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people's VOICE

A policy of hunger

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Death on the tracks



Lac-Mégantic disaster: a tragedy caused by profit and austerity

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The second wave of Egypt's revolution

"We believe that what happened on June 30th is a second wave of the Egyptian revolution, stronger and deeper than the first wave in 2011. It has taken place to correct the path of the revolution and seize it back from the forces of the extreme religious right that had conspired to steal the revolution and ride its wave to serve their fascist and reactionary objectives and the schemes of world imperialism."

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Faced with low wages and tough working conditions, many coffee shop employees are trying to join trade unions. They face a difficult struggle, but Starbucks could easily afford to pay more.

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9 Defeat for French right

Despite desperate efforts to block equal marriage, far-right movements in France lost their fight. Now the political focus is on the economy.

10 Medicare

Calls to protect and improve Canada's universal Medicare system were on the agenda for people's movements outside the First Ministers meeting at Niagara-on-the-Lake..

Wanted: Justice for Trayvon Martin

From People's World

After the acquittal of Trayvon Martin's admitted killer George Zimmerman, America found itself confronting the long-standing flaw in the democratic promise of "justice for all": race and racism. While there is a spectrum of views on the case and the verdict, two contradictory trends have become apparent quickly. One is denial that race or racism played any part, and the other is the view that race and racism are central to the whole case. We, like millions of others, agree with the latter. To deny the role of racism is to deny reality staring us all in the face.

Racism in our country is many-sided and systemic. One could spend considerable ink discussing the numerous ways it led to the killing of Martin and the ensuing legal case. Suffice it to note that it took a monumental struggle just to bring charges against Zimmerman for killing of the unarmed African American youth.

But the multi-racial Justice for Trayvon movement - led by Trayvon's incredibly courageous, dignified and loving parents - is becoming a cornerstone on which to build a far-reaching new civil rights movement. These next days are critical to getting the Department of Justice to act and uphold Trayvon Martin's civil rights. You can sign petitions on the NAACP, American Federation of Teachers, ColorOfChange and MoveOn websites. Building a massive 50th anniversary March on Washington this August could be a game-changer in the fight "to realise the dream."

Voting rights, civil rights and dangerous laws like Florida's so-called Stand Your Ground have to be among the issues that mobilise massive numbers for the 2014 mid-



term elections. The National Rifle Association, oily billionaire Koch brothers, the American Legislative Exchange Council and their Tea Party, ultra-right ilk are counting on a low turnout. If they are successful in repressing and depressing the vote, getting Congress to reinstate the Voting Rights Act, recently gutted by the ultra-conservative Supreme Court ruling, will be a monumental task instead of an attainable one. The same for common sense gun laws on the state and federal level.

From district attorneys to state lawmakers, racism has to be addressed.

When a Black teenager is profiled as a criminal and then killed because someone like Zimmerman supposedly feared for his life, it brings up too many other similar cases. Emmett Till, Oscar Grant and Amadou Diallo come to mind. But one of the clearest

examples of racism in practice is the case of Marissa Alexander of Jacksonville, Florida, who fired warning shots at her husband after she felt her life threatened. She got 20 years for defending herself. Alexander is Black. So much for the equal application of the Stand Your Ground law.

The modern day criminalisation of Black Americans has its roots in the rise of the ultra-right, starting with the election of Ronald Reagan in 1980, and the implementation of anti-99-percent social and economic policies, including the so-called War on Drugs. It has helped to create a criminalisation atmosphere for all of society. Need an abortion? You're a criminal. On unemployment? You need to be drug-tested. Look like an immigrant? Show us your papers. In a union? Thug! Parasite!

As documented in Michelle Alexander's *The New Jim Crow*:

stamps and other vital programs that serve tens of millions, of all races. It justifies unequal treatment before the law, unequal education, unequal employment opportunities and unequal pay. In short, while millions are influenced by racism in their attitudes and beliefs, the bonds and barriers of racism serve ruling class interests, diametrically opposed to their own.

This could be an "aha" moment for millions, particularly white Americans, raising new awareness of the persistence of racism, why it exists, how it distorts and twists democracy for 99 percent of the population and how its systemic nature serves the interests of the one percent ruling elite. Racism, like war and violence, destroys communities and human decency. It has a physical and psychological toll on all - perpetrator, target, or bystander. It's the most un-American of American-made systems.

In July 2008, then-AFL-CIO Secretary, Treasurer Richard Trumka, gave a profound speech on labour, racism and the importance of electing Barack Obama president. Declaring, "there is no evil that has inflicted more pain and suffering than the evil of racism in our country," Trumka said, "We have a special responsibility to fight this evil. Not by calling anyone racist, but by educating those who won't vote for Barack Obama because he is Black." These are lessons we can draw from today. ●

PEOPLE'S VOICE: a newspaper committed to social justice

Many of the articles in this issue of People's Voice reflect our mandate to help build and publicize struggles for social justice in Canada and internationally.

On page 5, our correspondent in France, Adrien Welsh, reports on the recent battle over marriage equality, and the significance of this clash within the context of the political direction of that country under the Socialist government.

Other stories in this issue deal

with efforts by food service workers to improve their pay and conditions, the anti-racism movement for justice for Trayvon Martin, and the shocking revelations that Aboriginal children were turned into subjects for experiments during the post-war period, deprived of milk and food by Canadian scientists.

It's true that all of these topics have been reported to some degree in the mainstream corporate media.

But the real attention of the mass media this summer is focused on something totally irrelevant to the lives of working people; yes, we refer to the newborn "Prince of Cambridge."

This will be our final column on the 2013 PV Press Fund Drive. Thanks to all our loyal readers for helping to support a paper which fights for social justice, instead of indulging in cheap applause for "royal" babies.

There will be one final important fundraiser for the Drive. Join us on Sunday, August 18, for the annual People's Voice Walk-A-Thon organized by our supporters in Surrey, BC. This popular event will take place as usual in Bear Creek Park, at the picnic area beside the parking lot at 140 St. and 88 Ave. Meet at 11 am for a brisk walk around the park, followed by a delicious picnic lunch featuring South Asian food and much more, and then a cultural program at 1 pm. Participation is free, but of course the organizers hope you will make a pledge towards the PV Drive. Call Harjit at 604-543-7179 for details! ●

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Lac-Mégantic: a tragedy caused by profit and austerity

Central Executive Committee, Communist Party of Canada, July 22, 2013

The July 6 derailment of crude oil tank cars in the center of Lac-Mégantic was a terrible disaster, causing the deaths of nearly fifty people, as well as extensive property and environmental damage. The Communist Party of Canada and the Communist Party of Québec express their condolences to the families and the people of Lac-Mégantic suffering from this tragedy.

Amidst the sadness and distress, a deep sense of anger has quickly arisen against those responsible - the Montreal, Maine and Atlantic Railway (MMA) and the Transport Canada, and their policies of profit and austerity.

MMA operates 820 km of railway passing through cities in Québec and Maine, and is one of several subsidiaries of Rail World, an Illinois-based transnational, which manages and invests in railways worldwide including Poland, Ukraine, Estonia, Latvia, and the Netherlands. Rail World's stated purpose is "to promote the privatization of the rail industry by bringing together government agencies wishing to sell their interests to investment capital and management expertise."

Rail World purchased MMA in 2003 for \$50 million, with nearly \$15 million invested by the Caisse de dépôt du Québec, and has subsequently received tens of millions of dollars in loans and grants under government infrastructure programs.

MMA is known for its aggressive practices to reduce operating costs: reducing staff, neglecting the maintenance of its network, using worn-out equipment and using type 111 tank wagons, which are recognized as inappropriate for the transportation of oil. Between 2003 and 2010, the company laid off 35% of its staff and imposed a wage reduction of 15%.

Last year, Transport Canada provided MMA with an exemption from safety rules, to allow the company to operate trains with only one engineer on board. At the same time, the Conservative government has imposed deep spending cuts at Transport Canada, as part of its ongoing austerity measures that have gutted many public services. As of May 2013, nearly 500 Transport Canada employees had received termination notices. These kinds of attacks on public services directly compromise the public's right to consistent and reliable safety inspections and enforcement.

Parallel to austerity measures, the Conservative government is accelerating its drive to privatize many public services. The Conservatives and their predecessors have encouraged and facilitated privatizations, with generous subsidies for corporate purchases and reductions in minimum safety rules to increase profit margins. For a dozen years Québec has had a law requiring railways to provide municipalities with the list of dangerous products transported through their territory. However, this law has never been

implemented because government regulation that would enforce the rules was never adopted.

Another part of the backdrop to the Lac-Mégantic tragedy is the frantic drive toward the development and mass export of hydrocarbons, including oil from the Alberta tar sands. A product of this policy has been a dramatic increase in oil transportation by train. Canadian National, for example, has seen an increase from

5000 cars tanks per year in 2010 to about 30,000 cars in 2012. For MMA and Rail World, the skyrocketing transport of oil is a profit opportunity to which the corporation is committed, full speed, despite its inadequate and unsafe infrastructure. These developments dramatically increase the risk of more accidents and threats to the environment, particularly in the context of Transport Canada cutbacks and

deregulation.

Oil corporations and the governments that parrot them will use the disaster in Lac-Mégantic as an argument for the development of pipelines. Within one day of the tragedy, the *Globe and Mail* argued that "Québec tragedy reminds us pipelines are safest way to transport oil", and that "it is time to speed up the approval of new pipeline construction in North America."

Such opportunistic comments, which prey on tragedy to further maximize profit, are shameful and must be condemned. What is urgently needed, on the other hand, is a comprehensive public discussion about economic policy, and how it connects with other public interests such as safety, environmental security, employment, and social needs. As Amir Khadir, deputy of Québec Solidaire, stated, "the tragedy of Lac-Mégantic must, I believe, lead us to reflect on the place that oil has in our economy." The tar sands are themselves an ecological disaster. It is necessary to change from a private energy industry that is focused on non-renewable resources, to a publicly owned and democratically controlled industry that is committed to developing renewable energy.

The ongoing investigation into

the Lac-Mégantic tragedy will focus on the chain of events that led to the derailment of the train, and it may determine some individual responsibilities. But focusing only on the immediate causes and the actors directly involved in the derailment will not identify the root causes of the disaster and prevent such events from happening again.

The problem is much broader and is found in the logic of capitalism itself - to the pursuit of profit above all, to the drive for massive privatization and deregulation in recent decades. As we struggle to rebuild Lac-Mégantic and for improvements to rail safety, we must also struggle for a system that places people's needs before corporate greed, for socialism.

The Communist Party calls for:

- The immediate strengthening and enforcement of rail safety regulations;
- Nationalization of rail transport, to place it under public ownership and democratic control, and the immediate repair and upgrade to the rail network and infrastructure;
- Nationalization of all natural, energy and other resources, to form the basis of an economy that will prioritize needs and interests of the people and the environment before those of corporations. ●



Rail safety is increasingly compromised in many countries by deregulation and privatisation. In the photo above from 2010, railway activists marched out of Lille station in France to protest against EU-led privatisation of rail networks. Just outside Lille is the Somain rail freight yard where over 300 jobs were wiped out by the dismantling of France's freight industry. Speakers at the protest condemned the systematic destruction of national rail networks, jobs and safety standards.

Baristas of the world, unite!

By Kimball Cariou

Baristas are starting to organize in Nova Scotia, and fast food workers have become increasingly militant in the United States. These two developments are linked to the efforts by big corporations to squeeze out maximum profits, at the expense of the huge service industry workforce in North America.

