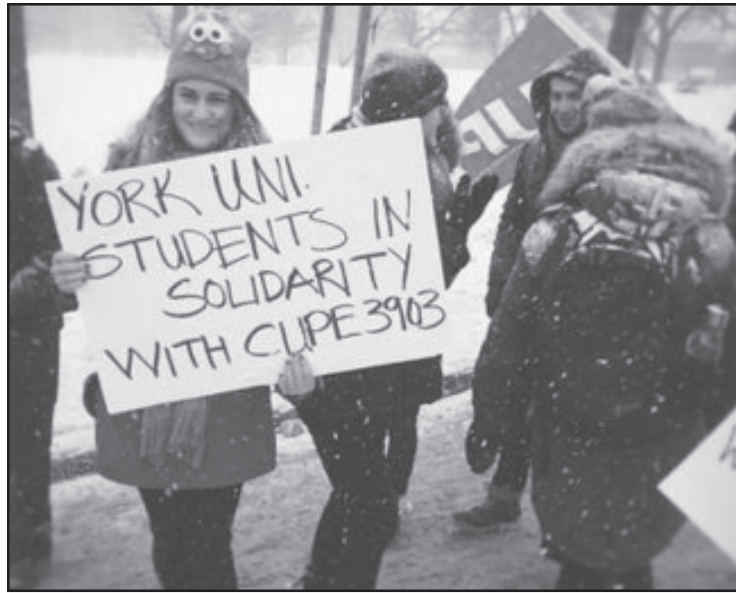
On March 20, about 1600 strikers from U of T voted by a narrow 50-vote majority to put the administration's latest offer to a ratification vote. The offer was not recommended because the negotiating committee was not unanimous. Over the weekend of voting on March 21-22, the offer was turned down by a narrow majority of 112 votes. Clearly the struggle was polarizing not only the negotiators, but the membership as well. The next offer of accepting binding arbitration was recommended by the negotiating committee, and accepted by a healthy majority on March 26. The strike was over, but not the struggle. You might safely say that the militant members of CUPE Local 3902 had fought the U of T to a dead heat, a significant accomplishment.

At York University, where CUPE Local 3903's 3,700 members walked off the job on March 3 and turned down previous tentative offers, there was a landmark breakthrough that has been described from "significant victory" to "York U capitulation".

Directly from the Union's webpage we quote....

"The Employer has agreed to tuition offset language, indexed to 2012 rates. This means that if tuition fees for domestic or international students rise above 2012 rates—which are the same as the 2005 rates—the University will increase funding for all in-program and incoming students to offset the tuition fee increase.

"It also means that the international students will receive increased funding equal to the amount of the recent international student fee increases. In brief, this means the Employer has agreed to the substance of the Union's



Solidarity on the picket line.

tuition indexation proposal.

"The Employer has agreed to make LGBTQ an employment equity group, and agreed to the Union's proposal to meet with the Union at the Employment Equity Committee within three months of ratification to begin the implementation process.

"For Unit 3, the Employer has agreed to increase summer minimum funding from \$1,750 to \$3,000, in addition to previously agreed-to Graduate Financial Assistance and wage increases. This represents a further increase of \$750 over the Employer's last offer, an increase of over 70%..

"On the question of the back-to-work protocol, the Employer has agreed to pay all Unit 1 and Unit 3 members 100 per cent back pay for the time on strike."

And further from Local 3903, "The last three weeks of our struggles have been an incredible source of energy: undergraduates, other unions on campus, and many social justice organizations have walked the lines with us; our Unit 2 (contract faculty) members have continued to support their Union comrades; the media has started to take seriously the problems in the University sector; our comrades at CUPE 3902 at the University of Toronto marched for four hours

between our two campuses in an act of extraordinary solidarity."

Solidarity. The essential ingredient, the catalyst of determination. Despite being instructed to resume teaching, some professors in departments such as film, political science, environmental studies, sociology and equity studies had refused to work until all striking workers had a deal.

The students and their organizations were solid. There was a proliferation of "open letters" of support from faculty and even administrators, and even some fair media coverage.

What was won at York will certainly be a dilemma for the "impartial" arbitrator at U of T, as the solidarity goes full circle and puts the spotlight back where it began. It is hard to analyze just how profound this victory is. The solidarity that fuelled it was not the stuff of idealistic altruism, but rather a pragmatic reaction to the attack on post-secondary education by the same neo-con agenda that is rapidly dismantling our social services and privatizing everything that moves.

Part of the newly negotiated York University agreement stipulates that the Union and the University will collaborate on joint submissions on funding to the Ontario government. Why would

this be so important as to warrant formal language in a Union agreement?

From the Globe and Mail of March 12: "Employers and industry groups will be included in negotiations leading to a new funding formula for universities in Ontario, the provincial government announced Thursday... Late last summer, Ontario signed strategic mandate agreements with each of the province's 44 universities and colleges, deals aimed at focusing each school on its strengths and reducing duplication across the system. Everything, including how tuition is set, will be on the table as part of the funding review, ministry officials said."

"Employers and industry groups", wow! They will now sit at the table and decide on "strengths", "reducing duplication", "how tuition is set" and "funding review". This is the "lean and mean" doublespeak of austerity, cutbacks and the

acceleration of assembly-line training, and research for corporate needs. No wonder academics are alarmed. God forbid there should be extravagant duplication of Tolstoy or Mark Twain when important research on good money-makers like fracking are needed. Gender studies, First Nations' languages, equity? How wasteful.

Beneath the ivy-clad image of gothic archways and smooth waters of tranquil meditation, there exist the violent undercurrents of struggles for and against the neo-liberal corporate agenda as it penetrates the universities. The struggle for that agenda is expressed in the *Globe and Mail* quote. The struggle against it is expressed by the unionized TA's, GA's, and Contract Faculty, in solidarity with the most progressive academics at all levels, the labour movement, First Nations and social justice groups.

Hurrah for CUPE and for this historic win at York University. ●

Peace, Solidarity, and Social Justice:  
Let's Move to the Left!



Saturday, May 2nd

United Steelworkers Hall  
25 Cecil Street, Toronto ON

Political & Cultural Evening

Doors open at 6:00 pm

Food & Refreshments

Free Admission

Performers: Banditry, Bānoo Zan, Dane Swan, MataDanze Womyn, Rosy Cervantes, Wally Brooker

Keynote Speaker:

Hassan Yussuff, President, CLC

Organized by The United May Day Committee

## 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
One column x 2 inches.....	\$25
One column x 3 inches.....	\$35
Two columns x 2 inches.....	\$45
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Two columns x 5 inches.....	\$90
Three columns x 4 inches.....	\$110
Two columns x 7 inches.....	\$130
Three columns x 7 inches.....	\$180

Send greetings to People's Voice at:  
706 Clark Drive, Vancouver, V5L 3J1  
E-mail: pvoice@telus.net

## The Union-Pearson Express: public transit for the rich?

By David G., Toronto

Metrolinx, the Ontario provincial transit agency, has unveiled the new Union-Pearson Express (UPE) train, which will run from Pearson International Airport to Union Station in Toronto. Service will start in May, a month before the Toronto 2015 Pan-Am Games, which are already controversial for overspending problems and the lack of proper infrastructure.

The Games will cause traffic jams across Toronto, affecting the city's aging infrastructure. Recently, the TO2015 executive CEOs have been found guilty of overspending their budget, after Ontario taxpayers' money went for expensive limousine rides and luxuries such as designer shirts. This is one of many controversies that the TO2015 committee got itself into in the recent months.

The UPE will run every 15 minutes, taking passengers from Union Station to Pearson in just 25 minutes. But here is the catch: an adult one-way ticket will be \$27.50

(\$19 if you have a Presto card). Approved by the Wynne government in December 2014, these are the most expensive ticket prices for an airport express in North America. The Canada Line linking Vancouver's airport to downtown, built in 2010, costs \$9 one-way. The Airport rail link in Chicago costs \$5 one-way.

This has outraged many Torontonians, since transit prices and the cost of living here have skyrocketed over the past decade. The CBC recently reported a poll showing that two-thirds of Torontonians think the price for the new UPE train is too expensive. NDP MPP Cheri DiNovo has criticized the UPE, saying that "it should not be an executive boutique for business travellers". Why did the Ontario Liberal government and Metrolinx pour \$456 million into a transit line for the privileged elite? Because according to Metrolinx, "business travellers are the demographic".

This ignorant, one-sided statement and fails to mention that

the vast majority of residents in the Toronto area who take public transit are, like myself, people of all kinds who travel everyday on buses, subways and streetcars.

What demographic group does the Union-Pearson Express serve? This Liberal boondoggle obviously doesn't serve the people who regularly use public transit. This express line doesn't serve the workers at Pearson Airport who make minimum wage, nor will Metrolinx give them any discount for the UPE. According to union reps at Pearson, between 10,000 to 15,000 airport workers live in Toronto. Martin Smith, President of CUPE Local 4047 says that "if the fares aren't affordable, the public will not use the Union-Pearson express."

The prices for the Union-Pearson Express are unjustifiably expensive for the majority of the people in Toronto. This will not benefit anyone except the wealthy. The Communist Party will continue to fight for affordable transit everywhere in Canada, by demanding reduced fares! ●



# EDITORIALS

## CSIS must be dismantled

As opposition builds against the Harper government's Bill C-51, supporters of this police state legislation increasingly fall back on a few tattered lines from the PM's message box. Perhaps the most common tired justification is that CSIS needs to break the shackles of "red tape" and "bureaucratic oversight." It's an argument straight out of reactionary U.S. movie and TV dramas, where highly-principled federal agents make sad but necessary decisions to torture and murder suspects for the greater good.

The Harperites and their U.S. allies steadfastly maintain that to "protect freedom" the state must use an ugly combination of torture, drone missile executions, massive surveillance of all forms of communication, suspension of civil liberties, and thuggish threats against critical voices. Real life, of course, is very different. Overwhelming evidence going back centuries indicates that torture almost never yields reliable intelligence information, and that regimes which rely on this tactic base their actions on falsehoods.

