

AUGUST
1-31,
2015

VOL. 23
#13

\$1.50

people's VOICE

**Military murders
in Colombia**
Page 9

Printed in Canada by union labour
on recycled paper  118-M
Publications Mail Agreement #40011632

Greeks hit again by latest austerity memorandum



While most Greek MPs were voting to implement new attacks against working people in the "Tsipras-memorandum", thousands rallied in the streets to protest the Syriza sellout. The Greek Communists are calling for a rupture with the EU/NATO and the imperialist domination of Europe.

See pages 2 & 10

***"A dramatic
escalation in
militarism and
the drive to war"***

see pages 6-7



**5
Pride 2015**

As the summer of Pride events continues across Canada, the Communist Party calls for unity and solidarity to defend equality gains, and to defeat the bigoted Harper Conservatives in October.

INSIDE

**9
Anti-union UK**

During a debate in Parliament, British PM David Cameron blurts out the truth: "labour reform" means destroying trade unions.

**12
Portugal election**

Voters will head to the polls this fall in Portugal, facing many of the same issues as in Greece. The left will campaign to defend public services, win higher wages and pensions, and protect civil rights.

Greece: No to the new "left-wing" memorandum

From the Communist Party of Greece (KKE), solidnet.org, July 11, 2015

The government of "leftwing" SYRIZA and nationalist ANEL, with the support of the rightwing ND, the social-democratic PASOK (who governed together until January 2015), the centre party POTAMI, is thrusting new unbearable anti-people burdens onto the working class and other popular strata.

On the night of July 10, it placed before the parliament the question of "authorizing" the government to negotiate a new, 3rd memorandum of anti-people measures, posing the following dilemma: the continuation of the anti-people political line or the country's bankruptcy and an exit from the eurozone.

Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras defended his memorandum, arguing in essence that the anti-people measures are being taken in order to regain the confidence of the investors and markets.

At 5 in the morning 251 MPs voted for the government's proposal, while the entire Parliamentary Group of the KKE [15 MPs] voted against it. As a whole there were 32 against, 8 who voted "present" and 9 who were absent.

These developments, which reveal once again the true face of the "left-patriotic" government of SYRIZA-ANEL, also expose the unacceptable stance of various forces abroad in recent months, which supported the government, including some communist and workers' parties, allegedly in the name of "solidarity with Greece".

Speaking in Parliament, during the discussion regarding the

provision of "authorization" for the government to agree to the new, 3rd memorandum, the General Secretary of the KKE, Dimitris Koutsoumpas, addressing the government stressed: "You were always supporters of political amorality, opportunism, which literally and without its deeper theoretical dimension simply means being opportunistic and adventurist. Just 10 days ago, in this very hall, during the discussion of the proposal for the referendum, the KKE clearly pointed out to you that you were calling on the people to take part in a referendum with a 'yes' or 'no' that only had superficial differences, as both the 'yes' and the 'no' meant the acceptance of a new memorandum, perhaps worse than those we have already seen. You adjusted the 'no' of the people to a 'yes' for the new memorandum.

"Something that was confirmed the very day after the referendum, when the rest of the political parties, those that supported a 'yes' and those that supported a 'no' agreed to a new memorandum which will be even harsher.

"We were certain from the beginning that this would happen. Not because we are soothsayers, but because your strategy, but because your programme, your position towards the EU, eurozone and the capitalist unions in general, your position regarding the development path and system that you want to serve, inevitably lead to you to struggle at the side of the EU, ECB, IMF, big capital, the monopoly groups, over how the division of the spoils will be conducted, how you will serve their profitability, how in the end you will reduce the people's income,

how you will economically reduce the price of labour power, how you will suck the people dry, so that the parasites of the system will prosper."

The GS of the CC of the KKE, in reference of the government's dilemma, "anti-people agreement, i.e. memorandum, or Grexit,"



KKE banners at a rally in Syntagma Square outside the Greek Parliament in Athens

stressed that: "The 3rd memorandum will also mean the real bankruptcy of the people. Of course in a somewhat more organized way. We will have barbaric anti-people measures. With the Grexit we will see a rapid pauperization, the people's bankruptcy together with state bankruptcy, without a way out, still trapped inside the walls of the EU, inside the same old capitalist development path. This is why all the other parties bear historic responsibilities, especially SYRIZA which is in government today and was trusted by the people.

"A real way out from the crisis and development in favour of the workers'-people's interests require the organization of the people, their

full preparation, honest talk, clear programmes and positions so that the people themselves decide to take power and to organize the economy and new society, outside and far away from the imperialist unions, with central planning, with social ownership of the wealth produced by the working class and

the anti-people agreement/memorandum or a state default or a Grexit or even a possible war in the wider region."

"...Despite the temporary compromise the tendency for the expulsion of countries remains strong. This does not concern merely Greece but all indebted countries. The people must not choose between their bankruptcy under the Euro or a bankruptcy under the Drachma. A decisive solution in favour of the people requires a true rupture that has nothing to do with the fake rupture that certain forces within SYRIZA invoke when they defend the exit of Greece solely from the Eurozone.

"Those who claim – including forces of SYRIZA, as well as other nationalist, reactionary forces from another standpoint – that the exit of Greece from the Eurozone, with a depreciated currency, will give impetus to competitiveness and growth and will have positive consequences for the people, are deliberately deceiving the people. The prospect of Greece as a capitalist country with a national currency does not constitute any rupture in favour of the people. Those political forces that promote this goal as a solution or an intermediate goal for radical changes (such as the Left Platform of SYRIZA, ANTARSYA as well as other ultra right, fascist forces in Europe) are actually playing the game of certain sections of capital.

"So we will not choose whether we will go bankrupt under the Euro or the drachma, under an internal or external devaluation. For this reason we do not choose between a memorandum and a Grexit.

"There is an alternative solution if the people struggle for a rupture with the EU, capital and their power. For example, we can abolish the EU commitments which have caused stagnation in domestic production, from sugar and meat to shipbuilding and many other sectors. We can utilize the contradictions between the imperialist centres and achieve international agreements of mutual benefit for Greece under people's power, which will be disengaged from the EU and NATO. We can pave the way for the satisfaction of the people's needs if we proceed to the socialization of monopolies, the means of production with scientific nationwide planning of economy".

Finally, D. Koutsoumpas noted that the KKE called on the working people to organize their counter-attack in the streets and the workplaces against the new destructive measures. ●

Joint International Statement in Solidarity with KKE

The following statement of solidarity with the Communist Party of Greece (KKE) has been co-signed by a number of communist and workers' parties, including the Communist Party of Canada. Visit solidnet.org for more information including updated lists of signatories.

Dear comrades,

We, Communist and Workers Parties are following the developments in Greece, the offensive of the European Union, capital and its political representatives against the workers'-people's rights. We have supported the struggles of the Greek workers and we have expressed our internationalist solidarity with and support for the struggle of the KKE.

For many years, the governments of ND and PASOK in cooperation with the EU-ECB-IMF have implemented memoranda and harsh anti-people laws with painful consequences for the working class and popular strata.

Today, the anti-people agreement-third memorandum which was signed by the SYRIZA-ANEL government, supported by ND and PASOK, with the Troika maintains the anti-people measures of the previous governments and thrusts new burdens onto the workers of Greece, unbearable taxation, the abolition of social-security and labour rights, the reductions in wages and pensions, privatizations etc., worsening the situation of the families from the popular strata even further.

These developments allow us to draw certain useful conclusions in order to strengthen the



people's struggle, such as:

Capitalism can not be humanized. It gives rise to crises, unemployment and poverty. In reality, it has been demonstrated that every kind of management of the system sharpens the people's problems and increases the profits of big capital.

The EU is a reactionary imperialist organization. "Democracy", "Solidarity" and social justice can not exist inside its framework.

We, the Communist and Workers Parties which sign this message, appreciate the decisive-consistent stance of the KKE at the side of the working class, the Greek people for the abolition of the memoranda, against the anti-people agreement signed by the SYRIZA-ANEL government (and the other bourgeois political parties) with the Troika (EU-ECB-IMF).

Our parties salute the struggle of the communists in Greece for the workers'-people's rights, the overthrow of capitalist barbarity, for socialism.

our people.

"All the other options are the failed experiments in social-democratic management, allegedly leftwing governments that manage the system, inside the framework of capitalism, and which after spreading fleeting hopes and false expectations lead the people to great disillusionment, the labour movement to retreat and strengthen conservative and even extremely reactionary trends among the popular forces."

In reference to the entanglement of the "Greek issue" in the inter-imperialist contradictions, Koutsoumpas noted that: "You often present the 'cruel' Schauble as the only opponent, Schauble who represents an important section of German capital, and that the friends of Greece from time to time are the USA and the IMF, and now France, focussing on the issue of the restructuring of the state debt.