The recent Nova Scotia case has drawn considerable media attention, after Halifax employees at the Just Us! coffee cooperative chain joined Local 2 of the Service Employees International Union. The chain says that any new shops that open will be unionized.

This is not the same as organizing a big transnational food company. Just Us! Co-op set out in 1995 "to become Canada's first Fair Trade coffee roaster... a small, but bold experiment to show that the coffee business, and all businesses, could be done differently, putting 'People and the Planet before Profits' locally and globally."

Even so, it took a sharp struggle to make this breakthrough. Last April, two Just Us! employees who went to the Labour Board claiming that they were fired for their union activities. Putting "people before profits" apparently did not immediately extend to front line employees, as sometimes happens in cooperatives.

On a larger scale, workers at two Second Cup cafes, a large cross-Canada chain, voted recently on whether to unionize. The results of that vote have not yet been released.

How large is this sector? In the

United States, 11 million people are employed in the food service industry, with about 1.1 million here in Canada - or about 6% of the total workforce.

But working conditions and incomes in this sector lag far behind the average, largely because few food service workers are organized. There are important



The Seattle-based Starbucks, which has more than 18,000 locations around the world, faces increased competition as restaurant chains expand coffee menus to include more lattes and frozen drinks. But during the first quarter of 2013, global sales at Starbucks rose 6 percent. For the quarter, Starbucks earned \$390 million US, up from \$309 million a year earlier. That's a profit of over \$4 million every day.

exceptions, of course, such as many employees at arenas in the major cities. However, these unionized workers are often employed only irregularly; at Rogers Arena, where the Vancouver Canucks play, hundreds of part-time workers operate concession stands, but only for five or six hours during each of

40-50 home games per year, plus the occasional concert event.

Statistics Canada reports that employees in the accommodations and food services sector are paid an average of about \$16 per hour (compared to \$24 for the entire workforce), with weekly incomes of about \$370. In other words, a typical working week is between 20 and 25 hours. Take-home pay works out to less than \$19,000 per year, forcing most to find other low-paid jobs to make ends meet.

The trend is similar in the United States, or perhaps even worse. U.S. food service workers average about \$10.20 per hour, with total annual earnings of \$21,240 for those employed full time. In both countries, about three-quarters of this workforce are women, and disproportionately come from racialised communities.

As the costs of housing, food, transportation and other necessities soar, workers in these jobs find it harder and harder to survive. And as the capitalist economic crisis continues, other employment options have become even less available.

This is certainly true for coffee shop workers. Traditionally - or at least since this sector boomed in the 1980s - many baristas have been students, pouring espressos and lattes part-time to help pay for tuition and living expenses. Starbucks and other chains and independent outlets were happy to hire students, relying on a relatively cheap workforce that turns over regularly.

That pattern began to change in the 1990s, when baristas started to organize for better pay and hours.

One of the outstanding examples was in Vancouver, where 150 employees at twelve Starbucks franchises joined the Canadian Auto Workers. The CAW won some improvements in job language and shift scheduling thanks to an organizing drive in 1996.

But the company resisted changes in wages or benefits at the unionized stores. Starbucks employed classic employer techniques, stalling negotiations while cutting down the hours of pro-union workers, or finding excuses to replace them with new employees. The CAW fought back with an "un-strike" and other creative tactics, but by 2007 the union was decertified at its seven remaining outlets.

At the time, the CAW said Starbucks never had any interest in trying to work with the union. High staff turnover rates affected union strength, as many pro-union workers ended up leaving after a year or two. Even so, the union considered Starbucks a "pretty good employer" by the "abysmal" standards of the service sector. But "when you look at their profitability, they could actually pay their people a living wage and still make money but they don't do that," a CAW representative said.

Today, of the 80,000 workers employed directly by Starbucks worldwide, fewer than 130 are currently union members.

Will the Second Cup and Just Us! baristas launch a significant change in the food services industry? Time will tell, but clearly, their success could have a huge positive impact for twelve million workers and their families across the continent. ●

EDITORIALS

The past is the present

The revelations that Canadian scientists deprived Aboriginal children of milk and other nutrients during the 1940s and '50s is further confirmation that the term "genocide" is quite appropriate to describe the origins of Canada. For decades, the strategy of the Canadian state was to eliminate the national identities of First Nations, Inuit and Metis peoples, with the aim of creating a uniformly "European" population. Various tactics were employed for this racist policy: the reservation system (essentially the theft of First Nations lands), residential schools ("taking the Indian out of the child"), the potlach ban, etc.

Those who naively argue that these policies are just "history" should think again. Many First Nations languages are disappearing, in part due to government refusal to provide financial support to save this invaluable cultural heritage. Aboriginal children suffer the highest poverty rates in Canada, leaving many suffering from hunger decades after the criminal "experiments" of the post-war years. The videotaped brutal beating of an Innu man by two Quebec police officers is a new reminder that state violence against Aboriginal people is still frequent. Attempts by governments and energy corporations to bribe and bully First Nations into allowing tar sands pipelines across their territories shows that the great land theft of previous centuries continues today.

The national oppression of the First Nations, Inuit and Metis peoples is not a relic of the past, but a defining feature of the Canadian colonial state. Instead of issuing more phony, paternalistic apologies and promises, Canada must move towards a new, equal and voluntary partnership, freely negotiated by the Aboriginal peoples. Quebec and English-speaking Canada, including the right of all nations to full self-determination.

Whistle-blower of the month

If there were any justice, Sylvie Therrien would be receiving a medal for service above and beyond the call of duty. Instead, she has been suspended without pay, after leaking documents showing that federal investigators cut people off from employment insurance benefits in order to meet quotas.

Therrien's documents show that she and other investigators were ordered to find \$485,000 in "savings" each year by denying EI claims. After first denying that any such quotas existed, the Harper Conservatives launched a witch-hunt to find out who spilled the beans. Under interrogation, Therrien admitted that she was the source of the leak.

"I knew my job was in peril. I knew that, but I couldn't continue. I couldn't sleep," Therrien said. "I was thinking just about those people... I was going to send them and their children into the street... and now here I am on the street."

The case may well end up in court, but it proves that pro-corporate governments will leave no stone unturned in their efforts to force workers to accept the lowest possible wages.

The documents show that Service Canada investigators were instructed to examine 1,200 EI recipients, by checking addresses, bank accounts, medical documents, and physical appearances, even knocking on the door of claimant's homes to ask for an interview on the spot. These investigations are not based on evidence of wrongdoing or cheating, they are simply random checks of recipients who have paid into the EI program while working.

At the same time, the Harper Tories (like the Liberals before them) have slashed the number of Canada Revenue Agency auditors responsible for tracking down corporate tax evasion such as offshore havens. That should tell you everything you need to know about Stephen Harper, prime minister of a government dedicated to making the rich richer, and the poor poorer.

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LETTERS

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706 Clark Drive, Vancouver, BC, V5L 3J1 or
pvoice@telus.net

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Shovel to dig out from under windfall profits.

Sixty years since the Cuban Revolution

By Vinnie Molina,
Communist Party of
Australia

On July 26, 2013 Cuba and people around the world in solidarity will commemorate the 60th anniversary of the historical attacks on the Moncada and Carlos Manuel de Cespedes Barracks.

Cuba prior to 1953 had economic and political conditions that exacerbated the class struggle. The Cuban people resolved that the resistance movement had to utilise all forms of struggle to defeat the dictatorship. The attacks of July 26 were considered a military defeat but are regarded as the spark of the Cuban revolution that later triumphed on January 1, 1959.

Fulgencio Batista had come to power through a coup d'état in March 1952 and led a dictatorship until fleeing the country at the end of 1958 after being pushed out by the victorious Rebel Army.

Fidel Castro led the failed 1953 attacks on the Moncada Barracks in Santiago de Cuba with just over one hundred patriots while a smaller number attacked the Carlos Manuel de Cespedes Garrison in Bayamo.

The main objective was to attack the military installations and gain control of the military armaments for distribution to the people and to spark an armed insurrection. Unfortunately this objective was not achieved and

Guest editorial...

most of the combatants were captured, tortured and assassinated. Only a handful had their lives spared and were taken prisoners serving long sentences; among them Fidel, Raul Castro and Juan Almeida among others.

The attacks however sparked a mass movement that campaigned for the freedom of all political prisoners forcing the Batista regime to grant an amnesty two years later releasing the Moncada survivors.

Fidel, Raul and others spent time exiled in Mexico where they organised the Granma expedition, which was joined by Ernesto Che Guevara. The expedition landed in Cuba in December 1956.

They confronted Batista's army soon after landing and faced many

casualties. The few survivors from the Granma expedition engaged the people of the Sierra Maestra in the struggle for freedom. A Rebel Army was organised that through heroic battles defeated the army of the dictatorship marching to Havana in January 1959.

July 26 is now a public holiday in Cuba; the Day of National Revelry, which was first, commemorated on July 26, 1959. This first commemoration was attended by thousands of Cubans from the countryside in support of the revolutionary government's agrarian reform.

Sixty years after the historical Moncada attacks, the people of Cuba continue to support the socialist government and the gains of the revolution and commemorate this day as the spark of the revolution.

This July 26 the Communist Party of Australia salutes the people of Cuba and their determination in continuing to build a Socialist society. The CPA also reaffirms its solidarity with the Cuban people in their struggle against the US blockade and for the freedom of the Cuban Five. ●



Following the attack on Moncada, Fidel Castro (seen here, just 27 at the time) was captured and jailed by the Batista regime.

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Gay rights victory a setback to French ultra-right

By *Adrien Welsh*

Finally, it happened! In the country which considers itself the homeland of human rights, the French Revolution and the Paris Commune, Vincent and Bruno could celebrate their wedding on May 29th. The first civil marriage between two people of the same sex put an end to legal discrimination based on sexual orientation in France.

While gay couples previously had the possibility to contract a civil union or *pacte civil de solidarité*, only now are certain rights of so-called "traditional" marriage guaranteed, including the right to legally adopt children.

Vincent and Bruno's union, celebrated in Montpellier in the south of France, followed months of mobilization by socially-progressive forces. An important contribution was made by the French Communist Party and its youth movements, which confronted the far-right and religious lobbies, and demanded the group Civitas be shut down.

The Catholic Civitas movement garnered considerable media attention, but failed to build a broad movement. Even staunch opponents of the marriage law, like the Cardinal-Archbishop of Paris, André Armand Vingt-Trois, were forced to call Civitas "un groupe borderline," or fringe.

Repeated calls by Civitas for homophobic demonstrations ended almost every time in riots. The last Civitas mobilisation was held on May 26. Organisers claimed over one million people in the streets of Paris, although police sources believe there were about 150,000 participants.

The first gay marriage in France was therefore celebrated in a tense climate three days later. More than 140 media outlets and 200 riot police attended the ceremony. But many commentators felt that this sharp social confrontation could have been avoided had the law been voted earlier.

When Christiane Taubira, the Minister of Justice, originally presented the law, it would have been easily approved in the National Assembly, since President Hollande's Socialist Party and coalition of "Radical, Citizen and Miscellaneous Left" parliamentarians have a majority.

Instead, the government stalled, giving various reactionary forces several months to organize. Further delays took place when a much larger than usual number of amendments were proposed by right-wing parties.

Since Hollande's election in May 2012, which promised "change," only the extension of the right of marriage has actually been accomplished. But since the Socialists took power, there are

1000 more unemployed each day, representing over 730,000 people. Among the youth, more than 25% are unemployed.

As some commentators have said, same-sex couples can now get married - but can they find a job?