The latest revelations about Canadian citizen Maher Arar are convincing proof that the fascist security agenda is utterly flawed. Former CIA officer John Kiriakou has shed new light on this tragic episode in a media interview, indicating that he and others correctly warned that the agency was punishing an innocent man. The Arar affair ultimately resulted in a public inquiry, and a \$10-million payout from the federal government for its shameful participation in his arrest, rendition and torture.

But many other victims have yet to win justice. Under Bill C-51, the net will be cast even wider, by gangs of unmonitored secret agents. Those who argue that we simply need "better oversight" are either completely naive, or are cynically covering up for the security establishment. C-51 must be defeated (or rescinded as soon as possible) and CSIS itself must be dismantled to protect our civil liberties and democratic freedoms.

## Hands off Venezuela, Mr. Obama

World public opinion increasingly condemns President Barack Obama's March 9th Executive Order declaring Venezuela "an unusual and extraordinary threat to U.S. national security." In Venezuela itself, a huge campaign is underway to collect 10 million names urging repeal of this Order, and people in other countries (including Canada) are signing this appeal in solidarity. A powerful statement issued by the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), which represents all 33 countries in the region, calls for reversal of the Executive Order. The United Nations G77+China group of 134 countries has urged the U.S. government to open a dialogue with Venezuela based on respect for sovereignty and self-determination. The Union of South American Nations (UNASUR) representing 12 South American states, the Bolivarian Alliance of the Peoples of Our America (ALBA) representing 11 Latin American and Caribbean nations, and the Common Market of the South (MERCOSUR) have also issued powerful condemnations. Many parliamentarians have made similar statements, including over 100 British MPs (but sadly, none from Canada!).

Even prominent members of the Venezuelan opposition have spoken out. Henry Falcon, the governor of Lara State, told the U.S. President, "Let me express to you clearly that Venezuela can't be considered a threat to any other nation on the planet. We have serious internal problems but we will solve them between Venezuelans."

At the Summit of the Americas in Panama City on April 9-10, this issue will be at the top of the agenda. The days when the White House could topple or "elect" Latin American presidents with a casual flick of a finger are over. Canadians should pressure the Harper government to apologize for its attacks against Venezuela, and join the rest of the hemisphere in demanding that Washington respect the sovereignty and self-determination of other countries.

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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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# 28 APRIL EVERYWHERE

## International Workers' Memorial Day

Remember the dead,  
**FIGHT LIKE HELL**  
for the living



## Communists enter Alberta election

### PV Alberta Bureau

Alberta politics are heating up this spring, with a May 5 provincial election now underway.

While pundits differ in their readings of the past year, it has been something of a rollercoaster ride for the two big right-wing parties, the Conservatives and Wildrose, allowing new space for the Liberals and especially the New Democrats. On the left, the Communist Party-Alberta is also gearing up to run two candidates asking the main social and ecological question facing the province: who owns and controls the oil and gas sector of Alberta's economy?

### Tory Dynasty vs Wildrose

Three years ago, Alison Redford helped win another re-election victory for the Conservatives. In power without interruption since 1971, the party has a proven track record of fully supporting its friends in big business. But in the last few years a new right-wing challenger emerged in the form of the Wildrose Party, whose ranks include Western regionalists, Christian fundamentalists, homophobes, libertarians as well as other far-right voices.

The Tory dynasty has also seen the two major cities, Edmonton and Calgary, increase in population and change in social character through immigration and the weakening of ties to Alberta's agricultural roots. This is reflected in the relative strength of Liberal support in corporate headquarter Calgary, and NDP support in the somewhat more industrial Edmonton.

In March 2014, Redford resigned amid scandals and was replaced by Jim Prentice as party leader and Premier. People's Voice readers will no doubt remember Prentice as a former Harper Conservative MP who left federal politics in 2010 to act as an executive for the CIBC bank.



**Bonnie Devine,  
CALGARY EAST**

Last November and December, twelve Wildrose MLAs, including their leader, crossed the floor to join the Conservatives. The move provoked widespread indignation on the right, which together with disenchantment over the latest provincial budget was enough to bring the remnant Wildrose party neck and neck with Tories in the most recent polls.

Prentice postponed a winter budget sitting due to falling global oil prices, and floated the idea of a sales tax. In fact, the budget tabled in March does contain some minor tax increases (including a so-called "Waiting Room tax") but mainly reflects the upside-down logic that the province faces a spending crisis, not a revenue problem, cutting over a billion just from health care alone.

### Communist Party candidates

Coming out solidly against these neo-liberal cuts will be the Communist Party-Alberta, running two candidates with a people's agenda platform.

Naomi Rankin, the party's provincial leader, will run in Edmonton Mill Woods. Rankin is a retired computer programmer who has been a political activist in peace, women's and social justice groups since she was a teenager.

Joining her in the campaign is Bonnie Devine, in the working class riding of Calgary East. A telecommunications worker, Devine is the past-president of her union local and a prominent anti-racist activist.

"Conservative governments have failed to charge normal royalties on resources, and they have cut corporate taxes again and again, as well as replacing progressive income tax with a flat tax favouring the rich," the Alberta CP's election platform says. In the opposite direction, the Communist platform proposes



**Naomi Rankin,  
EDMONTON  
MILL WOODS**

quality, affordable social housing; restoring public funding to health care and rolling back privatization; a universal, accessible, affordable, and public childcare program; as well as free post-secondary education.

"People across Alberta are justifiably outraged by the opportunism of the right wing parties and their squandering of Alberta's wealth over the past decades," Naomi Rankin told People's Voice. "Albertans shouldn't be forced to choose between the parties of big business," she said, adding that the Tories operate a "take the money and run" economy.

Figuring large in the Communist platform are the needs of people and nature, such as progressive taxation; job creation by diversifying the economy and expanding public ownership; labour and workers rights; expanded equality and democratic rights for Albertans; a new financial deal for cities; support for family farms; and a safe and healthy environment.

Alberta needs to "move away from dependence on resource extraction to valued added processing," "bring the energy industry under public control," and "Halt new development of the Athabasca bituminous tar sands, phasing-out these operations with jobs guaranteed for workers at equivalent wages and benefits," the platform says. It also proposes free public municipal Wi-Fi services for cities, and lower utility rates with ecology pricing that rewards conservation. ●

The Alberta CP website is online and being updated, at [www.comunistparty-alberta.ca](http://www.comunistparty-alberta.ca)

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# Canadian counter-terror law threatens environmental groups

By Alleen Brown, *The Intercept*, <https://firstlook.org/theintercept>

Geraldine Thomas-Flurer, who campaigns for environmental protection on behalf of indigenous First Nations in Canada, wasn't surprised when, in 2012, she found out that the Royal Canadian Mounted Police had been keeping tabs on her. The *Toronto Star* that year obtained documents showing that federal police had monitored private meetings held between her coalition and local environmental groups.

Now she just laughs when asked whether she's comforted by assurances from government officials that new surveillance and policing powers outlined under a proposed Canadian Anti-Terror Law wouldn't be aimed at peaceful protesters.

The passage of the terrorism bill would represent a new "open season on First Nations who are speaking out," she says.

Across Canada, police surveillance and intervention have long been a reality for groups working to stop development of fossil fuel extraction, including pipeline construction and fracking. The sense that somebody's watching is part of the price Thomas-Flurer, of the Saik'uz nation, has paid for coordinating the Yinka Dene Alliance, a coalition of six First Nations in British Columbia that have banned the passage of the Enbridge Northern Gateway pipeline through their territory.

The coalition is part of a movement that has slowed the development of the pipeline, which would carry more than 500,000 barrels per day of crude from landlocked Alberta's oil sands to a port on Canada's west coast, so much so that a recent *CBC News* article questioned whether the project was "being quietly shelved."

The new law, called C-51, would give the Canadian Security Intelligence Service and the RCMP

broad powers to thwart what bill proponents see as an evolving terrorist threat. Lawyers and activists say the bill's vague language would give Canada's police forces wide discretion to decide who they target and how.

The proposed legislation was prompted by last year's attack by Michael Zehaf-Bibeau, who killed a ceremonial soldier who had been guarding the Canadian Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, and then barged into Canada's packed parliament building, before being shot and killed by Sergeant-at-Arms Kevin Vickers. It was the second Canadian "lone wolf" attack in a week, both carried out by radicalized followers of Islam, unclaimed by any extremist group.

"I have been saying that our laws and police powers need to be strengthened in the area of

surveillance, detention, and arrest," Prime Minister Stephen Harper declared one day after the shooting, "I assure members that work, which is already under way, will be expedited."

Five months later, C-51 is moving through parliament, and is expected to pass this summer. Given politicians' focus on radicalization, new policing powers would likely hit hardest in communities of Muslims. "They're the bogeyman of today," said Ziyaad Mia, a spokesperson for the Canadian Muslim Lawyers Association. "But I think they're a canary in the coal mine."

The Anti-Terrorism Act would create a new criminal offense that could land an offender up to five years in prison for promoting "terrorism offences in general," a term that has befuddled Kent

Roach and Craig Forcece, professors of law at the University of Toronto and University of Ottawa, respectively. "No person (includ-

## Other voices...

ding ourselves) can fairly say they know how this new crime will be interpreted and applied," they wrote in a C-51 backgrounder.

Other parts of the act would expand the power of police to make preventative arrests if they believe "on reasonable grounds that the detention of the person in custody is likely to prevent a terrorist activity." The bill would also lengthen the time a person can be detained without charges from three days to seven, in cases where a police officer believes that a "terrorist act may be carried out," and it would codify a no-fly list.

"We actually don't know what [C-51 is] going to entail in terms of regular surveillance and intelligence. It's very murky," says Jeff Monaghan, a sociologist at Queen's University, who has studied Canada's counterterrorism apparatus. "We're going to find out about what disruption [of national security threats] really means in the next 10 years."