"Neither US or French or German capital are the friends of the people. They all demand the slaughter of the people's rights and income. The competition between them is being conducted on the terrain of the capitalist crisis and the deep unevenness that permeates the hard core of the Eurozone. The USA and Germany are competing for hegemony in Europe. The IMF, France and Germany over the future of the eurozone. Sections of domestic capital, industrialists, banking and shipping groups are involved in this confrontation.

"As long as we are involved in this dangerous web of contradictions all the alternatives will be a nightmare for the people: either



"Memorandum"

LABOUR NOTES

PSAC launches "Vote to Stop the Cuts"

Public Service Alliance of Canada has launched a campaign to remind Canadians about the impact of cuts to public services before they vote in the federal election. The Harper Conservatives are cutting more than \$14.5 billion a year from public services.

The Vote to Stop the Cuts campaign will include billboards, posters, radio ads and targeted Web and social media content. It focuses on cuts to key services since the Conservatives came into power, affecting support for veterans, search and rescue, Employment Insurance, environmental protection and food safety.

"These and many other essential public services are threatened by reckless Harper Conservative government cuts, without regard for the safety and welfare of millions of Canadians," says Robyn Benson, National President of PSAC. "Our members are on the front lines and see how frustrated Canadians are – waiting weeks to receive Employment Insurance cheques, or finding they can't qualify. They are trying to ensure that Canada's food is safe, that veterans are cared for and that our borders are secure. But government departments have been stripped bare and workers are struggling to maintain crucial services under very difficult circumstances."

For more information, visit votetostopthecuts.ca

New contract at Crown Metal

Employees of the Crown Metal Packaging factory in Toronto have ratified a new collective agreement, ending a 22-month strike. Members of United Steelworkers (USW) Local 9176 voted on July 19 to accept a six-year collective agreement with Crown. The return to work process will begin Aug. 10.

A tentative agreement was negotiated July 8 after the company withdrew its attempt to bar many striking workers from returning to their jobs. The company had recruited scabs to operate the factory during the dispute. The new agreement guarantees the rights of all striking employees to return to their jobs. It also includes enhanced retirement and severance provisions for employees who decide not to return to the plant.

"These men and women can return to work with their heads held high. They are going back shoulder-to-shoulder, with their union and their principles intact," said Marty Warren, USW Ontario Director. "These workers fought for nearly two years against a foreign multinational's attempt to eliminate their union and their unionized jobs. They received tremendous support from their community and from many allies. But they were deserted by the Ontario government, which sat idle as a giant corporation provoked a labour dispute, then brought in replacement workers to try to destroy decent jobs."

CUPW hits the road

The Canadian Union of Postal Workers (CUPW) is hitting the road in the run-up to the October 19 federal election. Calling this "a crucial time for us and for our future, CUPW warns that the Harper government "has unleashed unprecedented attacks against postal workers and the service we provide."

The union has launched a cross-country Caravan to rally its members for the election, starting on July 15 from Cape Spear, Newfoundland, Canada's easternmost point.

National President Mike Palecek says, "We will bring the Save Canada Post campaign into communities across the country. We will go from the east coast to the west coast and back again, stopping in many different workplaces and communities, and holding public meetings along the way. On this tour, we expect to document stories and testimonials, publicize our issues and bring members together, face-to-face. Conservatives cannot run and cannot hide from the mess they have created. We will ensure that everyone knows exactly where the blame lies for these cuts. We need each other now more than ever."

To view the itinerary, check savecanadapost.ca, and follow the union's Facebook and Twitter feeds for updates, photos and messages from the tour.

NWT civic workers strike

Thirty-one municipal workers in Hay River, Northwest Territories, who do a range of jobs from office administration, ground and facility maintenance, by-law enforcement, lifeguards and pool attendants, have been walking a picket line for a contract for over five months.

The Union of Northern Workers (UNW) and the town have held three rounds of bargaining since the strike began on February 9. The union says that the town has improved its initial offer, but its members have consistently voted for a better settlement. Adding to the issue of wage increases, some of the tactics used by the mayor and council of Hay River have not been viewed as "good faith bargaining."

Last February, Mayor Cassidy wrote a letter urging union members to go back to work, and said the town would support workers who decided to cross the picket line. The mayor also offered to waive union dues to members who crossed the picket line.

In early June the union said it would not sign an agreement without a back-to-work agreement as part of the contract. The town has refused, stating publicly that it could lay off some workers after the strike. Hay River has also hired scab workers to do ground maintenance work, and to run a summer camp for kids.

The UNW has repeatedly offered to submit the dispute to binding arbitration but the town has refused every time.

Nanaimo golf club workers locked out since April

By Alan Boyden, Nanaimo, BC

Members of UNITE-HERE, Local 40, have been locked out at the Nanaimo Golf Club since April 24. Twenty-three highly competent, conscientious and hardworking employees have been walking a picket line on regular five shifts for over three months. In spite of all sorts of weather – including record breaking heat – their spirits remain high and their resolve is undiminished.

In addition to the challenging climate, the picket line, largely composed of women, has been subjected to vituperative (testosterone charged?) invective from a minority of golfers and the scabs. These sexist insults have been met with a solemn and disdainful silence, showing a remarkable restraint. This contrasts with their cheery smiles and waves to the vast majority, who honk car horns and wish them good luck.

The reactionary management of the Nanaimo Golf Club led by Ash Chadha has made no effort to resolve this dispute. From the start his intention was to break the union. In violation of the labour code he contacted scabs prior to the lockout. This much Chadha admitted in court in June, according to Shelly Ervin, Financial Secretary Treasurer of Local 40, and observer Kayla.

July 16 saw a mass show of community support and union

solidarity organized by the Nanaimo, Duncan and District Labour Council. Local 40 president Robert Demand and Shelly Ervin were joined by a large supportive group. This consisted of concerned citizens, NDP candidate Sheila Malcolmson, retired CUPE-BC president Barry O'Neill, and a wide range of active and retired unionists including steelworkers, hospital workers (HEU), teachers (BCTF), BCGEU, and Teamsters. Members of the Nanaimo Club of the Communist Party were there to back the courageous locked out workers. The show of support was covered by a CHEK-TV team. The positive atmosphere was in no way marred by a golfer who drove aggressively at one of the people supporting the picket. Fortunately no injury was sustained, but the

incident served to highlight the potential dangers faced by the picketers.

The picketers are having an impact on the Golf Club's business. The cancellation of banquets and wedding receptions, combined with reduced restaurant patronage, clearly show the feelings of the citizens of Nanaimo. This indicates that management is not only showing extremely poor judgment as an employer, but also demonstrating gross incompetence as a negotiator. The management of the Nanaimo Golf Club must realise that their excellent union employees, who have served them so well in the past, deserve a fair deal.

The locked out union workers continue their courageous vigil, united in the knowledge of community support, defiant and determined to win. ●



On the Nanaimo Golf Club picket line.

Philosophy, the family and much more

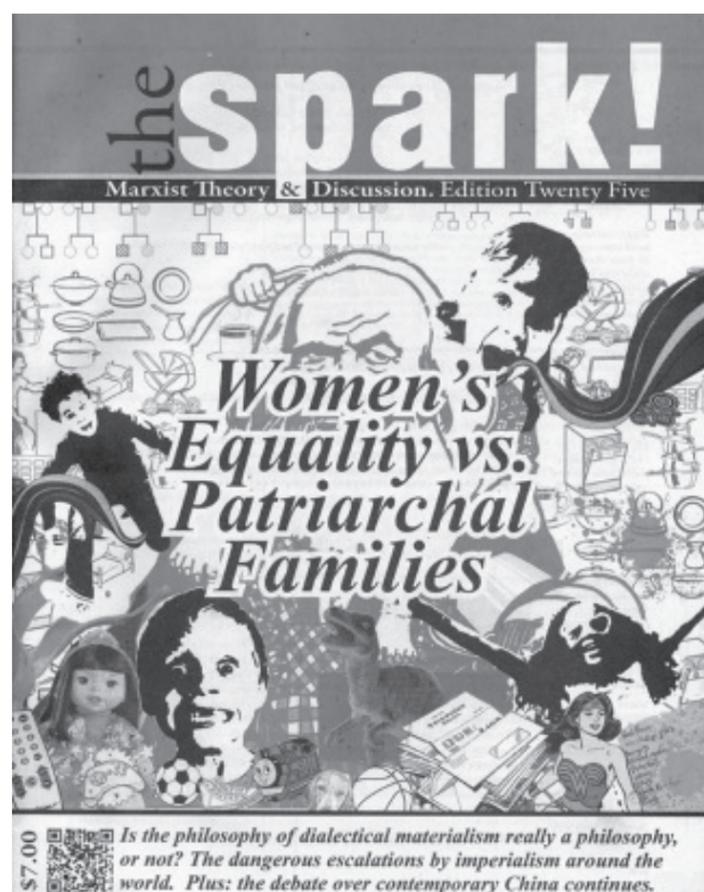
Issue 25 of the Communist Party's Marxist theory and discussion journal, the SPARK!, is now on sale. This 72-page edition covers a wide range of topics, from developments in the People's Republic of China, to an examination of women's oppression, a commentary on the philosophy of dialectical materialism, book reviews, and much more.