Hollande's policies are arguably worsening the economic climate for working people. Rejecting nationalising key sectors like automobile factories, Hollande has given 20 billion euros to the big corporations through tax cuts. The government has slashed pensions, and is pushing for "flexibility in employment" with its national inter-professional agreement. The Minister for Higher Education, Genevieve Fioraso, is on the path of privatizing post-secondary education.

Hollande's government also spent billions of euros conducting an imperialist war in Mali, while claiming there are no funds left, and that the austerity "cure" is the only solution.

To confront these policies, the Communist Party and its allies have tried to build a strong mobilisation. But without the full participation of the labour movement (especially the CFDT unions, which support the Socialist government), these initiatives have yet to lead to a broad movement.

This underscores how important it is to extend the right of marriage for all, to prevent any

possibility for the ruling class to divide working people on any racial, ethnic, linguistic, religious or sexual basis. From this perspective, progressive and democratic social movements, and especially the Communist Party through its LGBT collectives, played a leading role.

It appears the Socialists also benefited from a rather opportunist calculation. By leaving so much time between November 2012, when he announced the marriage equality law, and its adoption in May, Hollande granted time for right-wing forces to mobilise. This broadly supported but also somewhat polarizing law became the centre of French political life, and all opposition to the Hollande government was led by the right.

This problematic situation led to serious consequences. First, most progressive forces, including the Communist Party, tended to support

the government on most issues against the right-wing opposition, instead of building a genuine critical mass movement, oriented on a people's agenda and with working class demands at the core.

Perhaps most importantly, political debate in France became focused on gay marriage to the exclusion of other social and class issues. This helped big business, as anti-popular measures were approved without any strong opposition in the streets.

Next year's municipal elections will be another important struggle, as leftists and Communists continue to try to block the rising Front National, a party linked with extreme-right and anti-immigrant movements.

(*Welsh is a member of the international commission of the Young Communist League of Canada, and a correspondent for People's Voice.*) ●



Supporters of the marriage equality law celebrate in Paris.

PQ, Liberals, CAQ break Quebec construction strike

By *Robert Luxley, Montréal*

A general strike of Quebec's 175,000 construction workers began on June 17, the first such walkout since 1986. The intransigence of the employers forced the workers to strike, after months of negotiations. In terms of working days lost, the dispute was one of the largest in recent Canadian history.

The construction industry bosses, represented by the Construction Association of Quebec (ACQ) categorically rejected union demands for real wage increases, instead seeking to impose a 1% increase, well below the rate of inflation. The unions bargained for a 3% increase in the first year, and 2.75% in each of the following two years, or 8.5% over a three year contract.

Collective bargaining in the Quebec construction industry takes place within a particular legal framework. The law divides the industry into four sectors (industrial, institutional and commercial, residential, highways and civil engineering), each with its own collective agreement. Some clauses are common to each agreement, such as union recognition, grievance and arbitration procedures, pensions, insurance, etc. Negotiations are carried out at the provincial level, and settlement terms apply to the industry throughout Quebec.

In addition to holding wages below inflation, the employers also wanted to impose significant rollbacks in working conditions, targeting the industrial and institutional/commercial sectors. In these two cases, the employers hoped to reduce overtime rates, to establish a much longer working

day (13.5 hours per day, from 5:30 am to 7 pm), to impose Saturday as a day to recover time lost due to weather at the regular pay rate, and to increase labour mobility across the province.

The mood of the employers was



shown as negotiations began in January 2013, when they demanded a "special law" to impose a settlement. At the beginning of June, the president of the ACQ alarmingly told a news conference that pay increases would have grave economic consequences.

According to him, construction workers should not aim to raise their incomes through a pay increase, but by working longer hours. The union demands, he claimed, would lead to a decrease in investments.

The response to this attack was unity in action. Despite their differences and criticisms, the trade unions - FTQ-Construction, le Conseil provincial (International), le Syndicat québécois de la construction (SQC), and la CSD

Construction et la CSN-Construction - formed a common front, the Union Alliance.

A strike involving this many workers has a major economic impact. The media clamoured that the industry affects 14% of

Quebec's GDP, with considerable spin-off effects. The Bank of Canada compared the impact of the strike to the recent Calgary flood, predicting that it could curb growth rates by 0.6%. The president of the Employers Council wrote to Premier Marois: "We believe that in the interests of the economy and people of Quebec, elected representatives must meet now to discuss the adoption of a special law."

The PQ government at first refused to bow to the demands of the opposition Liberals and the Coalition Avenir Québec (CAQ), which called for the immediate adoption of a special law to end the strike and impose a legislated contract. But while claiming to

support the negotiating process, the government clearly did not intend to let the strike continue for long.

After the first week of the strike, an agreement in principle was reached on June 24, covering 41,000 workers in the highways and civil engineering sector. The agreement included an immediate pay increase of 2.0%, plus 2.1% on 2014, 2.2% in 2015, and 2.3% on 2016, for a total of 8.6% over four years. It also provided for increases in transportation costs and various bonuses. The issue of labour force mobility was also covered. The workers returned to work the next day, before ratifying the agreement.

At the same time, the Premier announced the appointment of a mediator, with a mandate of one week to reach a settlement. The opposition parties denounced the government for delaying the adoption of a special law, and the employers joined in, demanding such a law to protect business owners.

On June 25, another deal was reached in the residential sector, but this time the terms were not

The construction bosses want lower wages and a 13.5 hour work day

made public before the workers could ratify the terms. Another 57,000 workers ended their strike, leaving 77,000 still out in the industrial and institutional/commercial sectors, where negotiations were at a standstill. The bosses simply stuck to their positions. As they hoped, the special law was adopted on June 30.

The legislation proposed by the PQ minority government included

an 8.6% pay increase over four years, as negotiated in the highways and industrial engineering sectors, and would have extended the collective agreement of the 77,000 workers still on strike, also for four years. But the Liberals and CAQ considered these terms too favourable to the unions. They wanted to cancel the 8.6% pay increase, replacing it with an increase indexed to the rate of inflation.

After lengthy and difficult debates, the opposition parties voted with the government to impose a 2% increase and to renew the status quo of working conditions, for one year only. The special law ordered an immediate return to work, under threat of heavy fines. Only the two Québec Solidaire deputies voted against the legislation.

The Liberals and CAQ refused to maintain the status quo of working conditions for a period as long as four years, supposedly to "urge the unions to negotiate," declared Liberal leader Philippe Couillard. In reality, these parties hope to give the employers another chance to impose contract rollbacks. The battle will resume next year.

Meanwhile, the unions expressed their disappointment. "Our fundamental rights are being violated by the special law passed last night by the National Assembly," declared Yves Ouellet, spokesperson for the Union Alliance. "While we will respect the legislation, we will continue to denounce it." On their part, the Employers' Council expressed satisfaction at the outcome. ●



Marxist Theory

"Middle Class Revolution": A New End of History?

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

The US is notoriously unkind to "intellectuals." Popular culture portrays intellectuals as absent-minded, divorced from the everyday world, and obsessed with spinning useless, but harmless abstractions. They are good to keep contained in universities where they can give future cogs in the capitalist machine a taste, but not a passion for, impractical thought. Regrettably, those posing as intellectuals have gone far to earn contempt, favouring arcane, specialized languages and scholastic debates.

That's not to say that there is no room for thinkers in the US, but they are dubbed "pundits," "experts," "researchers" or "consultants," words that ring with practicality and single-mindedness; they are purveyors of small, easily digested ideas and not the "big" ideas associated with intellectuals.

In the US, we are taught to distrust big ideas unless they are linked to religions. But then religion has been compartmentalized, shunted off to Sunday mornings or weddings and funerals. All the big ideas we need were decided with the ratification of the US Constitution.

We can thank corporate marketers and their masters for our continuing alienation from big ideas and taste for small ones. They prefer ideas that are easily and flashily packaged, readily digested, and quickly obsolesced. They select for us ideas that can go "viral," grabbing the attention of not thousands, but millions. They select ideas that easily fit in a two-minute TV commentary or on 6 or 8 column inches of news print. Intellectuals didn't invent the term "sound bite." Nor did they invent "twitter." Corporate taste makers did. So what we get in the market place of ideas are small ideas, commodified ideas with shiny packages.

Thus, it may be hard to understand how Francis Fukuyama fits into the world of ideas. We know him for his celebrated 1992 book, *The End of History and the Last Man*, an ambitious intellectual tome designed to place triumphant capitalism and its attendant bourgeois democracy at the pinnacle of a long historical, dialectical process. A big idea indeed!...

Fukuyama's big ideas can take small credit for the pious military crusades led by the US ruling class in the Balkans, Iraq, Afghanistan, and recently in Libya and Syria, as well as the meddling in Eastern Europe, the Middle East, Latin America and Africa. Those who failed to accept the end of history soon felt the wrath of history's enforcer. At the same time, the resistance to Fukuyama's vision of history's end challenged his big idea. The intense confrontation between the US and peoples in the Middle East and Latin America shattered the idea that with the demise of the Soviet Union the world would rush to embrace the values of the US and Europe.

With the "end of history" forestalled by unforeseen events, Fukuyama knocked around the research institute/think tank/academic circuit, writing books and resisting the temptation to join the courtiers of the mass media trading in small, nasty ideas. He passed on the enormous earnings available to the likes of the O'Reilly's, Limbaugh's, or the other aristocrats of wind-baggery. Instead, he scoured

the landscape to find new opportunities to float big ideas.

And now he's back with a new big idea.

Fukuyama won a think-piece in the June 28/29 weekend *Wall Street Journal* entitled "The Middle Class Revolution." He argues that "All over the world, today's political turmoil has a common theme: the failure of governments to meet the rising expectations of the newly prosperous and educated." Cognizant of the worldwide mass risings of recent years, Fukuyama chooses this moment to offer an explanation, a theoretical explanation for those risings, an explanation palatable and comforting to US elites....

Unfortunately, he gets it all wrong.

He builds his case around reflections on events in the streets of Tunisia, Egypt, Brazil, and Turkey, a mixed collection neither reflective of all of the mass activity of our time nor sharing many common features. Seduced by recent headlines and sensationalist accounts, Fukuyama finds the "middle class" as the revolutionary agent in all cases. Besides the elusiveness of the term, he offers no evidence beyond youth, cell phones, and the presence of a vaguely sensed entrepreneurial spirit to justify the assignment of this role. And he is equally slippery in explaining what constitutes a "middle class." Instead, he considers a series of candidates: income (\$6,000-30,000 year), relative income (the middle of a country's income distribution), and relative level of consumption (greater than the subsistence level of the poor). Rejecting these, he settles on "education, occupation, and the ownership of assets," none of which is produced as evidence regarding any of the particular countries under review. In fact, the demographics of the four "revolutions" fail to show common attributes; nor do they demonstrate a rising of the "middle class."

When Mohamed Bouazizi, a fruit vender in Tunisia, set himself afire in December of 2010, he became the symbol for the uprisings that pundits have dubbed "the Arab Spring." Tunisia, under Ben Ali, was one of the success stories of neo-liberalism, a poster child for corporate-friendly "competitiveness" and foreign investment. Its industrial and service economies were relatively well developed.

While the neo-liberal regimen delivered growth, modest GDP/capita, some social benefits (education and welfare), it was rocked by the economic crisis and the scourge of high unemployment. The youth (constituting nearly half of the population) endured one of the world's highest unemployment rates: 30.7%. As in the US, Tunisian youth are relatively well educated, but denied access to meaningful employment. The relative affluence of Tunisian elites enjoying the fruits of a growing economy and the lack of opportunity for a youthful population spurred the overthrow of Ben Ali.