Monaghan has tracked the way Canada's counterterrorism efforts have crept into the work of environmental activists since 9/11. Government threat assessment reports he collected via Access to Information requests show a shift between 2005 and 2010 toward focussing resources on "extremist" groups, including ones that organize around environmental issues and indigenous rights.

One government assessment from 2008 declared that attacks carried out by domestic "extremist"

activist groups "are seven times more likely to occur than terrorist attacks."

Monaghan says C-51 would intensify that mission creep. Although called the Anti-Terrorism Act, C-51 would widen the state's policing and surveillance powers even beyond "terrorism in general."

The bill seeks to expand the reach of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service, which currently is allowed only to gather information but not to act on it, a separation created as a remedy to 1970s-era abuses perpetrated by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police against Québécois nationalists. Under the proposed law, CSIS can "take measures, within or outside Canada," to reduce "a threat to the security of Canada."

As part of the bill, the "Security of Canada Information Sharing Act" would allow Canadian government agencies, with minimal oversight, to exchange collected information about "activities that undermine the security of Canada," including actions that threaten the country's "territorial integrity" or interfere with its "critical infrastructure." That lands the work of the Yinka Dene Alliance squarely within the boundaries of C-51's sphere of intensified surveillance.

This isn't the first time Canadian intelligence has targeted domestic groups.

A 44-page Royal Canadian Mounted Police document, "Critical Infrastructure Intelligence Assessment," obtained by Montreal's *La Presse* last February demonstrated how Canada's intelligence and law enforcement agencies see anti-extraction activists and indigenous dissidents as serious threats.

The assessment mentions Greenpeace several times, is titled

see **THREAT**, page 11



Protester in Toronto at the March 14 Day of Action Against Bill C-51. (Photo: Ed Bil)

# Millions still die from workplace accidents and disease

PV Vancouver Bureau

April 28, the annual day to commemorate workers killed and injured on the job, was officially recognized by the federal government in 1991, eight years after it was launched by the Canadian Labour Congress.

The International Labour Organization (ILO) estimates that each year about 2.3 million workers die from job-related accidents and diseases, including over 320,000 fatal accidents and an estimated 2 million work-related diseases. An average of nearly 1 million workers will suffer a workplace accident every day, and around 5,500 workers will die due to a job-related accident or disease. **The biggest work-related killers include cancer (32%), circulatory diseases (23%), and occupational accidents (18%).**

In economic terms it is estimated that roughly four per cent of the annual global Gross Domestic

Product, or US\$1.25 trillion, is siphoned off by direct and indirect costs of occupational accidents and diseases, such as lost working time, workers' compensation, the interruption of production, and medical expenses.

Hazardous substances cause an estimated 651,000 deaths, mostly in the developing world, where the figures are low due to inadequate reporting and notification systems.

Data from industrialized countries show that construction workers are three to four times more likely than other employees to die from accidents at work. Occupational lung disease in mining and related industries arising from asbestos, coal and silica exposure is still a concern in many countries. Asbestos alone claims about 100,000 deaths every year and the figure is rising.

Just before the Day of Mourning in 2013, the collapse of the Rana Plaza building in Bangladesh claimed

the lives of over 1,000 garment workers. The shocking death toll was made far worse by management insistence that workers enter the building, despite obvious signs that it was crumbling and shifting. Many of the transnational clothing companies which source much of their product from Bangladesh are resisting efforts to make them pay full compensation, or to allow their employees to organize into effective trade unions.

But workplace deaths, injuries and disease are not just a "third world" problem.

For example, the U.S. oil and gas industry - and mining in general - are becoming increasingly dangerous. The year 2012 saw more on-the-job fatalities in the sector than ever, jumping to 183 compared to 112 in 2011. The figure represents 24.2 fatalities per 100,000 workers. In comparison, agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting sectors report 21.2 deaths for the same number of employed. ●





# GLOBAL WARRING: *how war and climate change are wired to the same engine*

By Neil Faulkner, UK Stop the War Coalition  
([www.stopwar.org.uk](http://www.stopwar.org.uk))

The global crisis is getting worse. Climate change, poverty, and war are tearing our world apart. These are not separate issues; they are not 'single issues'. They are connected. They are part of a system of rival states and corporations. The driver of the system is competition for profit.

The crisis can be imagined as a set of machines all wired to the same engine. A carbon machine is pumping pollution into the atmosphere and fast warming the planet.

Climate change is not some future threat: it is already happening. Floods temporarily covered 65% of Bangladesh in 1998, destroying villages, farms, and infrastructure. Half the island of Bhola, home to 1.6 million people, had been permanently washed

away by 2004. The worst bushfires in Australia's history ravaged the continent in 2011.

Around 20 million people were displaced by the effects of climate change in 2008 alone, and 150,000 people a year are now dying from its effects as diseases spread faster at higher temperatures.

## The profit machine

The world is now more class-

divided than ever before in history. The 80 richest people on Earth – who would fit on a double-decker bus – now have as much wealth as the bottom half of humanity (3.5 billion people).

The top 1% as a whole own half of all global wealth, while the bottom 80% own just 5.5%. These levels of inequality are unprecedented.

The fast growing gap between rich and poor is driven by a profit

machine. Corporate power, privatisation, and austerity are tearing societies apart to enrich a tiny minority. Everything from housing to health to urban space is being commodified – turned into new sources of profit.

Democracy is hollowed out by technocratic regimes serving the rich, the banks, and the corporations. Society is hollowed out by poverty, debt, and fear.

## The war machine

Our rulers spend \$1.7 trillion on armaments every year. Armies are becoming ever more high-tech, ever more deadly and destructive.

Today's wars – all fed by the same global arms conglomerates – are of two kinds. Some are imperialist wars waged by great powers for control of resources, especially oil and gas. Others are sectarian wars waged by right-wing militias filling the vacuum when societies are torn apart by poverty and violence.

Both types of war are rooted in the same system: the war machine – like the carbon machine and the profit machine – is hard-wired to the engine of capital accumulation.

Capitalism is a system of self-expansion. No bank or corporation invests without expecting to make a profit. Capital investment is always about making money: getting more out than you put in. It is therefore about uncontrolled, unlimited, unending growth.

There is no such thing as 'steady-state' capitalism. The idea of 'green capitalism' is therefore a pipedream.

The fossil-fuel economy – oil and gas corporations, mining

companies, car manufacturers – represents the second biggest concentration of capital in the world (the biggest of all is the banks). Trillions of dollars worth of capital investment is at stake. All of it is geared to growth.

What drives the engine of growth? The world is divided into competing banks, corporations, nation-states, and armies. The struggle between them is a struggle for energy, minerals, markets, and contracts. It is therefore a struggle for power.

Competition drives the engine of growth. And that engine powers the carbon, profit, and war machines. We live in a joined-up world: one system, one crisis.

## One big movement

The system cannot concede either social justice or climate justice without imperilling its own existence. The profiteers and warmongers who run the system will not allow change which threatens their wealth and power.

Time has now run out. Catastrophic climate change is imminent. The rulers of the world are rearming to fight new wars. And they and their system are plunging the mass of humanity ever deeper into poverty.

We need to build a united mass movement against war, poverty, and global warming; a movement for total system change; one big movement fighting for equality, democracy, and sustainability.

(Neil Faulkner is an archaeologist, historian, and activist. He was one of the organisers of the This Changes Everything gathering in London on March 28, 2015.) ●

## Over 5 Million Venezuelans urge repeal of Obama's executive order

By Lucas Koerner,  
[venezuelanalysis.com](http://venezuelanalysis.com),  
March 30, 2015

Over 5 million Venezuelans have voiced their opposition to the Executive Order issued by the White House on March 9, which brands Venezuela an "unusual and extraordinary threat" and imposes new sanctions.

Over the past week, millions of Venezuelans have mobilized in a nationwide petition drive, signing their names to an open letter addressed to U.S. President Barack Obama urging him to immediately repeal the executive order.

In response to President Maduro's call for 10 million signatures, the grassroots initiative has taken off dramatically over the past week with armies of volunteers manning over 760 sign-up points in public squares throughout the nation as well as going door to door in order to reach those with

special needs.

President Maduro has characterized this effort as an "emphatic success" and called for it to continue during Holy Week vacations. It is hoped that Venezuelans will continue pledging their signatures from "highways, beaches, and mountains" in a show of national unity in the face of U.S. aggression.

Foreign Minister Delcy Rodríguez confirmed that the Venezuelan government had delivered a formal letter of protest to the U.S. embassy in Caracas urging the Obama administration to repeal the executive order. Rodríguez underscored that the letter was the latest in a series of diplomatic overtures initiated by the Bolivarian government, suggesting that continued intransigence on the part of Washington may oblige Venezuela to appeal to international legal mechanisms.

The foreign minister also noted

that Venezuela enjoys the backing of a significant segment of the international community, which has manifested its solidarity via a series of statements by various multilateral blocs, including UNASUR, ALBA, the Non-Aligned Movement, CELAC, and the G77+China.

"This should allow the government of the U.S. to reflect. Look at a map that shows the whole world is telling the U.S. its government and its administration to cease aggression against Venezuela," stated Rodríguez, pointing to a world map highlighting the multitude of nations which have voiced support for Venezuela in response to U.S. threats.

In the midst of an international media campaign which has consistently presented Venezuela as a nation mired in economic and political turmoil, a new survey by the private polling firm Hinterlaces has found that 65% of Venezuelans chose "optimistic" as the term that best describes their emotional state, a four point increase over January.

Meanwhile, those who describe themselves as "pessimistic" or "frustrated" declined by four points to 34% and 21% respectively. The percentage who characterized themselves as "hopeful" rose five points since January to 78%.

For political analyst Jose Vicente Rangel, the poll figures as a critical vote of confidence for a government besieged by economic war, systematic misrepresentation in the international press, and U.S. sanctions.