The cover article by Quebec women's activist Marianne Breton

Fontaine, titled "The Principle Enemy," presents a fascinating argument on the need for transformation of the family to advance the cause of women's liberation. Breton Fontaine starts with the historical origins of the oppression of women, moving through the emergence of the bourgeois family and into the revolutionary future. Along the way, the author sharply critiques feminist theories which are called "radical" but which fail to address the

structural roots of oppression. At the same time, she warns that "the refusal of certain Marxists and of so many militant working class men" to grasp the need for a struggle against patriarchy in all its forms is "the result of the deep penetration of the dominant ideology." Breton Fontaine's thought-provoking article is a powerful rejection of the anti-communist claim that Marxist-Leninists have nothing to contribute to modern scientific analysis of the struggle for women's liberation; it should be widely read by all those who seek a deeper understanding of the reactionary role of patriarchy and the bourgeois family model in today's world.

Calgary's Jason Devine is known as one of Canada's most consistent anti-racist activists, but he is also a PhD student at the University of Calgary. His article, "On the 'Philosophy' of 'Dialectical Materialism'", presents a challenging argument on the content and terminology of Marxist philosophical theory. As Devine points out, "Marx never termed his theoretical innovation dialectical materialism." Both Marx and Engels, the author says, "argued for a positive, scientific, materialist and historical approach to reality viz. Marx's dialectic method, scientific socialism." The language in Devine's article may seem academic to some PV readers, but his point is worth serious study. As SPARK! editor Dan Goldstick (a philosophy professor at U of T) notes in his "very long" editorial, "we humans do not always think logically, nor



see SPARK, page 4

EDITORIALS

A triumph for socialist Cuba

Unlike the corporate think tanks operating out of Washington, we do not possess a crystal ball or any magic device to predict the future. Our ideological opponents are boasting that the re-establishment of diplomatic relations between Cuba and the US is a win for imperialism. Soon, they proclaim, Cubans will embrace capitalism with the enthusiasm they showed before "the beards" and their Soviet allies "imposed communism" in Havana.

History is a more reliable science. The fact is that for centuries prior to the Revolution, Cubans were brutally oppressed and exploited, first by Spanish colonialism, and then by the Yankees and their pet dictators. Since 1959, despite the US blockade, Cuba has advanced to first place in many key socio-economic indicators among Latin American countries. Cubans are keenly aware that the restoration of capitalism in the USSR and other socialist countries was followed by a dramatic drop in living standards and social security. We believe that while the period ahead will be complicated, the Cuban people will defend their socialist principles.

In reality, the decades-long diplomatic and political clash between the U.S. and Cuba has resulted in a decisive victory for the island of freedom. The agreement to restore relations makes it clear that debates over human rights and democracy will apply to both countries, and Cuba is recognized as a sovereign independent country, not a vassal of US imperialism. Of course, many outstanding issues remain to be resolved, such as lifting the blockade, the return of Guantanamo to Cuba, and ending US internal subversion and destabilization.

For this reason, it is crucial to strengthen efforts to build friendship and solidarity between Canadians and Cubans. This is not just a moral issue; every victory for Cuba is also a victory for peace, disarmament, human equality, national sovereignty, and for a socialist alternative to imperialist barbarism.

Defeat the corporate agenda

Speculation is mounting that PM Harper may drop the writ for the Oct. 19 election as early as mid-August, to allow his party to maximize their huge financial advantage. The Tories will try every sleazy trick to stay in power, over the objections of the vast majority who reject their far-right corporate agenda. The Conservatives are the main enemy of the working class and its allies, and their defeat must be the priority for the labour and democratic forces.

But "strategic voting" is not an easy formula for victory in this election and beyond. For one thing, such a strategy is extremely difficult to coordinate and implement during a short campaign period, especially given the partisan battles among the main opposition parties and their supporters.

More important, to varying degrees (especially the Liberals under Justin Trudeau), these parties accept the premises of the neoliberal austerity agenda which has devastated working people here and around the world. Despite some useful policy planks such as a national child care program and higher minimum wages, Thomas Mulcair's NDP promises to stay inside the "balanced budget" lines drawn by big capital, refusing to consider public ownership of resources and banks, or a shifting the tax burden onto the wealthy and the corporations. The Greens object to Harper's police state laws, but present no alternative to neoliberal economics. None of these parties ever questions Harper's imperialist foreign policy.

The defeat of the Conservatives must go beyond the ballot box, towards creating conditions for a stronger movement for "people's needs, not corporate greed!" That's why the Communist Party of Canada is fielding a larger number of candidates in this election, calling for fundamental change, not for a kinder, gentler version of neoliberalism and war. During the campaign, we will examine these issues in depth, and we welcome your feedback!



"An opportunity has opened up"

A ceremony to mark the re-opening of the Cuban Embassy in the United States was held in Washington on July 20. Here are excerpts from the statement on this occasion by Bruno Rodriguez Parrilla, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Cuba.

The flag that we revere at the entrance of this room is the same that was hauled down here 54 years ago, which was zealously kept in Florida by a family of liberators and later on by the Museum of our eastern city of Las Tunas, as a sort of premonition that this day would certainly come. Flying once again in this place is the lone-star flag which embodies the generous blood that was shed, the sacrifices made and the struggle waged for more than one hundred years by our people for their national independence and full self-determination, facing the most serious challenges and risks.

Today we pay homage to all those who died in its defense and renew the commitment of the present generations, fully confident on the newer ones, to serve it with honour.

We evoke the memory of José Martí, who was fully devoted to the struggle for the freedom of Cuba and managed to get a profound knowledge about the United States: In his "North American Scenes" he made a vivid description of the great nation to the North and extolled its virtues. He also bequeathed to us a

warning against its excessive craving for domination which was confirmed by a long history of disagreements.

We've been able to make it through this date thanks to the firm and wise leadership of Fidel Castro Ruz, the historic leader of the Cuban Revolution, whose ideas we will always revere with utmost loyalty...

Today, the re-establishment of diplomatic relations and the re-opening of embassies complete the first stage of the bilateral dialogue and pave the way to the complex and certainly long process towards the normalization of bilateral relations.

The challenge is huge because there have never been normal relations between the United States of America and Cuba, in spite of the one and a half century of intensive and enriching links that have existed between both peoples.

The Platt Amendment, imposed in 1902 under a military occupation, thwarted the liberation efforts that had counted on the participation or the sympathy of quite a few American citizens and led to the usurpation of a piece of Cuban territory in Guantánamo. Its nefarious consequences left an indelible mark in our common history.

In 1959, the United States refused to accept the existence of a fully independent small and neighbouring island and much less, a few years later, a socialist Revolution that was

forced to defend itself and has embodied, ever since then, our people's will.

I have referred to History to reaffirm that today an opportunity has opened up to begin working in order to establish new bilateral relations, quite different from whatever existed in the past. The Cuban government is fully committed to that.

Only the lifting of the economic, commercial and financial blockade which has caused so much harm and suffering to our people; the return of the occupied territory in Guantánamo and the respect for Cuba's sovereignty will lend some meaning to the historic event that we are witnessing today.

Every step forward will receive the recognition and the favourable acceptance of our people and government, and most certainly the encouragement and approval of Latin America and the Caribbean and the entire world.

We reaffirm Cuba's willingness to move towards the normalization of relations with the United States in a constructive spirit, but without any prejudice whatsoever to our independence or any interference in the affairs that fall under the exclusive sovereignty of Cubans.

To insist in the attainment of obsolete and unjust goals, only hoping for a mere change in the methods to achieve them will not legitimize them or favour the national interest of the United States or its citizens. However, should that be the case, we would be ready to face the challenge..

PEOPLE'S VOICE

ISSN number 1198-8657 Published by New Labour Press Ltd.
Canadian Publications Mail Sales Product Agreement #40011632

Return undeliverable Canadian addresses to Circulation Dept.,
People's Voice, 706 Clark Drive, Vancouver, BC, V5L 3J1
Tel: 604.255.2041 Email: pvoice@telus.net

Volunteers and contributors for this issue:

Dave Arland, Ed Bil, Alan Boyden, Johan Boyden,

Wally Brooker, Liz Hill, Roberto Moraga,

Adrien Welsh, and our mailers in Vancouver & Toronto.