Egypt presents a different picture. While Sadat and Mubarak also embraced the tenets of neo-liberalism, they did so in the shadow of Nasser's legacy of anti-imperialism, public ownership and social welfare. Moreover, free market capitalism fared far worse in this country. Despite a large industrial base and due, in part, to a relatively large agricultural sector

(56.5% of Egyptians live outside of urban areas), Egypt achieved a GDP/capita roughly only 2/3 of that of Tunisia.

But Egypt shares with Tunisia an extremely youthful population with massive un- and underemployment. With little government educational expenditure, it is no surprise that Egyptians have a relatively low participation in higher education.

Egyptian professionals - the social base for the Muslim Brotherhood - could count as a "middle strata," though they are a small part of the population. Most Egyptians, however, enjoy an income only marginally above poverty, marking membership in what would properly be considered the working class.



Rising bread prices helped spark the Tunisian uprising.

The global economic downturn only brought the plight of young Egyptians to the fore and prompted mass action and the deposing of Mubarak. The subsequent Morsi presidency brought a further disintegration of the economy and a spike in unemployment and poverty. The Muslim Brotherhood failed to attempt an exit from neo-liberalism and restored the foreign policy of Mubarak, even betraying the Syrian government to imperialism.

The people have again taken to the streets. In the words of Salah Adly, General Secretary of the Egyptian Communist Party, Egyptian Communists believe "that what happened on 30th June is a second wave of the Egyptian revolution that is stronger and deeper than the first wave in 2011. It has taken place to correct the path of the revolution and seize it back from the forces of the extreme religious right..."

The street demonstrations in Turkey, a country that has one historic foot in the Arab world and a tentative one in Europe, is more a political struggle than an explosion of economic discontent. Turkey's demographics are similar to a European country, a poorer European country like Portugal or Poland, but with a much higher percentage of youth in the population. The Islamist president Erdogan represents cultural traditions that conflict with that of more secular youth. Of course others, including workers, who have economic demands, support the demonstrations, as do unemployed youth. But they do not challenge the structures of bourgeois democracy or monopoly capitalism. Turkish

Communists recognize this fact. As Kemal Okuyan, a member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Turkey, states "... this is an outburst of a huge social energy. It is powerful in extent and effect. But there are some Marxist criteria for defining a situation as a revolutionary crisis. We are far from that. At least for now..."

Brazil, Fukuyama's final example of a "middle class" revolution, demonstrates its own unique demographics and weaknesses. Despite showing exceptional economic growth, Brazil counts as one of the most economically unequal countries in the world. Highly urbanized, Brazil's poverty is concentrated in city neighbourhoods, with all of the

five years. One would never guess that all four of the countries under discussion suffer from severe economic and political problems unsolved by their past and current leaders.

In Tunisia, Ben Ali's embrace of neo-liberal fundamentalism was a bankrupt answer to youth unemployment. In Egypt, corrupted leaders brazenly counted on the accommodation with imperialism to prop up their aloof rule over an abused people. Turkey's leader, like politico-theological leaders of other persuasions, overstepped the limits of governance and opened the door to airing the many grievances of the opposition, formerly trumped by religious commitment. And Brazil's social-democratic government learned the folly of attempting to manage capitalism while promising to rectify its inequities.

From the Indignados to the Occupy movement, from the revival of the Latin American left to the Arab Spring, authentic popular uprisings have emerged from the failure of capitalism to deliver the future and security so seemingly assured before the great crisis of 2008. Millions have been failed by the institutions, parties, and leaders that they formerly trusted. It's not as though they have been dealt a bad hand, but it is as though there is no good hand to be found in the deck.

Spinning theories based on such a corrupted sociological idea as the "middle class" guarantees failure. Of course one can't blame Fukuyama entirely for buying in on one of the great intellectual frauds of our time. Everyone, from the Chamber of Commerce to the misleaders of labor, likes to remind us that we are all members of a vast collection of people located economically between the rich and the poor. Within this distorted picture there is something for everyone. We all share home ownership, a good job, vacations, family, and comforting values, so the fantasy goes. The unfortunate poor are with us because they have failed, though they deserve our compassion and, perhaps, our charity. The rich are with us because they are successful and merit our respect. This harmonious picture is only disrupted when the rich get too greedy or the poor get rebellious.

This myth serves the ruling class, their political flunkies, and labor's class collaborationists in maintaining class peace and stability. But most importantly, it obscures the real class divide between employers and employees.

The divisions that spark genuine revolution are not between some muddy notion of a middle class at odds with an equally obscure spectre of government, but between the power and dominance of capitalist corporations and the diverse and largely unrepresented workers who enrich them. This sharply drawn class division accounts for the fundamentally economic, but also cultural and spiritual alienation of youth. Whether conscious or not, this division generates discontent and outrage. Expressed in many ways, the conflict between the employers and their employees stands behind the conflicts of the twenty-first century. And only its resolution in favour of the employee class - the working class - will bring these conflicts to a close.

It's not a new idea; it's a big, but not too big of an idea; and it promises an escape from the failure of capitalism: Socialism. ●

The second wave of Egypt's revolution

Excerpts from an interview with Salah Adly, General Secretary of the Egyptian Communist Party by "Nameh Mardom", Central Organ of the Tudeh Party of Iran, July 6, 2013

In the recent statements of the CP Egypt (July 3) you referred to the fact that the mass protest movement comprises various classes and strata. How were the classes and strata of Egyptian society mobilized in the second wave of the June 30 Revolution? Salah Adly: Since the outbreak of the revolution of 25th January 2011, the protest movements have not subsided, and demonstrations of millions of people have not stopped, i.e. the revolutionary state of the masses has always been there, subsiding at times and flaring up some other times. The workers' protests and strikes also escalated. After the success of Morsi and the Muslim Brotherhood came to power, the masses discovered their authoritarian nature, fascist character, their bias to the interests of more reactionary and parasitic sections of capitalism, and their inability to run a state of the size of Egypt. Furthermore, their betrayal of the interests of the homeland and their willingness to act as the biggest broker to maintain the interests of America and Israel in the region were exposed. They concluded the truce in Gaza and gave America and Israel what even Mubarak's client regime had not given.

Their sectarian and obscurantist project, which is hostile to democracy, science, culture and tolerance, became very evident. More importantly, the masses discovered the falsehood of their use of religious slogans to disguise their plans in the service of the Greater Middle East project and "creative chaos".

Therefore, the number of social protests (strikes, sit-ins, demonstrations and protest pickets) reached 7400 - by Morsi's own admission - during last year. The unemployment rate reached 32%, with most of the unemployed being holders of high and middle qualifications. Foreign debts rose from \$34 billion to \$45 billion. The domestic debt rose by 365 billion Egyptian pounds... The proportion of people living below the poverty line increased to more than 50% of the population...

Even broad sections of the middle and big Egyptian bourgeoisie in the sectors of tourism, industry, trade, agriculture and construction felt very scared for their interests as a result of the continued rule of the Muslim Brotherhood which was creating an atmosphere of chaos, insecurity and instability.

The "Tamarud" (Rebellion) Movement succeeded in collecting more than 22 million signatures for the withdrawal of confidence in Morsi and in support of calling for early presidential elections. All parties, trade unions and organizations participated in collecting signatures, and the campaign spread in the streets of cities, in factories, schools and universities, and in villages in all the governorates of Egypt. The great importance of this campaign is that it was able to involve Egyptian citizens actively in the

revolutionary movement to overthrow the rule of the Muslim Brotherhood. It also restored the peaceful and democratic character of revolutionary action, and formed the basis for removing the sacred cover of the false legitimacy of the ballot box as the sole criterion for legitimacy and the democratic system... Demonstrations in all the main squares of Egypt on June 30th were a principal test of the credibility of this campaign and the fundamental basis for the revolutionary legitimacy of the masses to overthrow this fascist regime and foil the project of the religious state.

The response of the masses was great, and the biggest demonstrations in the history of Egypt, and even in the history of the world, came out... More than 27 million demonstrators came out at the same time in all the governorates of Egypt, representing various classes and strata of Egyptian society, in the face of protests that did not exceed 200,000 from the Muslim Brotherhood and their allies in one small square in Cairo.

Thus, the Egyptian people were on one side and the Muslim Brotherhood were with their allies on the other, isolated, side... We believe that what happened on June 30th is a second wave of the Egyptian revolution, stronger and deeper than the first wave in 2011. It has taken place to correct the path of the revolution and seize it



One of the millions of Egyptians who took part in the June 30 protests across the country.

back from the forces of the extreme religious right that had conspired to steal the revolution and ride its wave to serve their fascist and reactionary objectives and the schemes of world imperialism.

What is the level of the participation of the toiling classes and workers in these protests? Why do the workers participate in the battle with political Islam for democratic rights?

Salah Adly: The basic slogans of the January revolution were: bread - freedom - social justice - human dignity. It is an essential link of the national democratic revolution, and came after a long historical stage that had begun in the mid-seventies of the last century, with the rule of dependent big capitalism and a full cycle of regression, backwardness and tyranny. During that period, the reactionary forces, in alliance with world imperialism and Arab reaction, managed to strengthen a climate that allowed the current of political Islam - especially the Muslim Brotherhood - to spread and ascend. The

forces of the left were weakened, workers were displaced and big industries were liquidated in order to deal a blow to any possibilities for achieving comprehensive development.

In fact, the workers have been



involved in most of the protests that have escalated since 2006, and are participating in all the popular demonstrations as part of the people and not in a class organized manner. This is due to the absence of strong trade union organizations and federations because of a long legacy of a tyranny and government repression... It is also due to big changes to the composition of the working class in various sectors that took place during the past period. Small and medium-sized industries controlled by the private sector were relied upon, where workers were prevented from

which they had agreed upon with all political forces and trade union currents before the revolution, and replaced Mubarak's men in the government-controlled General Union of Egyptian Workers with their own men. This is the social

and democratic basis for the bias of the working class in favour of the revolution against the rule of the Muslim Brotherhood and the forces of political Islam...

Anyone who imagines that workers only revolt for factional issues or for economic reasons is mistaken. Workers are more aware of the dangers of the extremist religious right-wing project and their right-wing and fascist practices in all democratic, political, economic, social, and national fields.

In your statements, the CP Egypt characterises the current developments as a revolution. What are the nature, tasks and urgent demands of the revolution?

Salah Adly: Yes, what is happening now is a revolution. To be precise, it is the second big wave of the January 2011 Revolution, as its first wave was aborted because it was robbed by the Muslim Brotherhood despite the fact that they did not participate in calling for it or making it. It is a democratic revolution with a clear social and patriotic orientation...

The first democratic task of the revolution is promulgating a new civil democratic constitution that stresses human rights, women's rights and economic and social rights for the toiling classes, and one which does not negate the people's right to choose its political and economic system in the future according to the balance of forces. Thus, the task of overthrowing the sectarian, reactionary and distorted Constitution, rather than amending it, is a fundamental task for the democratic and progressive forces in the present moment.

One of the tasks of the democratic revolution is also the freedom to form trade unions, political parties and associations without government interference, rejecting the formation of parties on a religious and sectarian basis, full equality between men and women in terms of rights and duties, equality before the law and

the criminalization of religious and other forms of discrimination.

Among the social tasks is formulating an independent comprehensive social development plan that is based on encouraging the productive sectors with the need for equitable distribution of the development product and wealth for the benefit of the poor and toilers and achieving urgent social demands. A top priority among these demands is specifying a minimum and maximum wage and linking it to prices, cancelling debts for small peasants, redistributing the budget items to increase spending on health and education, providing housing for low-income people, raising taxes on the rich, regaining possession of the corporations that were looted from the public sector and fighting against corruption.