"An important sector of Venezuelan society is perceiving a unified, cohesive government that is working to problem solve, Chavismo has regained positive expectations and hope, wielding arguments and banners [of support] in order to confront the discourse of pessimism and fatalism," stated the former high ranking government official on his television program. ●



Photo: Roberto Diaz

## REDS ON THE WEB

[www.comunist-party.ca](http://www.comunist-party.ca)

[www.peoplesvoice.ca](http://www.peoplesvoice.ca)

[www.ycl-ljc.ca](http://www.ycl-ljc.ca)

[rebelyouth-magazine.blogspot.com](http://rebelyouth-magazine.blogspot.com)

<http://solidnet.org>

## WFTU Supports April 19 World Day in Solidarity with Venezuela

The World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU), representing 90 million unionized workers in 126 countries worldwide, and represented at the International Labour Organization (ILO), the United Nations, UNESCO and FAO, since the very beginning has been in solidarity with the people of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela against imperialist interference.

Throughout the 70 years of its existence, the WFTU has expressed solidarity with the struggles of the Venezuelan people and the peoples of Latin America against political and military interference of imperialism. We repeat our rejection to the Executive Order issued by the President of the United States against the Government of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, aggressively and absurdly calling this country a "threat to US national security."

Today, we reaffirm our solidarity and support for the Venezuelan people and their democratically elected government. The WFTU supports the initiative of Venezuelan and international mass organizations for an International Day of World Solidarity with Venezuela on April 19, 2015. The international solidarity will launch a clear, forceful and immediate message that Venezuela is not alone in defending its sovereignty, peace and democratic gains, but is accompanied by all the class oriented, anti-imperialist, democratic, popular and revolutionary forces of the world.

In the context of practical solidarity with the people of Venezuela and the world's peoples against imperialist manoeuvres, the WFTU has called an International Trade Union Conference in Brussels, June 1-2, themed "The embargoes, blockades and sanctions of the US, NATO and the EU are a blow to the rights of workers", to discuss the response of the workers of the world to the manoeuvres of imperialism.

The WFTU, consistent with its principle of full respect for the sovereignty and self-determination of all peoples to decide for themselves about their present and future, demands an immediate end to the imperialist interference against Venezuela. ●

([www.wftucentral.org](http://www.wftucentral.org))



# CLC warns C-51 threatens freedoms

The Canadian Labour Congress says that Bill C-51 “threatens to undermine the very freedoms the government claims it wants to protect.”

“Canadians agree that terrorism is a threat and the government has a responsibility to safeguard public safety, but it has not justified why it cannot do that using the existing criminal code,” said CLC president Hassan Yussuff in a statement prior to his March 25 appearance before the House of Commons Public Safety Committee. “This bill appears to be more about political posturing ahead of a political election than it is about better protecting public safety and our democracy.”

Yussuff added, “We are alarmed that the government has blocked Canada’s Privacy Commissioner and former Prime Ministers from testifying before the committee hearing evidence on the bill”.

The CLC represents 3.3 million workers and an increasingly diverse membership that includes workers from Muslim and other communities who are being targeted by this bill and the rhetoric being used to promote it.

“We remember too well how after the attacks of 9/11, CSIS and the RCMP harassed many Muslims and workers from other racialized communities in their workplaces, resulting in job losses and harassment by employers and co-workers,” said Yussuff. “We are opposing this bill on behalf of those communities and because if passed into law it will compromise the rights of all our members and all Canadians,” he added.

The Labour Congress has presented a list of “what’s wrong with Bill C-51”, including:

\* It goes well beyond working to stop genuine security threats, giving CSIS and the RCMP far-reaching new powers, lowering the threshold for preventative arrest and expanding the notion of what

constitutes a threat to national security.

\* It leaves peaceful work stoppages, wildcat strikes, and other forms of nonviolent civil disobedience that may be deemed unlawful, susceptible to far-reaching interference and disruption by the RCMP and CSIS. Think of the peaceful yet “unlawful” activism that won women the right to vote in Canada, ended racial segregation in the US and defeated Apartheid in South Africa.

\* It exacerbates an already serious lack of oversight and review of CSIS, the RCMP and other agencies tasked with national security work.

\* This bill introduces a new criminal offense for “advocating” or “promoting” the commission of a terrorism act – terms that could be interpreted very subjectively. This could impact freedom of speech, freedom of opinion, freedom of the press and academic freedom.

\* It allows CSIS to contravene the Charter of Rights and Freedoms and other Canadian laws. ●

**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.**



## Lawyers fear abuses of state power

The Canadian Bar Association (CBA) was among the most prominent groups to challenge the federal government’s Bill C-51. Eric Gottardi, the chair of the Criminal Justice Section of the CBA, which represents 36,000 jurists, lawyers, notaries, law teachers and students across Canada, told the House of Commons Public Safety Committee that abuses of state power are less likely to occur when there is a distinct line between national security activities and activities that cross into operational policing.

“Bill C-51 threatens to disrupt this balance and blur the lines, by essentially giving CSIS

operational powers, many of which will overlap with RCMP powers,” Gottardi said.

The CBA’s submission warns that C-51 contains “ill-considered” measures that will deprive Canadians of liberties without increasing their safety. The bar association objects to the planned transformation of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service into an agency that could actively disrupt terror plots. It argues the bill’s “vague and overly broad language” would capture legitimate activity, including environmental and aboriginal protests — and possibly put a chill on expressions of dissent.

The most worrying element of

the bill, says the CBA, is a provision that would give judges the power to authorize CSIS violations of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. This provision potentially brings “the entire Charter into jeopardy, undermines the rule of law, and goes against the fundamental role of judges as the protectors of Canada’s constitutional rights.”

The association wants a sunset clause that would see the bill expire and trigger a parliamentary review no more than five years after its passage.

The CBA’s submission was draws on the input of experts in criminal, immigration, privacy and charities law.

Rejecting the government’s arguments, the CBA says the bill’s information-sharing measures would permit disclosure of personal data to the private sector and foreign governments, unconstrained by the Charter, and open the door to misuse.

The submission also says:

- the expanded no-fly list provisions would introduce powers to search computers and mobile devices without a warrant;
- CSIS’s powers would be expanded without a similar boost to the insufficient oversight and review of the intelligence sector;
- the bill is being rushed through Parliament without careful study. ●

## There is still no alternative: Scrap Bill C-51

**Statement by the Central Executive Committee, Communist Party of Canada, March 31, 2015**

Growing public pressure has compelled the Harper Conservative government to make a handful of minor amendments to Bill C-51, while rejecting all changes proposed by the opposition parties in Parliament. This tactical retreat shows that further mass opposition outside Parliament can help slow the anti-democratic and pro-war “security state” agenda of this government. The Communist Party of Canada maintains that these amendments are completely inadequate, and that Bill C-51 remains fundamentally flawed and must be scrapped.

Until now, the Conservatives had denied any need to modify C-51. Clearly they did not expect such an impressive range of public opposition, including from significant parts of the ruling class who are uncomfortable with the Conservatives’ sharp shift towards authoritarianism.

While the minor amendments are designed to allay the fears of a few

critics, the underlying assumptions behind the Bill remain in place. The Conservative amendments do not affect the most dangerous aspects of Bill C-51, which empower the state and its repressive and spying apparatus much wider authority to track opposition voices, and to treat Charter rights as secondary to so-called security concerns. In particular:

Removing the word “lawful” from the section listing exemptions to the new counter-terror measures will not stop the RCMP and CSIS from monitoring protests. The *Toronto Star* revealed on March 29 that the Government Operations Centre received reports on more than 160 protests, community events, and demonstrations between May 2014 and February 2015;

Clarifying that CSIS agents (newly empowered to “disrupt” potential threats) will not be able to make arrests, does not change the reality that this mandate creates a basis for the most reactionary elements within police forces to

inflict actions such as those taken at a March 27 student protest in Quebec, where Naomi Trudeau-Tremblay was shot at point-blank range with a tear gas canister;

The “disruption” power allows

detention, which is most likely to be used to “detain” people abroad - and, if the political will exists, also in Canada.

Despite the government’s claims, this legislation is really not about ISIS, or about stopping terrorism and preventing “radicalization”. Bill C-51 must be understood in the context of labour militancy against austerity measures, the student strikes in Quebec, struggles against tar sands extraction and fracking, grassroots movements such as Idle No More and Occupy, and growing interest in revolutionary alternatives to capitalist crisis, including the Communist Party and the Young Communist League, which have been targets of state repression on many previous occasions. This legislation is intended to move Canada in a reactionary and even fascist direction, by legalizing state terrorism, at home and abroad.

almost any “dirty trick” to be carried out by CSIS, and there is little question that these powers will be abused. The powers include



[www.Communist-Party.ca/STOPC51](http://www.Communist-Party.ca/STOPC51)





# GLOBAL CLASS STRUGGLE

## Another disaster in Bangladesh

The collapse of a cement factory in Bangladesh has renewed accusations that the country's government and employers have failed to take action after previous disasters. Eight workers were killed and 46 injured in the March 12 incident at the Mongla Cement Factory in Bagehat District, 300 kilometers from Dhaka.

"Lessons are not being learnt in Bangladesh. Again the use of sub-standard material, structural deficiencies and neglecting health and safety standards took away precious lives," said union leader Shahidul Alam, after local unions and the Building Workers International (BWI) undertook an urgent mission to inspect the site and meet victims and their families at the Khulna Medical Hospital.

The visit revealed a tale of negligence and utter disrespect for health and safety standards. One widow said, "We have lost our sole bread earner in this accident and now what we remain with is a paltry compensation of Taka 100,000. Is this how you value the life of a worker?"

Bangladeshi labour law sets the compensation for death during work at Taka 100,000 (US\$ 1250), and an additional Taka 20,000 (US\$ 250) has been given by the local administration. However, the families of the deceased and injured workers say this did not do justice to the families who have either lost their bread winners or find them injured.