Editor: Kimball Cariou Business Manager: Hassan Azimikor

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

LETTERS

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

People's Voice articles may be reprinted without permission provided the source is credited.

SPARK! No. 25....

continued from page 3

do we necessarily think dialectically. It isn't a question of how we do think, but a question of how to think - in order to think effectively: scientifically."

Chevy Phillips, "a keen observer of the Chinese scene," has the third major article in this issue, titled "In defence of the PR of China." As seen in the debates taking place in many communist and workers' parties around the world, socio-economic developments in China over the past several decades remain a matter of sharp controversy, and a matter of crucial importance for the 21st century. The view of Phillips is that "China, despite a very difficult situation, is doing the best it can, and making history." PV readers should leave personal opinions at the door rather than reaching hard

conclusions on the basis of this single phrase.

"Notes on the international situation" by Communist Party of Canada leader Miguel Figueroa, and two book reviews round out this issue. Roger Perkins argues that "Marxist Phoenix: Studies in Historical Materialism," by Murray Smith, is "a worthwhile book with a fatal flaw" - grafting Trotskyist wings onto the ever-resilient phoenix. Sam Hammond reviews "Raising the Workers' Flag: The Workers' Unity League of Canada 1930-1936." As Hammond concludes, the class struggle in Stephen Endicott's book "is never portrayed in black and white, but in beautiful, complex and complicated Technicolor."

SPARK! can be purchased at Communist Party offices (see page 8) for \$7; contact the party by phone or email to get details about ordering a copy by mail. •

Renew today!

Check your label

Please check the address label on the front page to see if it's time to renew. Subscribers who find "2016/08/01" on their label, for example, will have their subscriptions expire with this issue, August 1-31, 2015

Don't miss a single copy - renew today!

The long road to LGBTIQ equality: Next step - defeat Harper!

The annual Pride summer season is here, with hundreds of activities in major cities and small towns across the country. The Communist Party of Canada extends warm solidarity to the LGBTIQ community and allies, and urges voters to dump the anti-equality Harper Conservatives in the coming federal election.

Huge legal, political and cultural victories for basic LGBTIQ rights have been achieved since the first Pride parades, thanks to decades of efforts by the LGBTIQ community and our allies. Internationally, more countries are recognizing fundamental equality rights, as seen in the recent Irish marriage referendum.

This is only one element of a far wider civil rights campaign. The movement in Canada to end discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender expression/identity has made important progress since last year, especially around support for transgender rights. For example, growing numbers of School Boards are finally taking real action to make schools safer and more welcoming

for trans* students. The expansion of queer- and trans-positive expressions in the popular media, pro sports, the labour movement and other areas of society continues to break down barriers.

Pride 2015 Statement from the Communist Party of Canada and the Young Communist League

But there are also signs of a pushback by highly-organized anti-equality forces. In many countries, lesbians, and trans* people still face threats, violence, imprisonment or even death. Homophobic and racist views are deliberately exported from North America and Europe, despite the stereotyped claim that equality rights are “gifts” from the “enlightened” capitalist west. Progress is being made by countries such as Cuba, Brazil, and South Africa. Last year’s WorldPride in Toronto welcomed Mariela Castro Espin, the director of Cuba’s National Centre for Sex Education, who has led the movement for gay, lesbian and

trans* rights in her socialist country, showing what can be achieved with the support of progressive governments.

Here in Canada, the Conservative-dominated Senate has stalled Bill C-279, which aims to amend the Canadian Human Rights Code by adding “gender identity” to hate-crime legislation provisions. Despite the fact that almost all sexual assaults against women are committed by heterosexual males, the Conservative “bathroom” amendments to Bill C-279 are a deliberate attempt to spread the lie that trans* rights will make washrooms a dangerous space for women, and to foment hatred against trans* people.

On a larger scale, corporate-driven “austerity” cuts, and the attacks on unions, heavily impact women, Aboriginal peoples, and racialized groups, are undercutting equality gains. The most marginalized members of the LGBTIQ community, including trans*, two-spirited, racialized queers and young people, are those hardest-hit by the social program cutbacks.

Equality is not a “marginal”



Above, the Communist Party/YCL contingent at this year's TorontoPride Parade, and below left, the contingent from City Hall. People's Voice photos by Ed Bil

issue; trans* people are 10% of the LGBTIQ population, and face huge medical costs, higher unemployment, less access to housing, widespread intimidation at work, and lack of legal protections. Yet right-wing forces continue to scapegoat the LGBTIQ community along with racialized groups and other minorities.

Today, the economic crisis, the “ISIS threat”, and anti-communism are all invoked by the ruling class to justify their assault on workers’ rights and social equality. Among the most poisonous ideologies are homophobia and transphobia. Just like racism, sexism, and national chauvinism, these are intended to divide and undermine resistance to the corporate agenda of “trade deals,” raw materials extraction and exports, and militarism.

In the coming federal election, we urge voters to defeat the parties which back this agenda, especially the Harper Conservatives - the favoured party of big business, and the political home for so-called “family values” bigots who want to roll back LGBTIQ equality and women’s access to reproductive rights.

Communist candidates will be on the ballot in many ridings, campaigning for genuine social equality, jobs, democracy, labour rights, peace, environmental sustainability. We pledge to repeal the police state Bill C-51, and to fulfill the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission into the Indian residential schools.

We believe that “an injury to one is an injury to all.” Adopting full legal and political protections

for sexual orientation and gender expression, and gender identity, and respect for the bodily diversity of intersex people, is urgently needed to strengthen working class unity.

This unity is a vital element of the broad democratic and social movement to put people’s needs before corporate greed, austerity and war. Our LGBTIQ community must be a key player in a efforts to build a “People’s Coalition” of labour, Aboriginal peoples, youth and students, women, seniors, farmers, immigrant and racialized communities, environmentalists, peace activists and many other allies.

Mass resistance in our communities and workplaces, in the streets and at the ballot box, can defeat the parties of big business and open the door to a “people not profits” government. The goal of the Communist Party is to win genuine people’s power in a socialist Canada, where our economy and resources will be socially owned and democratically controlled.

This historic advance will make it possible to eradicate the intersecting forms of exploitation and oppression which threaten our world today. We urge you to join the Communist Party and the Young Communist League to achieve a liberated society in which, as Karl Marx said, “the freedom of each is the condition for the freedom of all.”

(NOTE: In this statement, the acronym LGBTIQ refers to “lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans*, two-spirited, queer, intersex and others.” The debate over this and other terms continues.) ●



Abolition of universal child care in Quebec: an attack against all Canadians

Special Resolution adopted by the Central Committee, Communist Party of Canada, June 13-14, 2015

The Communist Party of Canada condemns the abolition by the Couillard Government of the system of universal child care in Quebec, formalized with the adoption on April 20, under duress, of the mammoth Bill 28, true Harper-style legislation.

Changing laws and 68 regulations to impose more fiscal measures of austerity by the Liberal government, the Bill, inter alia, amended the costs of universal child care, which was previously at \$7.30 per day per child, by varying it according to household income. Parents must now pay amounts ranging between \$7.30 and \$20 per day, per child to have access to childcare. Over 70% of

Quebec households are thus affected by a rate increase that will allow the government to save perhaps less than \$200 million.

This measure totally violates the promise made by the Liberals during the last election campaign, not to increase child care costs unlike the PQ government had announced. But the Liberal’s lie goes much further since not only are they increasing the rates, but by ending the single price, they will also break with the principle of universality maliciously introducing the principle of “user fees” so cherished by neo-liberals.

At the same time, the Liberals also want to increase the financial attractiveness of unsubsidized private daycare centers, where many companies find themselves “friends” of the Liberal Party. The vice-president of the Quebec Alliance of unsubsidized private

daycare (AQQPNS), Khalid Daher, has openly welcomed the government’s decision. MNA and co-spokesperson of Québec Solidaire, Françoise David, has criticized the Liberal government for this new privatization which turns child care into a “commercial” network at the expense of workers.

The austerity measures immediately and predominantly affect women, both as workers in the public sector who lose their jobs, and as those primarily responsible for children and the families for whom these services are intended. But rising daycare rates will also “encourage some mothers to give up their jobs to stay at home,” as stated by the President of the Conseil du Statut de la Femme, Julie Miville-Dechéne during the parliamentary committee hearings on the bill.

Indeed, all studies show that an increase of childcare costs has an impact on the place of women in the workforce, she noted. This is certainly a significant retreat for the condition of women and women’s equality in Quebec.

Canadian women have been demanding for decades the creation of affordable child care networks. A report by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, shows that Canadian parents, not including Quebec, are forced to spend a major part of their annual income on basic child care expenses. In Ontario, for example, parents must dedicate more than a third of their annual income, or about \$ 1,700 per month per child in the Toronto area. Meanwhile in Quebec, thanks to the public child care program at \$7, women on average are paying 5% of their income.