The national tasks are: opposing dependency on the United States, refusing to succumb to Zionist hegemony, amending the Camp David agreement, restoring Egypt's national role in the Arab, African, regional and international levels, and deepening the relationship with the countries and peoples of the Third World...

What is your view about the arguments which say Morsi's removal is undemocratic because he was elected through a legally and the new Constitution was ratified through a referendum. Was Morsi overthrown by the Egyptian army?

Salah Adly: Those who have ousted Morsi are more than 22 million citizens who signed a document containing the signatory's name, ID number (national ID) and the name of the province, written by hand rather than on the Internet, in an unprecedented referendum that culminated in the "big coming out" in main squares by more than 27 million demonstrators on June 30, continuing for four consecutive days.

It was Morsi who overthrew legitimacy when he issued his dictatorial constitutional declaration in November 2011. It was Morsi who devastated human rights when his terrorist supporters besieged the Constitutional Court, when his militia tortured protesters in front of al-Ittihadyah Palace [the presidential palace], and when his men killed demonstrators in front of the headquarters of the Freedom and Justice Party (the political arm of the Muslim Brotherhood)... It was Morsi who reneged on the promises he had announced on the day he succeeded to amend the Constitution and form a coalition government. He and his group insisted on submitting to the conditions of the International Monetary Fund, and also declared Jihad on Syria at a conference of

see EGYPT, page 11

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GLOBAL CLASS STRUGGLE

Garment industry wages falling

The wages of global garment workers are not improving. More orders placed by big brands in nations such as Bangladesh and Cambodia do not necessarily translate into financial gains for workers, says the Worker Rights Consortium. The independent labour-rights monitoring organization has conducted a 10-year-long investigation into wage trends around the world.

"Workers' wages are lower now than 10 years ago in most of these countries," the consortium's Ben Hensler said. "While garment work may provide better wages than the informal sector or agricultural labour, it provides far less than an actual living wage, a mere fraction of a living wage."

The report found that in 15 of the top 21 apparel-exporting countries, the average wage for garment workers was only 36.8 per cent of what a family needs to survive. Among the top four exporters to the United States, prevailing wages in 2011 for garment workers in China, Vietnam and Indonesia were 36 per cent, 22 per cent and 29 per cent of an actual living wage, respectively. In Bangladesh, where the Rana Plaza factory collapse killed 1,129 in April, prevailing wages provided workers just 14 per cent of a living wage. Real wages in the country fell by 2.3 per cent over the 10 years covered in the study.

Wages are also dropping in other leading apparel exporters - by 28.9 per cent in Mexico, 23.7 per cent in the Dominican Republic and 19.2 per cent in Cambodia, the report showed. Orders surged into the Mexican garment industry after the North American Free Trade Agreement, but then the global system of import quotas expired and production shifted rapidly to China and other lower-wage countries.

Workers fleeced in Saudi Arabia

Saudi employers and agents are coming under severe criticism for fleecing foreign workers who are struggling to have their status rectified under the amnesty declared by the Kingdom, a Saudi Arabian newspaper reports. Sponsors are charging from \$800 to \$4000 from foreign workers for changing professions and transferring jobs, a service offered by the government free of cost, Arab News reported on July 21.

During the first amnesty period, which ended on July 3, the Saudi labour ministry completed four million labour correction cases. The amnesty was extended until November 3 following requests from various ministries, businesses and foreign diplomats in view of the huge number of expatriate workers who wanted their employment and residential status to be regularised.

For many Saudi sponsors and agents it was a big money making season, the newspaper quoted one market analyst as saying.

"The (mischievous) activities of sponsors and their liaisons

agents have made expatriate workers a pawn in their hands," Mufti Sheikh Abdul Aziz said. "These individuals were one of the major impediments to speedy execution of the correction process.

Fuad Kawther, a Saudi engineer, said foreign workers



deserved a better treatment. "Expatriates are the backbone of this country. They build our roads and houses, clean our clothes and streets and prepare food for us. Without them, our lives will be miserable," he told Arab News, urging the government to give nationality to long-time expatriates.

More mass firings in Greece

Tens of thousands of Greek workers walked off the job on July 16, rallying in Athens against government plans to fire public sector employees. The 24-hour general strike took place a day before parliament voted 153-140 to adopt a new series of anti-labour changes before the European Union and International Monetary Fund can disburse more financial aid.

Over 30,000 demonstrators - including municipal police and teachers targeted in the layoff scheme - gathered in the central square before parliament, beating drums and blowing whistles in one of the biggest anti-austerity protests in Greece this year. Protesters chanted "No more sacrifices" and waved banners that read "Fire the troika" in reference to the trio of European Commission, European Central Bank and IMF propping up Greece with over 200 billion euros in aid.

Domestic flights were disrupted after civil aviation unions staged a four-hour work stoppage and Athens's main tourist attraction - the Acropolis - shut early. City transport was also affected, with bus and trolley bus drives holding stoppages in the morning and in the evening. Trains stopped running and tax offices and municipal services remained shut. Garbage collectors, bus drivers, bank employees and journalists were among other groups joining the walkout.

Representing about 2.5 million workers, the public and private sector unions ADEDY and GSEE that called the strike have brought workers to the streets repeatedly since Greece slid into a debt crisis in late 2009, though several protests have fizzled this year amid a growing sense of resignation.

The government has issued a list of 12,500 workers slated for a "mobility pool" in which they are given eight months to find work in another department or get fired. Some 25,000 workers will be placed in the scheme by the end of the year, at a time when unemployment stands at an all-time high of 27 percent. Prime Minister Antonis Samaras's fragile coalition government nearly collapsed in June after it abruptly shut the state broadcaster ERT and fired its 2,600 staff. The debacle prompted the Democratic Left party's 14 MPs to quit the government, leaving Samaras with a much smaller majority.

Fukushima workers cancer risk

Around 2,000 people who have worked at Japan's wrecked Fukushima nuclear plant face a heightened risk of thyroid cancer, its operator says. Tokyo Electric Power (TEPCO) said 1,973 people - around 10 percent of those employed in emergency crews involved in the clean-up - are believed to have been exposed to enough radiation to cause potential problems. The figure is a 10-fold increase on TEPCO's previous estimate, and comes after the utility was told its figures were too conservative.

Each worker in this group was exposed to at least 100 millisieverts of radiation, projections show. Although little is known about the exact health effects of radiation on the human body, the level is considered by doctors to be a possible threshold for increased cancer risk.

The Fukushima nuclear plant became the site of the worst nuclear disaster in a generation after the massive tsunami of March 2011 destroyed its cooling systems. The plant's reactors went through meltdowns that caused explosions in the buildings housing them, spewing radioactive materials into the air, sea and soil. Tens of thousands of people were forced from their homes in a large area around the plant, where crews continue to clear debris and cool the reactors. The natural disaster claimed more than 18,000 lives, but no one is officially recorded as having died as a direct result of the radiation released by the meltdown.

The huge utility reported to the World Health Organization in December 2012 that only 178 workers at the plant were believed to have received radiation doses to their thyroid glands above 100 millisieverts. Japan's health ministry called on the utility to re-evaluate its methods. All 1,973 workers now deemed to be at increased risk of thyroid cancer are eligible for an annual thyroid checkup and other health services paid for by the company.

Colombian taxi drivers attacked

On July 3, sixteen taxi driver members of the International Transport Federation-affiliated SNTT (Sindicato Nacional de Trabajadores del Transporte) and representatives of the CUT

(Confederacion Unitaria de Trabajadores de Colombia) were tear-gassed, assaulted and detained by police during a peaceful demonstration in Cartagena, Colombia.

The demonstration was against a new camera system, which the drivers claim is flawed and unpredictable. The cameras photograph only the licence plate, and not the offence, which has already caused an increase in fines. The drivers claim that these fines are being used to line the pockets of those running the system, while transport workers and private drivers suffer.

Esteban Barboza, secretary general of SNTT said: "We are not requesting the removal of the cameras, we are demanding the review of the technology used to avoid arbitrary fines. Cartagena City does not deserve this kind of abuse and extortion with this system."

Antonio Fritz, ITF Regional Secretary, said that the degree of violence used by the Colombian government was unacceptable. He added that the assault and murder of taxi drivers is often concealed, or left uninvestigated.

Irregular workers organize in Korea

On July 14, irregular workers at subcontracting companies for Samsung Electronics Service founded the first union of irregular workers in South Korea. Around 400 workers formed the Samsung Electronics Service chapter of the Korean Metal Workers' Union.

If the courts recognize that the labourers who have filed a lawsuit were illegally dispatched, the new

union will gain considerable bargaining rights against Samsung's anti-labour management style. The subcontractor workers wear the uniforms of Samsung Electronics Service and are subject to strict oversight and directions by the company, but are not guaranteed the minimum rights and wages stipulated by law. Hundreds took part in the general assembly on July 14, since they had nothing to lose even if they were fired for joining the union.

In their lawsuit, the employees are asking the court to determine who their real employer is. While Samsung maintains that the subcontractors have their own managerial autonomy, others consider them shell companies with no independence. Testimony has emerged showing Samsung directs and supervises the workers, and that the subcontracting companies are effectively administrative departments that handle personnel issues and pay workers' wages.

In a decision recognizing Choe Byeong-seung, a dismissed worker with a subcontractor for Hyundai Motor, the Supreme Court distinguished between subcontracting and illegal dispatch. Cases in which the subcontracting company is little more than a shell and the prime contractor directs and oversees the work of the subcontractor labourers and records their attendance, the court said, are not subcontracting but rather illegal dispatch. This can be said for Samsung, which is said to have ordered extra weekend work and put pressure on subcontractors to stop the general meeting to establish the new union.

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

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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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Momentum builds for 18th World Festival of Youth & Students

Activists from the cross-Canada Preparatory Committee of the 18th World Festival of Youth and Students are on the road this summer, bringing the message of this huge event to young people in western Canada and the Maritimes. For information on the organizing tour, readers can visit 18wfys.tumblr.com.

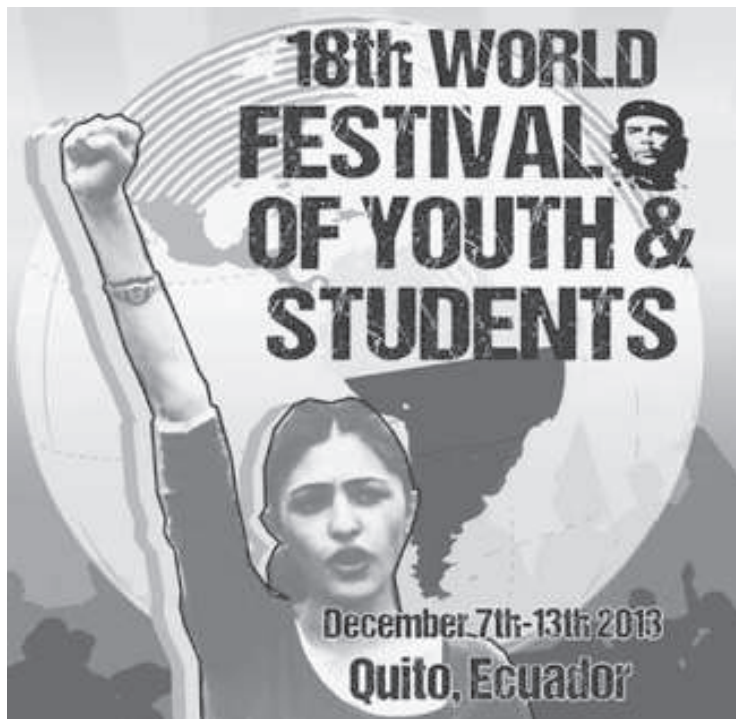
As estimated 20,000 young people will take part in this year's festival, to be held from December 7 to 13 in Quito, Ecuador, on the theme: "Youth unite against imperialism, for a world of peace, solidarity and social transformation!"