One of the injured workers at the Khulna Medical College, Mansoor mentioned "I had reached the worksite early in the morning and the work commenced as per schedule. The roof gave in all of a sudden, the workers did not have any personal protective equipment - I am now lying in the hospital in severe pain and have injuries on chest, hand and leg and also two teeth are broken. At my age, it will take months for me to recover from this injury".

Along with other partners a campaign is launched for enhancing compensation and additionally explore legal action while continuing to work on revision in Bangladesh Labour Law and also ratification of ILO Conventions 155 and Convention 167.

## Burkina Faso labour struggles

Burkina Faso's prime minister has accused groups involved in labour strikes rocking the landlocked west African country of creating "a climate of anarchy". Isaac Zida, who became prime minister soon after a 2014 uprising, lashed out at the strikers in a TV interview broadcast on April 1.

Strikes have been frequent in recent months in Burkina Faso, where a popular movement last year overthrew former president Blaise Compaore after 27 years in power. In the interview, Zida branded the activists as "disorganised strike movements... (who) clearly want to stop the government from working and

holding an election" in October. He said the government was trying to attract foreign investment to boost the economy, while protesters "want to undermine those efforts by creating a climate of anarchy, openly defying the authority of the state".

Nearly half of Burkina Faso's population lives beneath the poverty line. On March 30-31, truck drivers demanding better pay and working conditions stopped oil supplies from reaching power stations, causing outages across the country. Burkina Faso's main union, the General Workers Confederation, has called for a general strike on April 8, to demand the reduction of fuel prices.

Hundreds of thousands of



people - a million according to organisers - took to the streets in Burkina Faso in October 2014, forcing Compaore to step down. A former official in the presidential guard, Zida took over as interim leader, only to be replaced by current President Michel Kafando. Zida was then named prime minister.

## Guam workers face new pay cut

About 25 employees of Foremost Foods, Inc./Coca Cola Guam picketed Guam's Department of Revenue and Taxation on April 2 in a public show of defiance, holding signs demanding fair wages and benefits from their employer. The strikers in the U.S.-controlled Pacific island are members of Teamsters Local 986.

Every three years Foremost Foods/Coca Cola Guam negotiate with union workers, and for last three negotiations, management has cut their pay. "We haven't got a raise and for this negotiation that we just had we went with the company to the table. All we're asking is three more years of the status quo - that wages and benefits stay the same," union chief steward John Pereda said.

According to Pereda, management proposed to cut employee wages and benefits again this year, much to union workers' dismay. The employees on strike are not trying to harm the company, he said, they are just fighting for fair wages and benefits. Some delivery truck drivers and other new or younger employees are not members of the Teamsters, and had not joined the strike action.

"We have guys that have been here for 15, 20, 30 years," Pereda said. The employees picketing on April 2 worked as Foremost truck drivers, warehouse workers and

mechanics. "You can see how old some these guys are, and they're here still standing," he added.

Elfren Olivario, who has been at Foremost for 16 years, said the work is hard but he is used to it. "It really hurts us when we see them sponsoring people and they don't even support their own employees," Olivario said. "That really hurts us. We have families. They're good when they're in public, but we're here working for them, we're doing the work and they're not giving us the support."

Pereda said the workers plan to picket again soon, and they are willing to stage a strike for a whole month. He said the employees want to stay with Foremost rather than for a competitor, but they would like to earn the same wages they've been earning for the past three years.

## German posties protest cuts

At least 20,000 postal workers participated in a second day of strikes in several regions of Germany, trade union Ver.di said on April 2. The industrial action started on April 1, after the union and the Deutsche Post AG group failed to reach an agreement on better salary conditions.

"The next round of talks between the union and the management of Deutsche Post will start April 14th. Until then, the union suspends campaigning organization," Ver.di said in a statement on its website.

Ver.di is demanding a work hour cut, from 38.5 to 36 per week, with an unchanged salary, for its nearly 140,000 post office employee members. During the latest round of talks between company negotiators and union representatives on March 19, Deutsche Post AG, Germany's privatized mail carrier, failed to make any proposals that were congruent with trade union requests.

The strike is taking place across 16 federal states in Germany in the middle of the Easter holidays, delaying delivery of parcels, greeting cards, bills and letters. Deutsche Post sends 80 million letters and parcels on a daily basis.

## Samsung workers plan strike

The unionized workers of Samsung Techwin Co., one of four affiliates of Samsung Group that will be handed over to Hanwha Group this year, agreed on April 2 to launch a strike in protest of the group's decision. About 89% of the union's 2,998 members voted in support of the strike, while only 72 members opposed.

"We are not immediately jumping into the strike," a union official said, adding the details, including the schedule, will be decided soon.

In November, Samsung said it would sell defense affiliate Samsung Techwin and chemical unit Samsung General Chemicals Co. to Hanwha, a conglomerate whose main businesses include defense and solar power. Two other affiliates, Samsung Thales and Samsung Total, were also automatically included in the deal

because they are half-owned by the companies being sold to Hanwha.

In March, some 2,300 workers from the four companies held a protest rally in front of the group's headquarters in southern Seoul, voicing opposition to the decision to sell their companies to smaller conglomerate Hanwha. Hanwha plans to wrap up the acquisition during the first half of this year and has received government approval for the deal.

## Liberian metal-workers reject layoffs

Over 1,275 workers under the ArcelorMittal Workers Union in Liberia have agreed in principle to demand that the company lay off its entire workforce rather than allow the employer to target only 244 workers. They say that if the government cannot intervene to stop the company's plan to lay off 244 employees, then the company should be ready to dismiss its entire Liberian workforce.

The employees adopted the resolution during a mass meeting held at their workplace in Buchanan, Grand Bassa County. They said it is time for the government to protect the welfare of its citizens. The layoffs were announced by ArcelorMittal at a time when the price of iron ore has dropped substantially on the world market.

Their union wants the government to take actions to encourage ArcelorMittal to drop the layoffs, arguing that saving jobs will enable employees to keep bread on their tables and reduce crime rate in the county. The

resolution promises that there would be no vandalism of company properties during the dispute.

## Tunisia unions reject violence

Tunisia's trade union center UGTT, together with a wide range of civil society organizations, was among the organizers of the march which brought tens of thousands on to the streets of Tunis on March 29 to reject violence and terrorism. The IUF took part in the march in solidarity with the affiliated FGAT-UGTT, which organizes food and tourism workers, and with the workers and citizens of Tunisia, along with participants from the World Social Forum held in Tunis.

The UGTT, which played a pivotal role in Tunisia's democratic revolution, denounced the March 18 attack on the Bardo Museum as an assault on democracy and on tourism, one of the pillars of the Tunisian economy.



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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# Yemen: echoes of 1930s aggression

By Finian Cunningham,  
March 31, 2015, Information Clearing House

Both the Arab League and the United Nations have fully transformed themselves into the ill-fated League of Nations that more than 70 years ago disgraced itself into oblivion when it failed to condemn foreign aggressions that eventually led to the cataclysm of World War Two.

As delegates gathered in Egypt's resort city of Sharm el-Sheikh for the Arab League on the March 28-29 weekend, nearly half of its member states were at the same time openly engaged in an aerial blitz on one of the League's weakest countries – Yemen.

Far from issuing any misgiving, or appeal for restraint, the League fully endorsed the onslaught on Yemen and even went on to call for a new “unified military force” to repeat the action in other countries

where a “security risk” is deemed. This is a cart blanche for further foreign military interventions bypassing the United Nations Security Council. In other words, it is open season for lawless aggression.

With a population of only 24 million and half of them living in poverty, Yemen is one of the poorest countries in the Arab region. It is also one of the founding members of the Arab League, which was formed in 1945 at the end of the Second World War.

Scores of Yemeni civilians, including children, have been killed in a massive bombing campaign led by Saudi Arabia and co-ordinated by the United States. The bombing coalition of 10 countries include Egypt, North Sudan, Morocco and the Persian Gulf Arab states of Qatar, United Arab Emirates, Kuwait and Bahrain. More than 200 fighter jets from those countries have been reported

carrying out air strikes on the Yemeni capital, Sanaa, as well as on the southern port city of Aden and surrounding countryside.

Saudi Arabia and other Sunni Arab countries claim that the Houthi-led uprising in Yemen is being orchestrated by Iran. But the claims are far from substantiated and most likely trumped-up for self-serving reasons of providing justification for what is otherwise simply criminal aggression toward Yemen. The *Washington Post* reported: “The Saudis and their allies think [sic] that the Shiite rebels are backed by Iran and that Tehran is trying to exert control over a country [regime] that has been an ally of Riyadh and Washington.” The latter factual detail about the erstwhile Yemeni regime being an ally of Riyadh and Washington is the real key to the latest Saudi-led offensive, not the speculative hearsay about Iran.

So, Yemen is being bombed and

civilians are being massacred merely because the Saudis and their allies “think” that Iran is somehow involved. No proof, no legal case, just bombs away.

The Houthis are a Shia sect and reportedly maintain friendly political, diplomatic relations with Shia Iran. But both parties categorically deny any military involvement. Rather, the Houthis, also known as Ansarullah, appear to be the vanguard of popular rebellion against the ousted Yemeni regime that was long-supported by Saudi Arabia and the US. On March 25, the deposed president Abdel Rabbo Mansour Hadi fled the country to take refuge in Saudi Arabia. Even if Iran was supporting the Houthis that still does not legitimise an all-out bombing of Yemen led by a consortium of Arab monarchies armed and guided by the US.

In Sanaa, family homes, shops and offices have been demolished during hundreds of sorties by warplanes as the Saudi-led coalition pounded the city on nightly raids. Yemen's international airport was so badly hit it is no longer functioning, thus cutting off the country. A naval blockade by Saudi, Egyptian and US warships has also severed Yemen's access to the Red Sea to its west. While in on the southern coast, in Aden, bodies of civilians were reportedly strewn on streets as hospitals filled up with the wounded, and as US warships patrolled the Gulf of Aden.