Since the establishment of this program in 1997, work has become more accessible to tens thousands of Quebec women.

Quebec, the only province where women, parents and the working people had managed such a breakthrough, was an inspiring model for all people across Canada, but very disturbing for big business. This illustrates what interests Couillard’s government serves. His austerity policies are consistent entirely with those of the Harper Conservatives and other provincial governments which operate a general lowering of living conditions for the working class and popular strata across Canada.

The Communist Party demands and struggle for the establishment throughout the country of a universal, public not-for-profit system of quality child care, affordable and accessible. ●

"A dramatic escalation in mi

Internationally, the main feature today is the dramatic escalation in militarism and the drive to war by U.S. imperialism and its allies (either directly or via local proxies), by growing interference in the domestic affairs of other countries, and by the outright intervention to overturn states and governments perceived to be hostile to its regional or global interests. This escalation in the drive to militarism and war is directly connected to the deepening cyclical and structural crisis afflicting the capitalist system as a whole, and the desperate attempts of the main imperialist centres to protect and extend their respective positions at the expense of their imperialist rivals, at the expense of the vast majority of the peoples and nations in the rest of the world, and at the expense of the global environment.

Within the imperialist countries (including Canada), this increasing aggressiveness manifests itself in an all-sided offensive to roll back the social and economic gains of the working class and working people generally, and sharpened attacks on labour, democratic and civil rights. Labour and the democratic resistance is also growing within the imperialist countries and around the world, but resistance, united around a comprehensive democratic and anti-imperialist alternative, needs to be strengthened in order to turn back this offensive, and move onto the counter-offensive, for socialism.

The U.S. and EU imperialist blocs are the primary forces driving this heightened aggression, most often under the 'flag' of NATO. For its part, the Harper government is actively promoting the rising tide of aggression, particularly through its military involvement in Iraq and now also Syria, its strident support for the pro-fascist regime in Ukraine, its unqualified backing of Israeli expansionism, and its belligerent attitude to the Bolivarian government in Venezuela.

Whipping up tensions in turn serves to justify increased defence spending. As the World Peace Council recently noted, despite the economic crisis, military expenditures last year reached almost \$1.5 trillion, some 2.4% of global GDP, 37% of which was spent by the USA alone. The web of U.S. military bases and installations around the world continues to spread, estimated at roughly 1,000.

A massive chunk of these wasteful military expenditures is going into the expansion of the NATO military alliance, in order to secure absolute military superiority for the U.S. and its European allies, and to expand its 'sphere of operations' not only up to Russia's eastern and southern flanks, but also from the Middle East and North Africa up to the Arctic.

"Regime change"

The escalation of imperialist militarism and aggression is not only reflected in military interventions in local wars and the fomenting of 'regime change' in individual countries. It is also

pushing the world dangerously closer to world war. The bellicose campaign whipped by the US & NATO bloc against the Russian Federation over the issue of Ukraine, together with the 'eastern push' of NATO to tighten its encirclement of Russia (including the redeployment of NATO forces on its borders), raise the very real danger of possible thermonuclear war. PM Harper has been particularly vociferous in revving up this 'new cold war' against Russia. At the G7 meeting in Germany last week, he said "Mr. Putin runs an entirely different system... It is not at all like our economy, it doesn't share our interests, it doesn't share our values", and once again claimed that Russia was "expansionist" and constituted a "long-term menace".

Recent developments in Ukraine figure prominently into US/NATO's expansionist plans. Following the U.S.-orchestrated fascist coup d'état in February 2014, the illegitimately installed regime of Petro Poroshenko moved quickly to apply for NATO membership, and to call for NATO arms to beef up its brutal onslaught in the Donbas, against cities and enclaves of the Russian-speaking minority who are fighting for regional autonomy to protect their linguistic and other national rights under threat from the Ukrainian nationalist regime in Kiev. Thousands of innocent civilians have perished in this fratricidal conflict. In violation of the truce agreement signed in Minsk earlier this year, the Ukrainian army and its National Guard (made up mostly of fascist and neo-Nazi thugs and criminals) are continuing their assault in an attempt to crush the embattled opposition forces in the East. These gross violations are taking place with the approval, and with the strategic military assistance, of the main imperialist powers including Canada. In light of the genocidal offensive of the Kiev regime, the announcement this April of the Harper government's decision to dispatch 200 CAF personnel to help train the Ukrainian Army is deplorable, and our Party demands that this decision be rescinded immediately.

Our Party also condemns the growing wave of anti-democratic and anti-communist repression currently underway in Ukraine. The Kiev regime has launched some 20 criminal cases against leading members of the Communist Party (CPU) including its General Secretary, and the government is fighting a battle in court to ban the party altogether. Furthermore, several weeks ago the bogus 'parliament' in Kiev passed a series of bills to "decommunize" Ukraine, banning communist symbols and tearing down monuments to the Soviet heroes of the Great Patriotic War.

At the same time, the rump parliament approved legislation to officially restore the 'good name' of Stepan Bandera, the leader of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN) and infamous war criminal who colluded with the Nazis during Germany's bloody occupation of Ukraine in WW2. The legislation would also impose stiff sentences on anyone who

exposes this grotesque rewriting of Ukrainian history. While Communists are the main target of this assault, other democratic opponents of the regime are also coming under attack. On June 8, a tent camp set up on the 'Maidan' in Kiev by demonstrators protesting against Poroshenko was attacked and torn down by fascist thugs allegedly hired by the authorities. In the face of this fascist repression, our Party expresses its unwavering solidarity with the CPU and all democratic dissent, condemns the ugly wave of anti-communist frenzy, and calls on the Canadian government to publicly and unequivocally disassociate itself from the repressive actions.

U.S. Pivot to Asia

U.S. imperialism has also embarked on a dangerous expansion of its war machine in the Pacific. The U.S. "Pivot to Asia" plan to 'contain' the People's Republic of China calls for the deployment of 60% of its naval fleet in the area, with grave consequences to the peace and stability of the region. Continuing military provocations aimed at the DPRK (North Korea), the 2014 're-interpretation' of Article 9 of the Japanese constitution by the Abe government to allow for accelerated re-armament of Japan's Self-Defence Forces, U.S. meddling in the dispute over the Spratly Islands in the South China Sea, and the expanding U.S. military presence in Australia are all parts of this worrisome development. Canada is also moving to install a foreign military base in Singapore which will contribute to this 'pivot'.

The U.S.-led imperialist drive to encircle both the Russian Federation (through NATO's 'eastern push') and China (via the "Pivot to Asia") also has a South Asian component. Since its election, the BJP government under PM Narendra Modi has shifted India's domestic and foreign/military policy sharply to the right, contrary to the desire of the vast majority of the people. It has announced its intentions to privatize certain state utilities, mines and farms, has cut state food subsidies for 20 million of India's poor, and is actively promoting extreme Hindu nationalism, and encouraging extremist attacks against Muslims and other non-Hindus at the local and state level in parts of the country. Modi and the BJP have a long record in this regard. In 2002, when he was Chief Minister of the Gujarat state, Modi was directly implicated in fomenting communal riots that left up to 2,000 Muslims dead.

With respect to India's foreign policy, Modi is tilting ever more toward the U.S. axis. In January, his government renewed the 10-year Defense Framework Agreement with the U.S. that will now include joint weapons production projects. The two countries also announced a "breakthrough" on the stalled Indo-US nuclear cooperation agreement. In return for his willingness to make India serve as a strategic asset if not an outright ally of the U.S. in its crusade to counter "rising China," the Washington has declared that



Modi would receive immunity from US lawsuits, even if they allege human rights violations he committed.

"New Middle East"

Meanwhile, the U.S. & NATO imperialist powers are conducting another set of wars in the Middle East, under the cover of the 'war on terror'. In reality, this is part of the U.S. strategy of imposing a 'New Middle East', composed of a patchwork of weak, fractured Arab states divided among sectarian lines, in order to undermine pan-Arab unity, facilitate Israeli expansionism and extend imperialist domination over the region and its resources.

When the U.S., Canada and other NATO powers first launched airstrikes against the Islamic State (ISIS), our Party warned that this was likely a pretext for imposing regime change in Syria. Four long years of a foreign-sponsored war, financed by the reactionary Arab states and coordinated from Washington, has left Syria a shattered country, with an estimated death toll of more than 215,000 including 20,000 children, and millions more internally displaced or driven into exile. The elected Al-Assad government in Damascus is now caught in a vice, between ISIS attacks in the western part of the country and a new 'coalition' of other extremists and mercenaries backed by Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Turkey (the al-Qaida-led "Army of Conquest") seizing territory from the Syrian army on its eastern flank. In these dire circumstances, our Party must step up its solidarity with the besieged Syrian people, with the Syrian Communists, and with all the progressive, secular and democratic forces of the country striving to defeat this reactionary onslaught and to preserve the sovereignty and independence of their country.