Here is the call to the youth of the world to participate in the 18th WFYS, adopted at the festival's International Preparatory Meeting, which took place March 26-27 in South Africa.

In the past and present, youth have always played a significant role in the struggle of all societies for progress and social justice. The youth was militantly present in the greatest struggles of the peoples for peace, solidarity and social transformation.

In a world where imperialism presents itself as an inevitability, the anti-imperialist struggle proves that the youth choose their own future. The 18th World Festival of Youth and Student, which will take place in Ecuador, is the space for the young women and men of the World to unite their voices against imperialism.

Since the 17th World Festival of Youth and Students our estimations about the character of imperialism and our calling for anti-imperialist struggle have been justified. In the past few years with the continuing international capitalist crisis, the imperialist order, the system where the monopolies rule, is revealing more and more clearly its true colours, its brutal and barbaric nature, which leads to wars, occupations international injustice, exploitation



and blackmail by capitalists against the workers, human rights violations, threats and blackmail against countries and its people.

We live in a time of great danger and great potentialities. The capitalist crisis leads the imperialist alliances to intensify their rivalries over the control of the markets, of natural resources and commercial routes.

This fact inevitably leads to military actions like the NATO and EU war in Libya, the aggressions against Syria and the threats against the Korean people.

The inter-imperialist antagonisms due to the crisis create increasing tensions and dangers for greater international military conflicts which will have as victims the peoples of the world.

The Youth of the World are also witnessing a great offensive against their rights of work, education, health, access to culture and sport. Governments around the world and international imperialist organizations are pushing measures so that the

workers and the popular strata will pay the price of their crisis. Their aim is to safeguard the rotting capitalist system, to guarantee their profits and expand the exploitation in benefit of the monopolies.

At the same time we have seen millions of peoples and especially the youth and students movement resist the imperialists' aggression. We have seen a growing struggle against the will of the monopolies and their governments, against the implementation of the policies that want to lead youth to the path of enslavement.

The popular struggle the past years has proved that the potential of overthrowing imperialism depends on the popular determination and orientation of the struggle.

The resistance and the anti-imperialist struggle of the Youth and Students internationally is the flame that lights up and guides the Festival Movement since 1947.

For 65 Years and in 17 Festivals, the World's Youth have united its voice and its struggle against

fascism, dictatorships, anti-democratic regimes, colonialism, war, occupation, discrimination and demanded peace, freedom, solidarity, equality and the overthrowing of imperialism.

It is for all these reasons that we call every young man and woman to join our struggle in the 18th World Festival of Youth and Students.

We call Youth and students to join us for the overthrow of imperialism because our prosperity and happiness cannot be found within this system, that only gives birth to poverty, exploitation and unemployment.

We call them to join us to fight for the right for work and for dignity in our working rights. We call them to fight for our right for Free and Public Education, against privatizations, tuition fees and class barriers.

We call the Youth to fight against imperialism which destroys the environment, which creates class, racial and gender discriminations.

We call the youth to fight for democracy and against the repression of reactionary forces.

We call the Youth of the World to express their solidarity with the peoples who are fighting for their freedom against occupation as in Palestine, Western Sahara and so many other countries.

We call the Youth to support the peoples who have chosen their own path of development and are threatened by imperialist forces. Today more than ever, it is necessary for the Youth that its struggle is identified with the struggle of the workers and peoples; to intensify the struggle

to overthrow capitalism and its higher stage of development, imperialism, and construct the new world, of peace, equality, solidarity, friendship, and revolutionary social transformation, where the wealth created by the work of the peoples will belong to the people and will benefit their needs.

After a successful 17th World Festival of Youth and Students in South Africa at the birth place of the anti-apartheid movement and the Continent which today struggles for economic freedom, we renew our Festival Movement meeting for the fourth time in Latin America.

After Havana in 1978 and 1997, and Caracas in 2005 we make our way to Quito in 2013. The 18th World Festival of Youth and Students is taking place in Latin America and the Caribbean region which is having an increasingly strong anti-imperialist movement, consolidating the true unity in the peoples will for social progress, without the presence of foreign interventions, giving hope for the international anti-imperialist movement.

Supported by the growing popular movement of Ecuador, expressed at this moment by the Citizen's Revolution led by President Rafael Correa, embraced by the proud anti-imperialist youth of Latin America, we pay homage to all the heroes that gave their lives for the liberation of Latin America, we unite our struggle in the 18th World Festival of Youth and Students.

Youth unite against imperialism for the world of peace, solidarity and social transformation! ●

Communists arrested in Turkey

By Greg Rose, *People's World*, July 12, 2013

On the heels of a campaign by the Turkish government to blame it for the recent upheavals, leading members of the Turkish Communist Party (TKP) are being rounded up and arrested.

In Istanbul, Turkey prosecutors last week called for the arrest of 12 activists in the ongoing struggle against construction of a shopping mall complex in Taksim Gezi Park, including leaders of the Taksim Solidarity Platform, TKP central executive board member Erkan Bas and TKP Istanbul Provincial Chair Kamil Tekerek.

Several other party members were taken into custody, as well as Taksim Solidarity Platform member Mucella Yapici, Istanbul Medical Chamber General Secretary Ali Cerkezoglu, members of the Confederation of Public Sector Trade Unions, and members of the Confederation of Progressive Trade Unions. Bas and Tekerek were already in detention

for participating in a demonstration in Taksim Gezi Park, but the latest charges represent a serious escalation of Turkish government repression.

The demonstrations against the Taksim Gezi Park development, which began on May 28, have spread throughout Turkey and escalated to calls for the resignation of Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan and his Islamicist Justice and Development Party government on grounds of authoritarianism and brutality in suppressing the demonstrations.

Citing a police report on documents seized from searches of the homes of the accused, the prosecutor claimed that "calls for thousands of people to gather in Taksim Square prepared the ground for the marginal groups' provocations ... They caused the injuries of hundreds of police officers and citizens and the calls continued despite these injuries."

The government red-baiting campaign accuses the Turkish

Communist Party of having masterminded the demonstrations. There were television commentators who claimed that "Communist protesters" had turned peaceful protests into "violent attacks that ruin social order."

This red-baiting included an article in the Egyptian newspaper, *Al-Ahram Weekly*, by Turkish broadcaster Aylin Kocaman, claiming that young demonstrators were susceptible to the Taksim Gezi protests "because they have not been educated against the threat of communism."

The mainstream Turkish media has a history of subservience to the Erdogan government and of abetting a government disinformation campaign against the demonstrators.

In related developments approximately 50 demonstrators being detained by police continued their hunger strike, begun on July 10, to protest extension of their detention by prosecutors in Istanbul. ●

Bradley Manning wins MacBride Peace Award

By David Swanson, July 19, 2013

U.S. whistleblower and international hero Bradley Manning has been awarded the 2013 Sean MacBride Peace Award by the International Peace Bureau, itself a former recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize, for which Manning is a nominee this year.

A petition supporting Manning for the Nobel Peace Prize has gathered 88,000 signatures, many of them with comments, and is aiming for 100,000 before delivering it to the Norwegian Nobel Committee in Oslo. Anyone can sign and add their comments at ManningNobel.org.

The International Peace Bureau (IPB) represents 320 organizations in 70 countries. It was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1910. Over the years, 13 of IPB's officers have been Nobel Peace laureates.

The Sean MacBride prize has been awarded each year since 1992 by the International Peace Bureau, founded in 1892. Previous winners include: Lina Ben Mhenni (Tunisian blogger) and Nawal El-Sadaawi (Egyptian author) - 2012, Jackie Cabasso (USA, 2008), Jayantha Dhanapala (Sri Lanka, 2007) and the Mayors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki (2006). It is named after Sean MacBride, a distinguished Irish statesman who shared the 1974 Nobel Peace Prize, and is given to individuals or organizations for their outstanding work for peace, disarmament and human rights.

The medal is made of "peace bronze," a material created out of disarmed and recycled nuclear weapons systems. The prize will be formally awarded on Sept. 14 in Stockholm, at a special evening on whistleblowing, which forms part of the triennial gathering of the International Peace Bureau.

Nobel Peace Laureate Mairead Maguire recently wrote: "I have chosen to nominate U.S. Army Pfc Bradley Manning, for I can think of no one more deserving. His incredible disclosure of secret documents to Wikileaks helped end the Iraq War, and may have helped prevent further conflicts elsewhere."

<http://warisacrime.org/content/manning-wins-peace-prize> ●



Tell the politicians: Canadians demand better universal Medicare!

Statement by the Central Executive Committee, Communist Party of Canada, July 2013

"Let us take the private economic profit out of medicine" - Dr. Norman Bethune, pioneer of the movement for universal health care in Canada, 1936

When Canada's provincial and territorial premiers gather July 24-26 at Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario for their Council of the Federation meeting, the future of health care will be a crucial topic. Almost fifty years after Medicare was adopted by Parliament, the fight for universal, public health care is far from complete. In fact, the Canada Health Act faces serious threats from corporations and governments intent on turning our health into a source of enormous private profit.

As the "Call to Care" by the Canadian Health Coalition says, "Health care in Canada is a fundamental right without distinction of race, gender, age, religion, sexual orientation, political belief, immigration status, and economic or social condition." But as renewal of the National Health Accord looms, mobilizations by the labour and democratic movements are necessary to defend this right from the "medical-industrial complex" private interests.

It took similar public pressure in 2004 to force the First Ministers to boost federal support for healthcare by \$41 billion over the following decade. That deal narrowed a huge funding gap created by Liberal cutbacks during the mid-1990s, but did little to block the invasion of private profiteers into the public health system.

Canadians are justifiably proud of Medicare and the Canada Health Act principles of universality, accessibility, comprehensiveness, portability, and public administration. But Medicare has been badly undermined for many years, as provinces turn over chunks of the system to big business. Core hospital services such as laundry, housekeeping and meals have long been contracted out, and many clinics and hospitals are being turned into profit-making operations.

As the Communist Party stressed in 2004, "this process has been devastating for the most important element of the system: healthcare workers who provide front-line care. By treating valuable, skilled workers as disposable, governments and administrators have weakened the entire system, with negative results for patients."

While the 2004 accord increased the federal share of funding, other elements of the agreement have been sabotaged by the Harper Conservatives.

Progress on reducing wait times for diagnostic tests and surgeries

has fallen far short of expectations in most provinces. The National Pharmaceutical Strategy, aimed at cutting overall drug costs through bulk buying and better co-ordination, has been effectively killed by the Harper government. Plans to create a pan-Canadian home and continuing care strategy have stalled, leaving huge numbers of people with heavy expenses for post-hospital prescriptions and rehabilitation. The closure of tens of thousands of hospital beds over the past 20 years has dramatically strained access to acute and chronic care in hospitals, prematurely forcing many patients into nursing homes and home care. Many of these public services have been taken over by for-profit companies that maximize user fees in pursuit of higher profits. Nor did the 2004 agreement end the racist underfunding of health care for Aboriginal peoples, who were shut out of the negotiations at that time.

Even as the burden of health care is shifted onto patients and their families, the federal Conservatives refuse to discuss a pan-Canadian drug program and home care, or to meet with provincial governments about renewing the health care funding formula.