Against this background of slaughter, the Arab League endorsed the Saudi-led military attacks. Saudi King Salman told the summit that the bombing campaign would continue until Houthi rebels are defeated. Meaning there is no end in sight to the onslaught. Indeed, it is now anticipated that the extensive aerial bombardment and naval siege is paving the way for a massive ground invasion of 150,000 Saudi troops mobilised along the northern Yemeni border.

Attending the Arab League convocation, and royally received, was the discredited president of Yemen, Mansour Hadi. He called on the Saudi military coalition to not relent in its strikes against his own country until the Houthi “Iranian stooges” are crushed. The irony is that Mansour Hadi is widely excoriated within Yemen, and not just by the Houthis, as a stooge of Saudi Arabia and Washington. His steadfast refusal to deliver on popular demands for a democratic transition in Yemen over the past three years led to the Houthis seizing the capital and government institutions at the end of 2014.

The latest Saudi-led military intervention in Yemen, overseen by Washington, has been condemned by Iran, Russia and China.

But the UN has shown lamentable passivity in the face of this foreign aggression on Yemen. Speaking at the Arab League summit, UN secretary general Ban Ki-Moon failed to make any condemnation of the aerial bombardment of that country.

“It is my fervent hope that at this Arab League summit leaders will lay down clear guidelines to peacefully resolve the crisis in Yemen,” said Ban Ki-Moon with a

complacency bordering on cynicism. He urged Arab members to engage in peace talks supposedly brokered by his special envoy, Jamal Benomar. This was said while Saudi Arabia and others were openly vowing to continue their blitzkrieg.

The naked aggression on Yemen, with the complicity of the US and European capitals, is perhaps the nadir for the Arab League and the United Nations. The descent of these organisations into disgraceful irrelevance has been decades in the making. The despicable transformation into tools of aggression is now clear in the eyes of the world.

The UN and the Arab League have remained silent while the US and its allies launched war after war on countries over the past two decades, most notably on Iraq during the 1990s and 2000s, which resulted in over one million dead, mainly civilians. Worse, the UN and the Arab League stand accused of complicity by giving Washington a de facto green light – and on some occasions logistical support – to wage its wars across the Middle East.

In 2011, the Arab League expelled Libya and Syria, even though these countries were being subjected to US-NATO aggression, along with the collusion of Saudi Arabia and other Gulf Arab states, including Qatar and the United Arab Emirates. Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi, who was murdered by NATO-assisted and Gulf-financed extremists in 2011, denounced the Arab League before his death as “finished”.

Syria, as with Yemen, was one of the founding members of the Arab League, yet the government of President Bashar al Assad remains to this day suspended from the 22-member organisation. The Syrian government's seat has been given over to the Western-backed Syrian National Council which is comprised of non-entity exiles who have no popular mandate within Syria.

The League is thus nothing more than a self-serving talking shop dominated by Saudi Arabia and the other oil-rich Gulf Arab kingdoms. As client regimes of Washington, that in turn makes the League a tool of the US to give a thin cover for its imperial predations in the Middle East and North Africa. Ironically, one of the founding principles of the Arab League is to protect the “sovereignty and independence” of its members.

Ominously, the lawlessness and outright aggression that has gripped international affairs – with the latest manifestation in the collective bombing of Yemen – is reminiscent of the 1930s.

That perilous period saw a series of international aggressions carried out by fascist powers with impunity. The League of Nations – a forerunner of the United Nations – facilitated these aggressions through its shameful silence and connivance. When Japan annexed large swathes of China's Manchuria in 1931, the League of Nations, including the US, Britain and France, largely turned a blind eye. As they did when fascist Italy bombed its way into Abyssinia

see YEMEN, page 11



Toronto anti-war rally, October 2014 (Photo: Ed Bil)

## No to the expanded Canadian military mission in Iraq and Syria

Statement by the Central Executive Committee, Communist Party of Canada, March 31, 2015

The Communist Party of Canada condemns the Harper government's one-year extension of Canada's participation in the latest imperialist war in Iraq, which will expand this military mission into neighbouring Syria without the agreement of the elected government of that sovereign country. This is a clear violation of international law and the UN Charter. As with previous military actions in Korea, Yugoslavia, Afghanistan and Libya, this move is yet another undeclared war.

As our Party and others predicted last fall, this mission quickly went far beyond the so-called “bombing and training role” to include direct combat operations. Clearly, this extension shows that Canada is on the way to another disastrous Afghanistan-style war of occupation, ultimately costing billions of dollars and thousands of Iraqi and Syrian lives. The federal government recently claimed that the mission had cost \$122 million as of February; this understated figure of about \$30 million per month does not include many related expenses, but does indicate that the cost of the expanded mission can be expected to go far higher.

Predictably, the Tories call this a “humanitarian” war to “protect

the women and children”. But there is overwhelming evidence that the “Responsibility to Protect” doctrine has instead inflicted enormous damage upon civilian populations. The long list of R2P victims include the thousands killed in NATO's bombing of Yugoslavia in 1999, countless Afghan civilians, and the million or more Iraqis dead in the wake of the 2003 US-UK invasion.

Four years after “Operation Freedom Falcon” in Libya, violent social, economic and political crises have resulted from the illegal bombing and “regime change”. As imperialism plunders the country's energy resources, war hawks are now openly discussing a second intervention against ISIS-linked groups in that country.

In Iraq and Syria, Canadian troops are helping to further imperialism's so-called “New Middle East strategy” which aims to turn the entire region into a patchwork of weak and compliant mini-states kept in check, in part, by its local ally Israel, with Turkey, Saudi Arabia and Qatar as secondary, supportive powers.

Involving Canada in the modern day crusades led by US imperialism and other NATO allies only deepens regional conflicts and humanitarian crises. The most significant terrorist threat today is posed by the U.S., British, Canadian and other governments, which have killed millions of innocent people with a vast range of deadly modern

weaponry, ranging from Cruise missiles to drone bombs. These are the same imperialist powers which count the reactionary fundamentalist regimes of the oil-rich Gulf states and Saudi Arabia as close and valued allies.

It was US imperialism which encouraged and financed the Taliban, Al Qaeda, ISIS and other such groups for its own ends, only to later whip up fear and hatred against these same reactionary forces. This cynical game of switching “allies” and “enemies” brings enormous profits to the military-industrial corporations, but only death and destruction to working people.

The Communist Party of Canada rejects the “Responsibility to Protect” doctrine as a cover for direct imperialist intervention and military aggression in the Middle East and other regions. We demand Canada's complete withdrawal from NATO and US-led military interventions, starting with the expanded war in Iraq and Syria. We call upon the labour and democratic forces, and especially the anti-war movements, to step up opposition to the Harper government's war-making, and to help win a new foreign policy of peace and disarmament, just political settlement of armed conflicts, respect for national sovereignty, withdrawal from NATO, an end to imperialist military alliances and interventions, and for universal global nuclear disarmament. ●





# GM lobby is cropping out the truth

**“ALTERED GENES, TWISTED TRUTH”,** by Steve Druker, Clear River Press, 528 pages, Morning Star review by Colin Todhunter

This is not what the GMO industry wanted to see – headlines in major newspapers and across the internet exposing the fraud behind genetically modified organisms (GMOs). But this constitutes much more than a PR nightmare. The story behind the headlines shakes the very foundations upon which the industry is built.

*Altered Genes, Twisted Truth* is a new book by the US public interest lawyer Steve Druker. The book is the result of more than 15 years of intensive research and investigation by Druker, who initiated a lawsuit against the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) that forced it to divulge its files on GM foods.

Those files revealed that GM foods first achieved commercialisation in 1992 but only because the FDA covered up the extensive warnings of its own scientists about their dangers, lied about the facts and then violated federal food safety law by permitting these foods to be marketed without having been proven safe through standard testing.

If the FDA had heeded its own experts’ advice and publicly acknowledged their warnings that GM foods entailed higher risks

than their conventional counterparts, Druker says that the GM food venture would have imploded and never gained traction anywhere.

He also argues that many well-placed scientists have repeatedly issued misleading statements about GM foods, and so have leading scientific institutions such as the US National Academy of Sciences, the American Association for the Advancement of Science and Britain’s Royal Society.

Druker states that contrary to the claims of biotech advocates, humans have indeed been harmed by consuming the output of genetic engineering. The technology’s first ingestible product (a food supplement of the essential amino acid, L-tryptophan) caused dozens of deaths and seriously sickened thousands of people, permanently disabling many of them. Evidence points to the genetic alteration as the most likely cause of the unusual contamination that rendered the supplement toxic.

Laboratory animals have also suffered from eating products of genetic engineering, and well-conducted tests with GM crops have yielded many troubling results, including intestinal abnormalities, liver disturbances and impaired immune systems.

Druker says that contrary to the assertions of its proponents, the massive enterprise to reconfigure the genetic core of the world’s

food supply is not based on sound science but on the systematic subversion of science — and it would collapse if subjected to an open airing of the facts.

Eminent environmentalist, humanitarian and anthropologist Jane Goodall - recipient of the Benjamin Franklin Medal in Life Science, the French Legion of Honour, Japan’s Kyoto Prize and the Tyler Prize for Environmental Achievement - has written the foreword to the book. Goodall argues that Steven Druker is a hero for exposing this massive fraud and is worthy of a Nobel prize for lifting

the lid on the truth about GM.

She goes on to state that the industry worked to convince the public and government officials, through the dissemination of false information, that there was an overwhelming expert consensus, based on solid evidence, that the new foods were safe. Yet this, as Druker points out, was clearly not true.

The companies, she alleges, have spread disinformation to try and win public support. Druker describes how amazingly successful the biotech lobby has been and the extent to which the

general public and government decision makers have been hoodwinked by the clever and methodical twisting of the facts and the propagation of many myths.