Our Party has condemned the

Protests continue across austerity policies, including (above) and Po

Excerpts from the Political Report adopted by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Canada, held June 13-14 in Toronto, Ontario.



Militarism and the drive to war"



Europe against corporate...
g these actions in London
Portugal (below)



Harper government's one-year extension of Canada's participation in the latest imperialist war in Iraq, and its expanded military mission into neighbouring Syria without the agreement of the elected government of that sovereign country. As the CEC statement noted:

"Clearly, this extension shows that Canada is on the way to another disastrous Afghanistan-style war of occupation, ultimately costing billions of dollars and thousands of Iraqi and Syrian lives. Predictably, the Tories call this a 'humanitarian' war to 'protect the women and children'. There is overwhelming evidence that the 'Responsibility to Protect' doctrine has... inflicted enormous damage upon civilian populations."

The wars in Syria and Iraq, the chaos in Libya, the Saudi-led military intervention in Yemen, and domestic turmoil in Egypt – all these are playing into the hands of the Zionist state of Israel to maintain and deepen its illegal occupation of the West Bank, Golan Heights and other Arab lands, and to negate the Palestinian people's struggle for national self-determination. The March 15 declaration by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu that if re-elected, his party/government would ensure that Palestine never receives independent statehood confirms that expansionist Israel has been lying to the world for decades, and that it has no intention of ending its occupation and of negotiating a just peace with the Palestinian people based on a two-state solution. Rather, the rapid expansion of illegal settlements on the West Bank, the construction of the 'wall of shame', the periodic bombardment and slow economic strangulation of Gaza, and its continued refusal to resume negotiations with the Palestinian Authority – all these actions unmistakably point to the real intentions of the Zionist state: namely, to make life under occupation unbearable for the Palestinians, to force them into

permanent exile, and to complete the annexation of remaining Palestinian lands. This is a genocidal policy of 'ethnic cleansing', by any other name. As such, it is a crime against humanity.

It is absolutely appalling that the Harper Conservative government should give unbridled political, diplomatic and economic support to the racist, expansionist state of Israel. Turning reality completely on its head, the Tories have threatened to prosecute Canadians who criticize Israel's actions, and who support boycotts, sanctions and disinvestment (BDS) against Israel, on the basis that such advocacy constitutes a 'hate crime'. In January, then-foreign minister John Baird signed a "Memorandum of Understanding" with Israel pledging to fight the BDS campaign, which he called "the new face of anti-Semitism" in Canada. Shortly afterward, Public Safety Minister Steven Blaney, in an address at the United Nations, characterized boycotts of Israel as anti-Semitic hate speech and violence... Our Party categorically denounces these anti-democratic threats intended to muzzle all criticism of, and active opposition to Israeli policy, and calls on our entire party to step up its solidarity with the Palestinian people's struggle, and in favour of the BDS campaign against Israel.

Iran agreement

One encouraging development in the region has been the interim nuclear deal (the Joint Plan of Action) struck between Iran and the P5+1 countries (US, Britain, France, Russia, China and Germany), which our Party cautiously welcomed in a recent CEC statement. Our Party is sharply critical of the autocratic, undemocratic regime in Teheran; however, we also condemn the use of the so-called "Iranian nuclear threat" as a pretext to impose sanctions on the Iranian people, and to foment imperialist aggression against Iran. Our Party therefore considers this 'framework' agreement a small step in a positive direction on the issue of peace in the Middle East.

However... the deal avoids many of the underlying issues that have contributed to insecurity, conflict and war in the region, not least that there is no consideration or inclusion of the role of Israel – a nuclear weapons state which has not signed the Non-Proliferation Treaty – in the agreement, nor any mention of the military buildup in the region by the US and its allies. Our Party has demanded that the Canadian government immediately normalize relations with Iran and end all sanctions, reject its current foreign policy of provocation, interference, aggression and war, and adopt an independent foreign policy based on peace and disarmament, including withdrawal from NATO.

Capitalist crisis

...The escalation in imperialist aggression, the main aim of which is to secure resources and markets for plunder, is directly related to the deepening systemic crisis of capitalism itself, and to the

desperate attempts of the dominant imperialist centres to resolve this crisis on terms which preserve and advance their respective interests and forestall the advance of the BRICS countries. The impact of the worldwide economic meltdown of 2007/08 – by far the most intense and protracted cyclical crisis since the Great Depression – continues to resonate. Economic growth rates in the main imperialist centres – U.S., Japan and EU – remain sluggish. In Europe, GDP growth is virtually zero and many of the EU member-states (Greece, Spain, Portugal, and Italy) are perilously close to defaulting on their massive accumulated debt. The austerity measures imposed on these countries by the EU and the bankers to ensure repayment have led to a massive surge in unemployment and poverty among the masses of the people.

One of the sure signs that the capitalist crisis is far from over is reflected in the fact that the 'debt bubble' has continued to grow at a staggering and unsustainable rate. The McKinsey Global Institute, a bourgeois think-tank, noted recently that instead of indebtedness receding in the period following the onset of the crisis, "all major economies today have higher levels of borrowing relative to GDP than they did in 2007. Global debt in these years has grown by \$57 trillion, raising the ratio of debt to GDP by 17 percentage points. That poses new risks to financial stability and may undermine global economic growth." Meanwhile, corporate and bank profits have rebounded handsomely, but both private (corporate) and state reinvestment levels in new goods and services production and infrastructure remain at very low levels in most leading capitalist countries, including Canada. This glut of so-called 'dead money' (assets not funnelled back into the cycle of extended reproduction), is instead being used to consolidate and centralize capital in the hands of an ever-dwindled core of 'super-monopolies', and the largest global banking institutions.

This in turn is driving up structural unemployment rates in real terms, as full-time, well-paying jobs are increasingly replaced by part-time, temporary and other precarious forms of employment, and forcing real wages to plummet.

In the U.S., for instance, "...median inflation-adjusted income last year was \$2,100 lower than in 2009 and \$3,600 lower than in 2001. 50% of all American workers made less than \$28,031 a year, while a whopping 39% brought home less than \$20,000. Furthermore, the gap between high- and low-income groups is the widest in 100 years and the share of U.S. consumers who call themselves middle class has never been lower." [Money Morning Staff Reports, February 2015]

Even more serious than the current cyclical malaise is the longer term economic and political outlook for the U.S. and EU powers, as their hegemonic positions come under increasing challenge from the so-called BRICS countries. Currently, the

combined economies of the BRICS – Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa – amount to 18% of global GDP but their share, led primarily by China's economic growth, is expected to rise to fully 1/3 of worldwide GDP by 2030. Using a different econometric measure, the "Purchasing Power Parity" index (which adjusts for the real value of respective currencies), the BRICS' share would increase to over 45% of global economic activity by 2030. The recent talks between Brazil and the Russian Federation about plans to create a BRICS development bank and other moves to weaken the monopoly of the US dollar as the international reserve currency are signs of this changing balance of forces internationally.

This seismic shift in relative economic might has precipitated a number of counter-measures by the U.S. and EU to shore up their flagging position through an accelerated push for regional trade and investment pacts (CETA, and US-EU trade agreement, the Trans-Pacific Partnership [TPP], etc.), and through increased militarization aimed at pressuring and "containing" Russia and the PRC.

...Despite the failure of neo-liberal recipes to re-fire growth, ruling capitalist governments have in the main stubbornly struck to pro-austerity, anti-labour measures (even when mixed with fiscal stimulus), the results of which continue to place an overwhelming burden on the backs of the working class and its allies – indigenous peoples, women, seniors and retirees, youth and students – while protecting corporate wealth and even accelerating the concentration and centralization of capital.

Indeed, this concentration of accumulated wealth on a global scale is reaching dizzying heights. As an Oxfam research paper released earlier this year points out, "the richest 1 percent have seen their share of global wealth increase from 44 percent in 2009 to 48 percent in 2014. Members of this global elite had an average wealth of \$2.7 million per adult in 2014. Of the remaining 52 percent of global wealth, almost all (46 percent) is owned by the rest of the richest fifth of the world's population. The other 80 percent share just 5.5 percent..."