In fact, the Harper Tories aim to slash funding by \$36 billion over the next several years, reversing the gains in the 2004 health accord. The latest federal budget includes big cuts to the Health Council of Canada and health services for veterans and refugees. The Tories blatantly refuse to uphold single-tier Medicare in provinces such as British Columbia, where private clinics openly break the law by extra-billing patients.

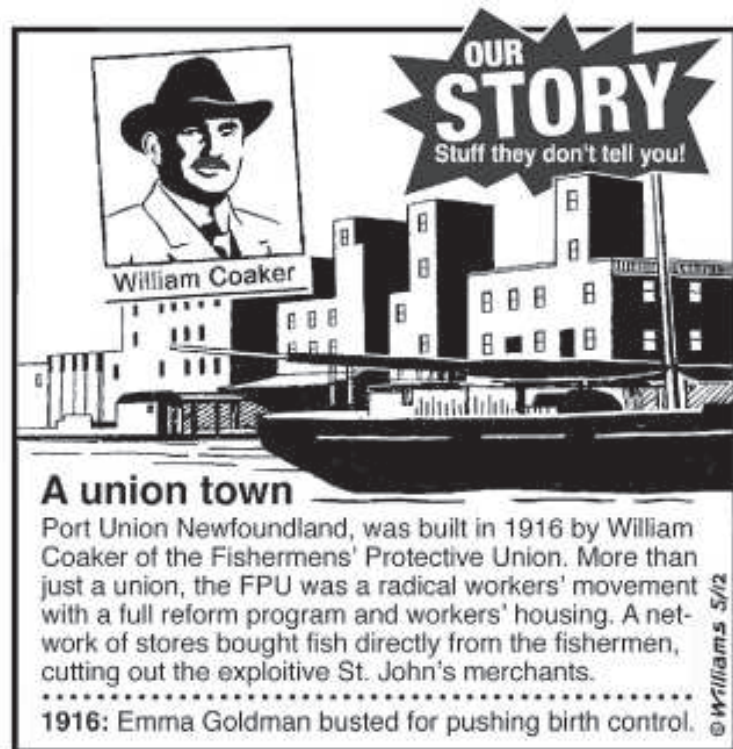
As the Canadian and Ontario Health Coalitions warn, if the premiers allow the health accord to expire without comment, they will have betrayed a public trust to

defend our public healthcare system.

The sad reality is that these governments are accomplices in a drive by the ruling class to shred the social safety net achieved through decades of struggles by working people. This neoliberal agenda deliberately targets job security, pensions, social assistance, affordable housing, public education, child care, labour rights, health and safety - everything which makes it possible for working people and their families to have a decent life. Instead, acting at the direction of the "one percent", governments trample the interests of the vast majority of the people. This pattern is a global trend, as a capitalist ruling class mired in economic crisis seeks to protect the bloated profits of transnational banks and corporations by driving down the economic and social conditions of working people.

It's time to put the heat on the politicians through mass struggle, including strike action. When the Health Accord is discussed, Aboriginal people must be at the First Ministers table. Health care must be recognized as a fundamental human right and a public good, delivered on a not-for-profit basis, not privatized and contracted out. The federal government must fully assume its responsibilities for funding and enforcement of the Canada Health Act. The system must be expanded to include universal pharmacare, home care, long term care, opticare and denticare, and a mental health strategy. Decent wages and working conditions for health care workers must be recognized as essential.

Mass, united action is needed to drive the profiteers out of the public health care system. It's time to put the health of the people before the profits of the corporations! ●



MUSIC NOTES

By Wally Brooker

Sarah Harmer and the Tar Sands walk

Ontario singer-songwriter Sarah Harmer has published an open letter on the Tar Sands Healing Walk in Huffington Post (www.huffingtonpost.ca). Harmer, co-founder of Protecting Escarpment Rural Land and an opponent of the proposed Line 9 tar sands pipeline in eastern Canada, appealed to Natural Resources Minister Joe Oliver and Alberta Premier Alison Redford to join the peaceful walk that took place July 5-6 along a 16-kilometer stretch of the Alberta tar sands. She called on the Conservative politicians to "get out of their cars and walk like regular folks through an area they aren't shy about selling on a global stage." The 4th Annual Healing Walk, sponsored by Keepers of the Athabasca, was attended by more than 500 people from coast to coast. Oliver and Redford didn't join, but the campaign to compel them to meet with the affected communities continues. For more info: www.healingwalk.org.

Mos Def force-fed Guantanamo style

In an effort to draw attention to the plight of illegally-held Muslim prisoners in the U.S. prison camp at Guantanamo Bay, popular hip-hop artist and actor Mos Def (a.k.a. Yasiin Bey) voluntarily subjected himself to nose-to-stomach force-feeding and had the procedure posted on the Internet. The disturbing 4-minute film, which demonstrates "standard operating procedure" for force-feeding, was made by the U.K. human rights organization Reprieve with director Asif Kapadia. More than 100 prisoners, illegally detained without charges or trial, are on hunger strike at Guantanamo and at least 40 are being force-fed twice a day. Judge Gladys Kessler of the Federal District Court in Washington, DC recently ruled that force-feeding is "a painful, humiliating and degrading process." She declared that President Obama has the power to end the force-feeding by freeing the prisoners his own government has cleared for release. For info: www.reprieve.org.uk.

Alicia Keys & her Tel Aviv gig

Despite a 16,000 signature petition and the pleas of prominent public figures such as Alice Walker, Angela Davis, and Roger Waters, pop superstar Alicia Keys went ahead with her July 4th concert in Tel Aviv. Keys rejected the Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel, arguing that her concert would "unify audiences in peace and love." She ignored the obvious fact that most Palestinians are effectively prevented from attending such concerts. Some observers were surprised, since Keys has a reputation as a socially-conscious artist with a concern for the rights of children. Reports sent to her from Palestinian children's rights activists noted that an average of 700 Palestinian children under 18 are detained and prosecuted annually in Israeli military courts. The US Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel is encouraged by the fact that so many groups and people were mobilized to urge Keys to cancel. For info: www.usacbi.org.

CBC blogger attacks misogynist pop stars

Andrea Warner, a music journalist and blogger at CBC Radio 3, called out a trio of contemporary pop stars in an article titled "Misogyny Makes a Comeback." Recently-released songs by Rick Ross (U.O.N.E.O.), Robin Thicke (Blurred Lines), and Kanye West (On Sight) respectively celebrate drugging and raping a woman, groping after women who "want it" and (apparently) forced fellatio. While misogyny in music is not new, Warner identifies "a deliberate and task-oriented degradation and objectification of women that's far more disturbing than the casual inherent misogyny of generations past." She notes that these artists are not an older generation of men caught up in old ways, but "younger men who were, more often than not, raised within feminism and to respect women, but who still feel it's their right to degrade and debase them." Warner has words of praise for contemporary male musicians who are outspoken in their opposition to sexism: rappers Talib Kweli and Lupe Fiasco and Canadian folk-rocker Joel Plaskett. Read the article at <http://music.cbc.ca>.

David Rovics update: Into a Prism

American singer-songwriter David Rovics has just released *Into a Prism*, a collection of 15 new songs. It's named after the NSA global spying program revealed by whistleblower Edward Snowden. In addition to the title song ("Prism") Rovics skewers Barack Obama and other bought-off politicians, attacks (with characteristic wit) U.S. chauvinism and cultural imperialism, and celebrates heroes like exiled African-American activist Assata Shakur and Vasili Arkhipov, the Soviet submarine commander who literally saved the world during the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis. Rovics has an impressive ability to balance righteous indignation with compassion and ironic humour. He excels at incorporating historical events into his songs and making them relevant. *Into a Prism* is an acoustic album, and the artist's voice and guitar work are in fine form. Why is this guy not headlining the summer folk festivals? For info: <http://davidrovics.bandcamp.com>.

CIA helped jail Nelson Mandela

By Brian Becker,
globalresearch.ca

Forget the crocodile tears from the US government about Nelson Mandela's poor health. Imperialist diplomacy with all of its sugar-coated phrases is nothing more than a form of historical perjury.

Nelson Mandela's arrest in 1962, which led to 18 of his 27 years of imprisonment on Robben Island, was based on the work of the CIA. The CIA and National Security Agency worked as partners with the racist, apartheid regime's vicious military and intelligence services.

Mandela was a leader of the African National Congress (ANC) that organised civil resistance and an armed struggle against South Africa's white racist apartheid regime. The United States and the other Western capitalist governments supported the racist, fascist apartheid regime.

Mandela was labelled a terrorist by the United States. So was the entire ANC. Even as late as 2008 the US State Department had to pass special waivers so that Mandela or any ANC leader could visit the United States because he and the ANC were still on the "terrorist watch list."

The ANC's struggle for Black majority rule and the liquidation of apartheid received critical support from Cuba, the Soviet Union and other socialist countries. The ANC had an active alliance with South African Communist Party in the struggle for Black majority rule.

Even after the fall of the apartheid government ANC members applying for visas to the USA were flagged for questioning and forced to ask for waivers to enter the country. Former ANC chairman Tokyo Sexwale was

denied a visa in 2002.

In 2007, Barbara Masekela, South Africa's ambassador to the United States until the year prior, was denied a visa to visit a dying cousin living in the United States.

The CIA and NSA spy services - with the full collaboration of such transnational corporations at IBM, Kodak and many others - worked at all levels and for decades for apartheid and against the African National Congress activists who were routinely murdered, tortured and sentenced to life terms in the hell holes of South Africa.

The ANC was labelled and treated as a terrorist organisation and pro-communist by the CIA and successive US administrations, Democratic and Republican alike. Congress, too, was an enthusiastic cheerleader for this vile partnership with the planet's most disgustingly racist regime.

The House of Representatives only voted to call for Nelson Mandela's release from prison in 1986 when it was clear that the fascist apartheid regime's days were numbered, leading the United States and Britain to abruptly shift course and broker a negotiated end to the white supremacist system. A mass worldwide anti-apartheid movement had completely isolated South Africa. Dick Cheney voted against the House resolution in 1986, pointing out that the US government was still retaining the ANC on the official US "terrorist list."

The US and Britain knew the end had finally come for the usefulness of the apartheid government when its seemingly invincible military was decisively defeated by the Angolan army and thousands of Cuban volunteers in the historic 1987 battle of Cuito Cuanavale. As Mandela said, "When Africa called, Cuba answered."

In an act of shameless duplicity, once Mandela was released from prison, each successive US administration has pretended that the United States was always opposed to Mandela's imprisonment and stood with him against apartheid.

After getting out of prison, Mandela came to the United States to meet President George H.W. Bush on June 25, 1990. He was being touted as a hero and a champion in the fight against racism. The US government, working through propagandists in the corporate-owned media, tried to instil a society-wide case of amnesia about the fact that they were the defenders of apartheid and directly responsible for Mandela's imprisonment.

But one reporter had the gall to ask an unscripted question. Bush's press secretary, Marlin Fitzwater, was asked in the days before the June 25 meeting with Bush whether the president would apologise to Mandela for the US role in his arrest.

Fitzwater was angry and caught off guard. He said, "I just don't like it when people question our motives on blacks or on Mandela because of an incident that happened 20 years ago in another administration."

Today, when the US government celebrates Mandela, will any of the corporate media expose the bloody role of the CIA, NSA and other US intelligence services in their war against the African liberation movements?