Goodall claims that a number of respected scientific institutions, as well as many eminent scientists, were complicit in this relentless spreading of disinformation.

She believes the book will “go a long way toward dispelling the confusion and delusion that has been created regarding the genetic engineering process and the foods it creates.

“Although this book tells a story that’s in many ways distressing, it’s important that it has finally been told because so much confusion has been spread and so many important decision-makers have apparently been deluded.”

Druker gave a press conference in London on March 4 and challenged the Royal Society to apologise for its pro-GM stance and its part in rubbishing scientists who have safety doubts over the crops and food.

Perhaps the likes of Tory former environment minister Owen Paterson and prominent biologist Professor Anne Glover should apologise too for their role in dismissing legitimate concerns about GMOs - especially Paterson for his recent tirade against critics during a speech in Pretoria.

Druker’s work highlights research which has found tumours, liver and kidney harm in animals given GM feed in trials. And he complains that researchers who dare to raise these problems have been pilloried. Contrary to the assertions of its proponents, he believes that the massive enterprise to reconfigure the genetic core of the world’s food supply is not based on sound science but on the systematic subversion of science - and it would collapse if subjected to an open airing of the facts.

Massive neoliberal trade deal the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) having the potential to open the floodgates to allow GMOs into Europe. Beyond GM director Pat Thomas says that Druker’s investigation deserves serious consideration before we take actions that will irreversibly alter the European food supply. ●

## Altered Genes, Twisted Truth



## Mulcair endorses anti-communist monument

By Darrell Rankin, Leader, Communist Party of Canada-Manitoba, in response to NDP leader Thomas Mulcair’s support letter for the proposed “Memorial to the Victims of Communism” in Ottawa.

NDP leader Thomas Mulcair’s support for the Tory government’s anti-communist monument in Ottawa is a contemptible attack on the working class’s most staunch and militant fighters and on anyone who shares the aim of achieving a socialist society.

Anyone familiar with socialist ideas knows they do not victimize anyone. When workers start building a new society, socialists know it takes a great deal of work to overcome capitalism’s barbaric legacies and to wield power well and with confidence.

We know that capitalist ideas

can taint and overthrow socialist governments.

Capitalists ought to know. They mismanaged their affairs and lost power several times while toppling the feudal aristocracy two centuries ago.

Frederick Engels wrote about the French revolution that the bourgeoisie “lost confidence in their own political capacity, (taking) refuge first in the Directorate, and, finally, under the wing of the Napoleonic despotism.... It seems a law of historical development that the bourgeoisie can in no European country get hold of political power – at least for any length of time – in the same exclusive way in which the feudal aristocracy kept hold of it during the Middle Ages” (1875; 1892).

In my view, people who suffered discrimination or violence in a socialist society really ought to

blame the legacy of capitalism and the ideological poisons it has honed.

Engels wrote at a time when capitalists strove to take and hold on to power. Today, however, they are working exclusively to stay in power and dampen the revolutionary ambitions of the working class, the class destined to end the class struggle through the creation of a socialist society.

Capitalism continues to grow ripe and rotten. Every crisis spawns outbursts of anti-communism. This perfectly explains why anti-communism is more and more a deceptive cloak for capitalism’s worst reactionaries and warmongers, from Czarist Russia to U.S. McCarthyism and Apartheid South Africa.


The Tory attempt to revive this vile canard deserves – and is starting to receive – a sharp rebuke by Canada’s democratic and labour movements, not a fawning endorsement by the NDP that drives a sectarian stake into the working class.

The world’s reactionaries have written many obituaries for communism since Marx and Engels wrote the Manifesto for our party in 1848.

Their descendants today will never kill communism because they cannot kill the entire working class from which we spring. It did not work for Hitler and it won’t work today for Ukraine’s pro-Nazi regime and the most rabid and militarist circles in U.S. and Canadian imperialism. ●



The proposed anti-communist monument in Ottawa is widely seen as a Conservative propaganda weapon, similar to the McCarthyist tactics of the post-WW2 era.



### La Trova Nuestra

**Friday, April 24, 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".



## Quebec anti-austerity fight...

continued from page 2

conditions and the workers current demands."

In reality, however, Fontaine said, "the public sector union negotiations are the core part of the austerity fightback and the working class will not be able to defeat austerity without winning these negotiations."

In this situation, the working conditions fixed by collective agreement are important tools of working people against austerity. "The Liberal government is seeking to wipe out these obstacles, and there is a clear link between these tools and the broader struggle,"

Fontaine said.

In 2012, the common denominator of mass protest was tuition fees. This issue developed into a political struggle. In 2015, Fontaine said, the common denominator is wages. "The government is very afraid of a repeat of the Common Front of the 1970s," he added, recalling that it was widely recognized at the time how the struggle of labour had become a political struggle.

All this time the students had not resolved the more long-term strategic goal of their actions. One proposal came forward to make a "strategic retreat," continuing street actions but going back to class to pick up the student strike actions in the fall with labour.

Opponents, including voices like Printemps 2015 who aim to recreate the spirit of 2012, condemned the "retreat" as overgenerously trusting labour to put up a militant fight. Many supporters are in student unions from metropolitan Montreal, where most of the action is taking place.

Proponents of the "strategic retreat" include the 2014-2015 semester executive of the Association of Student Union Solidarity (ASSÉ), who argued that without labour the students will be acting in isolation and their momentum, as in 2012, could fall apart in the

summer when the current school semester concludes.

By the end of the first week of April, the CSN Montreal had convened a general assembly, and ASSÉ concluded a weekend-long congress. Both meetings hammered out tactics and strategy, with sharp differences of opinion coming forward.

By the evening of April 6, the news came out that not only had ASSÉ's entire executive resigned but "symbolically removed" them. Acting spokesperson Hind Fazazi, who will work in an interim leadership role until another congress at the end of April, announced continued pressure tactics and the strike. (Her acting press secretary will be Maxence Valade, who lost an eye from police brutality in 2012.)

While the student strategy is certainly consequential, it appears labour remains the decisive factor for this anti-austerity battle. More and more, the movement is talking about revenue sources such as more progressive taxation, reinstating capital tax for banks and financial companies, and increasing the corporate tax rate.

But when embarking in late March on a potential fall strike plan, the Front Commun objectively is calling for a political strike. ●



## Threat to environmental groups...

continued from page 5

"Criminal Threats to the Canadian Petroleum Industry," and describes a "well-financed, anti-Canadian petroleum movement, that consists of peaceful activists, militants and violent extremists, who are opposed to society's reliance on fossil fuels."

"I was actually shocked," said Greenpeace Canada's climate and energy campaign director Keith Stewart, who has read report after report over the years showing government efforts to thwart the organization's use of blockades

and other acts of civil disobedience against energy industries. "I'm accustomed to reading these things usually in much more couched language that's drier, more bureaucratic."

Still, C-51's architects and supporters maintain that the bill does not sacrifice dissent. "Let's speak practically," Justice Minister Peter MacKay said at a press conference. "If they're not burning police cars or blowing up critical infrastructure, this is not going to be criminalized."

This assurance isn't comforting to Thomas-Flurer. Although the group's tactics are non-violent,

she won't argue if you call her and her allies a threat to Canada's oil industry infrastructure. When asked when construction on the Northern Gateway pipeline could potentially start, she replies, "Never."

Women in her community "will die for a cause if they have to," she says. "If it means standing in front of a bulldozer and getting killed, they'll do it - I'll do it." ●

## Yemen: echos of 1930s aggression...

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(Ethiopia) in 1935-36, Franco's Spain subjugated Catalonia in 1938, and Hitler's Nazi Germany annexed Austria and Czech Sudetenland, also in 1938.

The complete breakdown in any semblance of international law during the 1930s and the rise of state-sponsored gangsterism paved the way for the Second World War.

A similar process of degeneration is also well underway in the present day, led largely by the US and its coterie of allies among the NATO alliance and oil-rich Arab dictatorships. Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya, Syria, Ukraine and Yemen are but some of the evil fruit from the poison that is coursing through international relations. And yet, ludicrously, Washington accuses Putin and Moscow of behaving like Hitler with a malign 20th Century atavism.

That a defenceless, impoverished country such as Yemen can be openly bombed by hundreds of US-supplied F-15 fighter jets—and for that criminality to be widely endorsed—is a sure sign that the world is once again sliding into the abyss of rampant criminality and the possibility of a more catastrophic all-out war. ●

## What's Left

### Cross-Canada

**April 18 Day of Action Against Bill C-51.** For details in your city, visit [www.facebook.com/events/437681029729588/](http://www.facebook.com/events/437681029729588/)

### Vancouver, BC

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

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

**May Day march**, Friday, May 1, starts 5:30 pm from 14<sup>th</sup> & Commercial, speeches at Grandview Park, 1200 block Commercial Drive, sponsored by Vancouver & District Labour Council.

**People's Voice Victory Banquet**, Sat., May 2, doors 6 pm, Victoria Drive Community Hall, 2026 E. 43 Ave., keynote speaker Micheal Vonn, policy director of BC Civil Liberties Association, on Bill C-51 and the right to Free Speech. Tickets \$20 (students & unemployed \$12), international dinner and

cultural program, call 604-254-9836 or 604-255-2041 for info.

**Mother's Day Pancake Breakfast**, Sunday, May 10, 10 am-1 pm, Chilean Co-op, 3390 School Ave., \$15 all you can eat (\$8 under 12). Organized by Burnaby Club CPC, proceeds to People's Voice.

### Surrey, BC

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

### Toronto, ON

**Confront Barrick Gold**, rally at the mining corporation's AGM, Tuesday, April 28, 10:30 am-12:30 pm, Convention Centre, 255 Front St. West.