In the face of this widening social disparity – caused in the main by corporate-driven wage cuts and other takebacks, pro-austerity cuts to public and social services by capitalist governments, and by regressive tax policies that shift the burden onto working people – labour and popular resistance continues to grow particularly in Europe where the austerity agenda has been most harshly implemented. Strikes and protests have continued in Greece, Spain, Portugal and many other countries, such as Ireland, where this March, up to 40,000 anti-austerity protesters marched through Dublin against additional charges for water. The Communist parties have played an important and in some cases decisive role in building up the mass anti-austerity movements across Europe, especially the KKE (and PAME) in Greece and the Portuguese CP in Portugal. ●





GLOBAL CLASS STRUGGLE

Iranian teacher jailed

Esmail Abdi, a leader of the Iranian Teachers' Trade Association, was arrested on June 27 following his attempt to obtain a visa to attend the 7th Education International World Congress in Ottawa in late July. After his passport was confiscated at the border, he was ordered to return to Tehran to meet with prosecutors, where he was arrested while more than 70 teachers waited outside in support.

Abdi has now been transferred from solitary confinement to the general ward of Tehran's notorious Evin prison. On July 14, after more than seventeen days in jail, Abdi's wife, three children and mother were able to meet him for an hour and fifteen minutes, reporting that he was in good spirits and his cheerful disposition had not changed. Abdi informed his family that his interrogation is at the final stages.

The detention of the union leader has angered teachers in Iran, sparking an active response to his arrest throughout the country. A global mobilisation continues through the Education International (EI) Urgent Action Appeal. Many official letters have been sent to Iranian authorities asking them to release Abdi and other imprisoned teachers, and to secure Abdi's right to travel to Canada to attend the EI Congress. An EI appeal promoted by the LabourStart website has been signed by over 10,000 individuals. The Canadian EI affiliates, hosts of the World Congress, have also launched a Thunderclap campaign in support of Esmail Abdi.

Five other teacher unionists are languishing in Iranian prisons: Ali Akbar Baghani, Rasoul Bodaghi, Mahmoud Bagheri (all three board members of the Tehran Teachers Trade Association), Alireza Hashemi and Alireza Ghanbari.

Greek cleaners lose jobs again

The recent reinstatement of cleaners at Greece's ministry of finance lasted just twelve days. Two and a half years ago the cleaners were fired when a previous government followed austerity orders from the country's creditors. They were reinstated on July 1 by a decree passed by the Syriza-led government.

But their jobs were eliminated on July 13, as Athens capitulated to creditors' demands for further austerity cuts in exchange for an 86 billion bailout.

"I wish Mr. Tsipras had said no to Brussels," said one worker, sitting outside the ministry in Athens, his hope of being rehired now in tatters. "I hope we can still trust him. He wants to help the workers, the poor people... but the creditors will not let him."

Swept to power in January after five years of punishing austerity, Syriza promised an end to cost-cutting and legislative oversight from the EU, ECB and IMF, and repeal of measures taken by previous governments that slashed public sector jobs and wages.

Those hopes ended on July 13 in Brussels, when Prime Minister Tsipras agreed to the most intrusive austerity program ever demanded by the EU. The package was approved two days later in the Greek parliament, despite fierce opposition from more than half of Syriza's central committee, who signed a letter decrying the deal as a "coup".

More on Greek bailout deal...

So-called "labour market reforms" were a key part of the first two "bailouts" provided to the banks



which intend to squeeze their money out of Greece. Similar "reforms" are part of a third "rescue package" adopted in mid-July.

The initial text released by European leaders is vague, but Greece will keep in place restrictions on workers' bargaining rights that creditors have successfully demanded in the past, including a drop in the minimum wage, and the weakening of sectorwide collective agreements. Further measures to bolster the leverage of employers will include laws that pave the way for companies to issue mass layoffs and rein in the ability of workers to go on strike.

Labour analysts suspect the reforms will resemble proposals Eurozone lenders made before the Syriza government came to power earlier this year on an anti-austerity platform. At that time, creditors pressed Greece to raise the quorum for strike votes and extend the advanced notice workers must give before walking off their jobs from 24 hours to 48 hours. They also want to remove restrictions on lockouts.

Meanwhile, the imposition of capital controls delivered the last blow to Greek public construction projects, leading to many cancellations, since there was no way for the workers to be paid. Over the July 11-12 weekend thousands of workers were laid off or suspended until the political and economic situation clears up.

Approximately 40,000 layoffs were imposed in the construction sector, according to the SATE, an organization that represents medium and large engineering companies. Many of these jobs have been permanently lost, even if the construction sites reopen.

Issues have also arisen in the road transport sector, with many drivers complaining that they are stranded abroad unable to pay the cost of the trip in cash. The main problems arise from gas supplies, the drivers' inability to pay tolls,

ferry tickets and even the inability to pay for their stay in foreign countries. The estimated operating expenses during a run between Greece and Central Europe ranges from 4,000 to 5,000 euros, which cannot be paid in cash.

Aussie unions push Labor on trade deal

A group of Australian unions are demanding that the opposition Labour Party strengthen its position on international trade agreements to protect local jobs.

The Australian Manufacturing Workers' Union, Transport Workers' Union, Electrical Trades Union, Australian Workers' Union, Textile, Clothing and Footwear Union of Australia, Maritime Union of Australia and Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union have accused Labour of "ducking and weaving on trade policy" and called on the party to reject the recently signed free trade agreement with China.

The unions have threatened to force movement on the issue at the ALP's national conference in late July if they don't get the assurances they want.

Korean workers rally

Tens of thousands of unionized workers held rallies throughout South Korea on July 15, seeking higher minimum wages and an end to the government's attempts to restructure the labour market in a management-friendly way.

The Korean Confederation of Trade Unions (KCTU), an umbrella union, said around 50,000 members joined the nationwide protests held in 14 different locations, including Seoul and the southeastern port city of Busan.

The protestors demanded that the government stop its oppression of workers, adding the country's hourly minimum wage should be revised to 10,000 won (US\$8.74). Earlier in July, the minimum wage was raised to 6,030 won (\$5.25) per hour for 2016, up 8.1 percent from the previous 5,580 won.

Protestors also condemned the government's push to adopt the so-called "pay peak" system, under which companies are permitted to freeze or slash wages for employees nearing the retirement age. The KCTU says the government is trying to implement changes that will worsen labour market conditions and hurt the livelihoods of ordinary citizens.

General strike plan in Uruguay

The Uruguayan trade union centre PIT-CNT has announced a 24-hour general strike on August 6, demanding changes to pay guide-lines, respect for collective bargaining and a bigger education budget.

The executive of PIT-CNT approved the one day general strike under the slogan "Struggle Pays".

The labour central rejected guidelines proposed by the government during talks at the Wages Councils dealing with private sector pay. In Uruguay, the traditional method for setting pay rates is to convene a Wages Council, a tripartite agency that sets minimum wages and benefits for the various sectors of the economy.

The government says it will ask the various sectors of the economy to use their annual growth figures to "self-classify" as either "dynamic", "intermediate" or "in difficulties" and set annual pay rises accordingly. It also suggested six-monthly adjustments; an annual increase in the minimum wage, with a target of \$13,430 by 2018 and supplementary productivity payments.

The PIT-CNT is calling for larger increases in the minimum wage and a target figure of \$15,000 by 2018; special treatment for workers earning under \$15,000; annual wage indexation; a real rise in pay levels, in line with the country's economic growth; and a bigger education budget to meet the demand for teachers and administration workers.

PIT-CNT president Fernando Pereira says the only way to stop the one day strike is "a radical change to the guidelines in accordance with our demands, which are restrained and moderate and appropriate for the country's situation."

He also announced a plan of action in the period leading up to the strike, including meetings to explain the issues to workers and build support among the general public.

Iceland nurses quitting

Iceland is considering hiring nurses from overseas to replace nurses who are resigning, some of them moving abroad. Minister of Health Kristjan Por Jilfusson told the media that the government is looking into various options to deal with the country's growing nursing shortage.

Hiring foreign nurses in the Icelandic health care system is nothing new. Many are recruited from the Scandinavian countries, but also from other corners of the globe, such as the Philippines.

Recently, over 300 nurses have tendered their resignations over collective bargaining terms, and many intend to practice their profession abroad instead. Nurses went on strike at the end of May, but were ordered back to work through parliamentary vote weeks later. This prompted some immediate resignations, with many more following.

Cabinet ministers initially wrote these resignations off as "a negotiations tactic". The government then offered new terms to the union leadership, who tentatively accepted the deal. However, 88.4% of voting nurses voted against the deal.

In such an event, according to the law which broke the strike, new collective bargaining terms would be set by a three-person arbitration committee. But the union intends to take the government to court over the strike-breaking legislation. In the meantime, the national hospital is stretched thin in their nursing staff, with no end to the dispute in sight.