Nelson Mandela is a beacon for the oppressed. He is a hero and he will be remembered as such. Not true for the CIA and NSA which worked as the spy service for the racist, apartheid regime as it hunted down and captured Mandela and captured or killed his comrades. ●

What's Left

Speaking Tour on events in Pakistan

"Sectarian Violence in Pakistan", speaking tour by historian Dr. Tahir Kamran (University of Cambridge), including the following dates: **SURREY**, Sat., Aug. 17, 1:30 pm, Strawberry Hill Library, 7399-122 St.; **EDMONTON**, Sun., Aug. 18, 2 pm, Whitemud Crossing Public Library; **TORONTO**, Fri., Aug. 23, location TBA; **MISSISSAUGA**, Sat., Aug. 24, details TBA; **MONTREAL**, Sun., Aug. 25, details TBA. Organized by Committee of Progressive Pakistani-Canadians.

Surrey, BC

People's Voice Walk-A-Thon, Sunday, August 18, Bear Creek Park (picnic area near parking at 140 St. & 88 Ave.), gather 11 am for walk around the park, lunch at 12 noon, political/cultural program 1 pm. For info, call Harjit, 604-543-7179.

Vancouver, BC

La Trova Nuestra, evening of Latin American music, admission \$10, 8 pm, Friday, July 26, Centre for Socialist Education, 706 Clark Drive.

Labour Day Picnic, Monday, Sept. 2, 11 am-3 pm at Trout Lake Park, visit the People's Voice display. Organized by BC Federation of Labour, Vancouver and New Westminster Labour Councils, and CLC.

Winnipeg, MB

Marxism Course, Contact Communist Party of Canada Manitoba Committee to join, 586-7824 or cpc-mb@changetheworldmb.ca.

Montreal, QC

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

News for people, not for profits!



People's Voice deadlines

September 1-15 issue: Thursday, August 15
September 16-30 issue: Thursday, Sept. 5

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

Ghadar Party anniversary celebrations



The formation of the Ghadar (Rebellion) Party in 1913 in the U.S. by Indian emigrants, mostly Sikh, but also Muslims and Hindus - desirous of working for the independence of India from British rule, and for social justice - and the Party's activities and sacrifices, form a shining component of the Indian progressive movement. The 100th anniversary celebrations of the founding of the Ghadar Party were held in big and small ways in India and many other parts of the world, especially where there are large Sikh communities. The main theme of the rally in Brampton, Ontario was that, while the countries of the Indian sub-continent had thrown off the yoke of colonial rule, the goal of achieving social and economic justice remained. The Communist Party of Canada issued a special statement honouring this important anniversary. Shown here are some of the CPC members and progressive Pakistani-Canadians at the rally in Brampton.

Egypt: second wave of revolution...

continued from page 7

terrorist jihadist forces without referring to the army and the National Defense Council...

What has happened is not a military coup in any way, but a revolutionary coup by the Egyptian people to get rid of this fascist rule. What the army did is carrying out the will of the people and protecting them from the plots of the Muslim Brotherhood and their armed terrorist allies who want to ignite sectarian strife and civil wars, divide the Egyptian army and destroy the institutions of the Egyptian state to serve the interests of imperialism and Zionism in the region.

What kind of military coup is it when tens of millions of people are in the streets? What kind of military coup is it when the head of the Constitutional Court has already assumed power, which is what had been demanded by the Salvation Front, that includes all the opposition forces with their various orientations and the "Tamarud" (Rebellion) youth movement, and has been endorsed by the masses of the Egyptian people?...

Nevertheless, we are keen for the need to be alert and pay attention during the next phase to ensure that the military's role in this stage is limited to the protection of the people and the

Egyptian national security and to abide by its promises not to interfere directly in political affairs, and the need for the people to remain in the squares to ensure the implementation of their demands in the transitional phase...

What is your assessment of the newly appointed interim president, Adly Mansour, and what he should immediately do?

Salah Adly: He is a judge who is well-known for his integrity and competence, and had not professed any political positions or adopted certain biases. The speech he delivered after he was sworn in and took up his post as interim president for the transitional period was a good and positive speech. He stressed that it was "the people alone" who authorized him, and that the powers granted to him are honorary, but the real authority will reside in the prime minister who will be chosen by consensus among the national forces and youth, and who will be charged with the implementation of tasks agreed upon by national democratic and social forces. A top priority for the government will be to halt the economic collapse, implement the urgent demands of the toilers and provide security.

We see the need for continued public pressure in the squares, which was confirmed by the statement announced by Al-Sisi,

protecting the right to peaceful demonstration. This is to ensure that there will be no deviation from what has been agreed upon, and to ensure that the army will not intervene except within the limits agreed to ensure the success of this difficult transitional stage.

What are the main challenges facing your party, specifically in relation to other political forces and creating a united alliance?

Salah Adly: The main challenge is the need to unite the forces of the left in the first place to confront the big tasks that we are facing at this stage. The most important are:

- 1) To ensure the achievement of the objectives and tasks of the transitional phase.
- 2) To achieve consensus on a single candidate for the national and democratic forces to fight the battle of presidential elections.
- 3) To form a front of leftist forces, Nasserites, youth movements and trade union organizations; to prepare joint lists to fight the forthcoming parliamentary and local elections; and to exert pressure to ensure there is no retreat from correcting the path of the revolution in the transitional phase.
- 4) To seek to complete and develop the party structure, to renew the party with fresh blood, and to develop its program so that we can face the big challenges that we are confronting. ●

Starvation inflicted on First Nations children

The latest chapter in the story of genocide against Aboriginal peoples in Canada came to light in mid-July, with news reports about shocking experiments against children in the residential school system during the 1940s and '50s.

Recently published historical research shows that for over a decade, about 1300 people, mostly children, were deliberately starved by government researchers. Milk rations were halved, essential vitamins were kept from people who needed them, and dental services were withheld.

Researching the development of health policy for a different project, nutritionist Ian Mosby uncovered "vague references to studies conducted on Indians," and found the details of a government-run experiment.

According to news reports, Justice Murray Sinclair, chair of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, became aware of the experiments during their collection of documents relating to the abuse of native children at residential schools across Canada from the 1870s to the 1990s.

The experiments are entrenched with the racism of the time, says Sinclair.

"This discovery, it's indicative of the attitude toward aboriginals," Sinclair said. "They thought aboriginals shouldn't be consulted and their consent shouldn't be asked for. They looked at it as a right to do what they wanted then."

In his research paper, published in May, Mosby wrote, "the experiment seems to have been driven, at least in part, by the

nutrition experts' desire to test their theories on a ready-made 'laboratory' populated with already malnourished human experimental subjects."

The first experiments began at Norway House in northern Manitoba in 1942, where federal scientists found "isolated, dependent, hungry people," impoverished by the collapse of the fur trade. The demoralized Cree population, they concluded, were marked by "shiftlessness, indolence, improvidence and inertia," traits they regarded as "hereditary" rather than the results of malnutrition. These people were considered ideal subjects for tests on the effects of different diets. The scientists calculated that the local people were living on less than 1,500 calories a day, far less than the 2,000 generally required by healthy adults.

Instead of recommending an increase in support, they selected 125 out of a group of 300 Cree residents to receive vitamin supplements, which were withheld from the rest.

The research was expanded in 1947, to involve about 1,000 children at residential schools in Port Alberni, B.C., Kenora, Ont., Schubencadie, N.S., and Lethbridge, Alta.

At one school, milk rations were deliberately held to less than half the recommended amount, to get a "baseline" reading for when the allowance was increased. At another school, children were divided into one group that received vitamin, iron and iodine supplements and one that didn't.

One school depressed levels of vitamin B1 to create another baseline before levels were boosted. To compare the results, children at one school were allowed none of the supplements.

CBC has reported the recollections of 76-year-old Alvin Dixon, who was forcibly taken from his family in Bella Bella, on British Columbia's northwest coast, and relocated to Port Alberni, where he says he and many of his classmates were starved.

Dixon remembers having to milk cows during his stay at the residential school, yet he was always fed only powdered milk.

"We would be so hungry and we would steal these potatoes [from farmers' fields] and eat it raw," he told CBC News.

"The term 'guinea pig' comes to mind quite quickly and readily, because that's what we were, I guess," says Dixon, who recalls having to fill out forms about his food consumption. By the time he reached high school, Dixon said he remembers being smaller compared to his non-aboriginal classmates.

The chief councillor of the Tseshah First Nation in Port Alberni has demanded an apology from the federal government.

"Canada has been sitting on this and hiding this information from the aboriginal people now since it first happened in the '40s and '50s," said Hugh Braker, who added that the band is horrified by the revelations.

(Written with files from CBC and Canadian Press) ●



Children at Norway House residential school, about 1920. Source: <http://thechildrenremembered.ca/schools-history/norway-house/>

Canada must confront ugly truths: AFN Chief

Meeting in Whitehorse, the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) has reacted strongly to news that First Nations children were used as unwitting research subjects during the 1940s-1950s.

AFN National Chief Shawn A-in-chut Atleo stated: "This report has sent a shockwave through First Nations in Canada and should be no less shocking to all Canadians and beyond. The reports of these studies, in which more than a thousand Indigenous children were denied essential nutrition and in some cases deliberately starved, were reported as far back as 2000 but did not gain national attention. Sadly, I have a deeply personal connection as my home community of Ahousaht was one of the communities that had these studies imposed on them unknowingly. My elders and family members were exposed to this cruel and inhumane treatment where our children were treated like lab rats.

"Canadians need to understand that their own history is one of First Nations being exposed to social engineering and treated as less than human. This is a long line of experience that extends through the residential schools, forced relocations and the ultimate attempt at social engineering, the Indian Act that tried to wipe out our identity and ways of life overnight. Canadians must understand that we are not the authors of our misfortune but we must be masters of our future. We are here only because of the strength and resilience of our Elders, peoples and cultures. It is time to stop blaming the victim and time for Canada to work with us to partners on a path to progress, to recognize our inherent rights, title and Treaties and our right to self-determination. This kind of horror would never have happened if First Nations were in control of our own lives and communities.

"This report has ignited a firestorm here at our Annual General Assembly in Whitehorse and galvanized Chiefs to table an emergency resolution calling for swift action and redress. The government must release all information on this matter without delay. We are mindful that this same government is withholding documents from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and

in our own discrimination complaint before the Human Rights Tribunal on First Nations child welfare. This shameful delay must end. Action is required that is consistent with the Prime Minister's apology for the residential schools that committed the Government of Canada to work towards healing and reconciliation. It is time to honour that promise.

"And we must say to everyone: Canada, this is your history. We must confront the ugly truths and move forward together."

"Our communities are still coming to terms with the residential schools legacy and the Mosby research is another painful reminder of these experiences and the ways our people suffered at the hands of the government; in this case being subjected to human experimentation we never consented to," stated BC Assembly of First Nations Regional Chief Jody Wilson-Raybould.

She added, "Chiefs and leaders from across BC came together at the Annual General Assembly and unanimously condemned the past actions of the Crown in condoning human biomedical experimentation on our peoples and in particular our children who attended Indian residential schools. The Report is further evidence for the ongoing need for healing and the important role of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission as well as the necessity to support our Nations' work in moving beyond our debilitating colonial period."

"Extreme hunger and deliberate food denial punishments are shared experiences for many residential school survivors and this research and the media flurry around this work has opened up painful memories and hurt for many of our people," stated Grand Chief Stewart Phillip, President of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs.

"We are compelled to take every single opportunity to tell the truth," said Chief Phillip. "It is critically important that our people and indeed all Canadians understand this shamefully disturbing history resonates today just as it did when these disturbing incidents took place. For the sake of our families, the truth must be told to reach a sense of closure and lasting reconciliation." ●



Girls at Ahousaht residential school, image from <http://thechildrenremembered.ca>.

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