**Peace, Solidarity and Social Justice: Let's Move to the Left!**, political & cultural evening, Sat., May 2, 6 pm, Steelworkers Hall, 25 Cecil St., keynote speaker CLC President Hassan Yussuff, with performers Banditry, Banoo Zan, Dane Swan, MataDanze Womyn, Rosy Cervantes, Wally Brooker. Organized by United May Day Committee.

## People's Voice deadlines

May 1-15 issue: Tuesday, April 16

May 16-31 issue: Thursday, May 7

Send submissions to PV Editorial Office,  
706 Clark Drive, Vancouver, V5L 3J1  
<[pvoice@telus.net](mailto:pvoice@telus.net)>

## Revolutionary Culture Calendar 2015

Some still available! To order 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.

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

## 23rd Annual People's Voice Victory Banquet

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

### Keynote Speaker: MICHEAL VONN

(lawyer and Policy Director, B.C. Civil Liberties Association)

"Bill C-51 and the Right to Free Speech"



Join us for an evening to defend free speech, featuring an international cultural program, and delicious food (including vegetarian option).

Tickets \$20 (student/unemployed \$12)  
For details, ph. 604-254-9836 or 255-2041



# Capitalism, environmental crisis, and socialism

Zoltan Zigedy,  
zoltanzigedy@gmail.com

A hundred years from now, humans may remember 2014 as the year that we first learned that we may have irreversibly destabilized the great ice sheet of West Antarctica, and thus set in motion more than 10 feet of sea-level rise. Meanwhile, 2015 could be the year of the double whammy - when we learned the same about one gigantic glacier of East Antarctica, which could set in motion roughly the same amount all over again. Northern Hemisphere residents and Americans in particular should take note - when the bottom of the world loses vast amounts of ice, those of us living closer to its top get more sea level rise than the rest of the planet, thanks to the law of gravity... (Washington Post, March 16)

The latest findings on climate change reported by the Washington Post mark another step on the path toward environmental catastrophe. Apart from philistines, apocalyptists, and other celebrants of ignorance, people understand that the growing degradation of our planet promises pain in the short run and disaster beyond. When humans first emerged on the planet, the environment, the climate, and other features of the natural world presented seemingly insurmountable obstacles to survival. The pre-history and early history of humankind was a tenuous struggle to construct bulwarks against natural calamity and a desperate effort to exploit nature's meagre offerings.

Nearly 200,000 years after the appearance of homo sapiens, circumstances have turned full circle. Humanity has found the means to dominate nature (though far from in a humanitarian way), but with seemingly little regard for the sustainability of the human project. Today, the formerly vulnerable species threatens to render the earth inhospitable to itself, a kind of mindless suicide by the only species that genuinely claims to own a mind.

For those determined to avoid this suicidal path, locating the cause and finding solutions is an urgent task.

## Is "Progress" or "Growth" the Enemy?

It is fashionable in some quarters to locate the cause of the environmental crisis in the insatiable lust for "progress," a term as elusive as it is imprecise. Harking back to the sixties and the "counter-culture" era, many envision a world where consumerism and the fetish for the new are banished in favour of a simpler life style and intellectual, spiritual, or artistic values. There is much to admire in a



commitment to modest consumption and arrested acquisitiveness.

However admirable this may be as a personal choice, it is extremely short-sighted social policy. Certainly, the upper-middle classes of the developed countries could benefit the environment by exiting the insane competition for larger houses, more luxurious cars, and the latest techno-gizmo. The mindless quest for more and better is neither admirable nor sustainable. But before we condemn progress or growth, we must recognize that more is at stake in rejecting progress or growth than thwarting rampant consumerism in the US and Europe or the vulgar excesses of the upper classes.

Apart from consumption madness, billions of the world's population lack even the basics of sustainable life. They barely survive in the midst of poverty, disease, and inadequate shelter, food and water. Until the material means to rectify the sorry, inhuman plight of billions is available, progress and growth must be an imperative. To callously deny them a future out of scorn for hyper-consumerism is petty and, paradoxically, selfish. They cannot be made the scapegoat for Western privileged waste and excess. Those

who so easily condemn progress or growth are shamefully blind to the inequities of class, race, and nationality.

Prospective solutions come in many forms and many shades. Individual solutions are useful and defensible provided that they do no deny the disadvantaged the opportunity to achieve standards of living reasonably commensurate with the standards of the more privileged. For example, asking people without access to modern appliances to curtail usage of inefficient technologies is both irrational and unjust. Equality of sacrifice in the face of vast economic inequities cannot be the solution to environmental degradation. While recycling, re-use, and other personal conservation projects are necessary and meaningful, they are incapable of sufficiently slowing the global expansion and exhaustion of resources. Nor do individual, personal solutions offset the major sources of environmental destruction: corporations and governments.

Conventional policy solutions cluster around market-based and regulatory approaches to the environmental crisis.

Most environmental activists see the failure of either market-based or regulatory measures as a failure of political will. They believe that politicians and political movements have yet to recognize the dire consequences we face by ignoring the environmental crisis. While this may be true, it fails to recognize the acute limitations of market-based and regulatory solutions and the impossibility of their effectiveness in a global capitalist economy.

The political will is not absent because of ignorance, but because the political system is owned and nourished by the capitalists. Moreover, the global economy - overwhelmingly a capitalist economy - is fuelled by profits and profits alone. And profits are sustained and expanded by turning everything material or immaterial into a commodity. As a commodity, nature's resources hold no value other than what can be attached to the pursuit of profit.

It is the exploitation of human and natural resources - labour and nature's bounty - that is the grist for profit's mill. And capitalism

puts profits ahead of nature as well as ahead of people. Both history and the logic of capitalist accumulation and expansion demonstrate the inevitability of waste and destruction. Only when environmental degradation impedes the process of accumulation and profit expansion will the capitalist system respond to the crisis; environmental scientists tell us that will be too late.

And that is precisely the point acknowledged by Naomi Klein in her recent book, *This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs. the Climate*. Klein's anti-capitalism, like so many versions associated with the social democratic, soft-left, has been somewhat fuzzy, vacillating between rejecting the neo-liberal incarnation of capitalism and something elusive, but more daring. But her current thinking is sharper, though still short of an endorsement of a coherent vision of socialism. She concedes: "But because we have waited as long as we have, and we now need to cut our emissions as deeply as we need to, we now have a conflict not just with neo-liberalism, but a conflict with capitalism because it challenges the growth imperative." (quoted in *Monthly Review, Notes from the Editors, March, 2015*). For this, Klein has been criticized widely by her liberal readers still anchored in fealty to capitalism.

The editors of *Monthly Review* perceptively point out that "Klein's argument is irrefutable. To be sure, in criticizing neoliberalism for removing the tools needed to address climate change she deftly avoids the issue of whether capital as a system could ever have seriously mitigated the problem."

Capital cannot mitigate the problem.

The MR editors go on to persuasively argue:

*Klein is realistic and radical enough to realize that her recognition of this necessity, together with her readiness to act on it, puts her and the entire left climate movement that she represents in conflict with capital as a system - and not just with its most virulent form of neoliberalism. It is, as she says, a "two stage argument," and we are now in the second stage. There is no avoiding the fact that the logic of capital accumulation must give way if we are to have a reasonable chance of saving civilization and humanity.*

For "the entire left climate movement" to move beyond individual solutions, market-based answers, regulation, rejection of neo-liberalism, and even capitalism, the movement must define and embrace another goal. What would it be?

Only a system that will replace the logic of profit-before-all with the broad interests of humanity can answer the question. Only a system that can supplant the anarchy of production and distribution with rational planning could count as an answer. Only a system that can substitute forward-looking public ownership for individual short-term self-interest will cope with the crisis. And only a system that erases the existing extreme inequalities associated with capitalism and imperialism can meet our need to bring social justice to the disadvantaged.

As reluctant as much of the left is to utter the word, the answer is quite simply: socialism.

## The Unseen Elephant in the Room

Lost on most of the environmental movement, including the "left climate movement," is the role of imperialism in stoking the environmental crisis. According to Wikipedia:

*The United States Department of Defense is one of the largest single consumers of energy in the world, responsible for 93% of all US government fuel consumption in 2007... In FY 2006, the DoD used almost 30,000 gigawatt hours (GWH) of electricity, at a cost of almost \$2.2 billion. The DoD's electricity use would supply enough electricity to power more than 2.6 million average American homes. In electricity consumption, if it were a country, the DoD would rank 58th in the world, using slightly less than Denmark and slightly more than Syria (CIA World Factbook, 2006). The Department of Defense uses 4,600,000,000 US gallons... of fuel annually, an average of 12,600,000 US gallons... of fuel per day.*

Add to this total the electricity and fuel usage of the rest of NATO, Japan, Russia, The Peoples Republic of China as well as those belligerents constantly at war with imperialism and you have uncountable and socially unnecessary waste of natural resources as well as ecological destruction.

Count the hundreds of military bases - outposts for imperialism - that devour resources better employed in a war to protect the environment.

Add to this total the unceasing pollution, the destruction of natural and man-made structures, the spoilage of land and water, etc. that accompany the endless use of devastating weapons.

The full effects of militarism and imperial aggression stagger the imagination. Pentagon estimates of the production and maintenance of one weapons system - the F-35 - have been three-quarters of a trillion dollars, an enormous unmentioned cost to the environment.

Unfortunately, far too many environmentalists are more cognizant of the environmental damage of littering than they are aware of the enormous threat to the environment of imperial design and endless war. Joining the anti-imperialist, anti-war movement, fighting for an end to militarism, is potentially a far more effective way to reverse the ecological wounds that threaten the planet than the entire bundle of liberal and social democratic panaceas that currently dominate the discussion in the environmental movement: Prius, yes, but Predator drones, no.

As the environmental movement matures, it must embrace the socialist option. It must stand resolutely against militarism and its threat to the environment. No other stance will deflect "civilization" from its determined march toward self-destruction. Authentic, militant environmentalism comes with partisanship for socialism and anti-imperialism. ●

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