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

Join the Communist Party of Canada



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

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

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

B.C. Committee CPC
706 Clark Drive, Vancouver, BC, V5L 3J1
604-254-9836 <cpinfo.bc@gmail.com>

Edmonton CPC
Box 68112, 70 Bonnie Doon PO
Edmonton, AB, T6C 4N6
Tel: 780-934-7893

Calgary CPC
5421 - 8th Ave. SE
Calgary, AB, T2A 4L7 Tel: 403-248-6489

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

Ottawa CPC
Tel: 613-232-7108

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

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

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

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

Cameron admits: Trade Union Bill is anti-strike law

By Luke James, UK Morning Star

British PM David Cameron unintentionally came clean about Tory attempts to ban dissent by working people when he admitted on July 15 that his Conservative government's Trade Union Bill amounted to "anti-strike laws."

Government ministers had insisted the Bill was not an attack on trade union rights, but the Prime Minister revealed its real intention just hours after the proposals were published.

Labour MP Ian Lavery told the Morning Star it was clear the Bill represented "the greatest attack on working people in 30 years."

Cameron made the Freudian slip at Prime Minister's Questions as he came under pressure from acting Labour leader Harriet Harman.

Harman said plans to restrict strikes — that breach international labour law — showed he was "just governing in the interests of the Tory Party."

The red-faced PM responded by going on the attack, claiming her question showed Labour was "going off to the left." And in a flurry of right-wing rhetoric, he blurted out: "What have we heard from them? They oppose every single one of our anti-strike laws."

A 50 per cent turnout threshold will be imposed on all strike ballots if the Trade Union Bill, which will receive its first reading in late July, is passed.

Despite the Tories' refusal to consider secure online ballots to boost turnout, workers in "essential



public services" face even greater restrictions. Strikes in health, education, fire, transport, border security and energy will be banned unless 40 per cent of all union members eligible to vote approve action.

Even when unions overcome those barriers, bosses will be able to break strikes by bussing in agency workers. Workers could also face criminal charges simply for standing on a picket line with more than six people.

Asked by the Star whether Cameron's outburst confirmed the proposals amounted to "anti-strike laws," a spokesperson for the PM said: "No. It doesn't... the right to strike remains" — despite the PM's comments completely contradicting the government's official line.

Skills Minister Nick Boles attempted to play down the Bill's effect when quizzed on Radio 4's Today programme. Asked whether

it was an attack on the right to strike, he said: "No, not at all. The right to strike is absolutely something we must maintain."

He attempted to reassure listeners that "all we're trying to do is strike a fair balance between the interests of unions and the public."

Lavery, chair of Labour's trade union group of MPs, described the Bill as a "catalogue of limitations to trade union freedoms and civil liberties."

He said: "What we have seen today proves more than ever that the Tories have their sights set firmly on Britain's six million trade unionists. Instead of fighting to better the lives of working people — who have been hit by the Tories' own policies — they have chosen to undermine their rights at work. Put simply, this Bill is the latest in a long line of restrictive measures designed to crack down on our democratic rights and should be opposed at every turn." ●

Cuban economy ends slowdown trend

From Cuban News Agency (acn)

Cuban Economy minister Marino Murillo confirmed on July 16 that the country's Gross Domestic Product grew 4.7 percent in the first half of 2015. Addressing the 5th Session of the Cuban Parliament, attended by President Raul Castro, Murillo said that the financial balance shows "appropriate performance", ending an economic slowdown trend prevailing over recent years.

All economic activities show an increase, with higher figures in agriculture, ranching, the sugar industry, manufacturing, construction, trade and others, which sparks positive prospects for economic development. Social services like education and health maintained expected levels according to the year's plans, the minister said.

Import costs for foodstuffs dropped by \$1.62 million, due to price declines on the world market. But the failure to meet local rice production schedules led to dedicating a large part of that money to purchase rice in order to meet domestic demand, the minister noted. This failure to meet production programs was also observed in areas like milk, wheat, and sugar. The latter area increased production but fell short of targets, leaving Cuba unable to export some 79 thousand tons.

The country's commercial balance shows positive performance so far in 2015, despite external financial events, such as falling prices for Cuban export products and the devaluation of the main currencies with which the country operates abroad. This has led to negative results in sectors like nickel, oil, the metal industry and tourism. An increasing number of tourists are arriving, but with an income that does not translate into large growth.

There was instability in the availability of several food products at the hard-currency shopping network, due to the failure to meet local production plans and imports for that specific market, including staples like frozen chicken, cheese, sausages and mince. With this in mind, the country will allocate 40 million dollars to purchase such products, the minister said. He insisted on the need to plan all activities with enough time to guarantee the appropriate performance of the country's economy. ●

Colombian army killed civilians to boost body count

By Dan Kovalik, People's World

The US-backed Colombian government has presided over what now appears to be one of the worst cases ever of mass atrocities perpetrated against innocent civilian populations. According to new reports as many as 6,000 civilians may have been killed under the orders of generals and colonels seeking to boost their reputations as rebel-killers.

Human Rights Watch (HRW) just issued a report citing "extensive previously unpublished evidence [which] implicates many Colombian army generals and colonels in widespread and systematic extrajudicial killings of civilians between 2002 and 2008 ..."

HRW notes that Colombian "prosecutors are investigating at least 3,000 of these cases, in which army troops, under pressure to boost body counts in their war against armed guerrilla groups, killed civilians, and reported them as combat fatalities." There are reports by other groups, such as the Fellowship of Reconciliation (FOR), which put the number of victims of this slaughter at closer to 6,000.

Jose Miguel Vivanco, executive Americas director of HRW, described these killings, known as the "false positive" killings, as "one of the worst episodes of mass atrocity in the Western Hemisphere in recent years."

There is mounting evidence that many senior army officers bear responsibility. Yet the army

officials in charge at the time of the killings have escaped justice and even ascended to the top of the military command, including the current heads of the army and armed forces, according to Vivanco.

While HRW rightly calls upon the US to suspend military aid to the Colombian military in light of these crimes and the impunity for them, what HRW fails to mention is how the US has had a direct hand in the commission of these crimes. Thus, a damning report released by FOR demonstrates how there is a direct correlation between US military funding and training, particularly at the School of the Americas (aka WHINSEC), and the incidence of human rights abuses, including "false positive" killings.

To wit, the report concluded that "of the 25 Colombian WHINSEC instructors and graduates for which any subsequent information was available, 12 had either been charged with a serious crime or commanded units whose members had reportedly committed multiple extrajudicial killings."

Moreover, FOR reports that "some of the officers with the largest number of civilian killings committed under their command (Generals Lasprilla Villamizar, Rodriguez Clavijo, and Montoya, and Colonel Mejia) received significantly more US training, on average, than other officers" during the high water mark of the "false positive" scandal.

For its part, HRW notes that at

least 44 alleged extrajudicial killings were carried out by the Fourth Brigade under the leadership of General Montoya (who then later became the army's top commander), while at least 48 alleged false positive killings were carried out by the Ninth Brigade under the leadership of General Lasprilla Villamizar.

However, the most salient aspect of the "false positive" scandal for Americans — and the one which HRW as well as the press ignore — is that the Colombian military has been encouraging the high body count, and therefore murdering civilians to acquire it, in order to justify continued military aid from the United States which, since 2000, has given that military over \$9 billion and counting to wage its counter-insurgency war.

In other words, it is the United

States which is truly behind the "body count syndrome" at the heart of the "false positive scandal." And, it cannot be said that the US has somehow been encouraging body counts unwittingly, for it has been very aware of this phenomenon for many years.

As an illuminating account by Michael Evans at the National Security Archive explains, recently de-classified US documents show that "the CIA and senior US diplomats were aware as early as 1994 that US-backed Colombian security forces engaged in 'death squad tactics,' cooperated with drug-running paramilitary groups, and encouraged a 'body count syndrome ...'"

Yet, despite long-standing knowledge of such crimes, the US not only continued, but indeed massively increased its military aid to Colombia under the 2000

program known as Plan Colombia — the Colombians refer to that program as "Plan Washington," for it was in the US government where it truly originated.

As Michael Evans explains, the US has been quite aware of Colombia's policy of creating "false positives" for decades:

"The earliest record in the Archive's collection referring specifically to the phenomenon dates back to 1990. That document, a cable approved by US Ambassador Thomas McNamara, reported a disturbing increase in abuses attributed to the Colombian Army. In one case, McNamara disputed the military's claim that it had killed nine guerrillas in El Ramal, Santander, on June 7 of that year.

"The investigation by Instruccion Criminal and the Procuraduria strongly suggests ... that the nine were executed by the Army and then dressed in military fatigues. A military judge who arrived on the scene apparently realised that there were no bullet holes in the military uniforms to match the wounds in the victims' bodies..."

Similar tendencies were highlighted four years later in a cable cleared by US Ambassador Myles Frechette. He found that "body count mentalities" persisted among Colombian Army officers seeking promotions. The Embassy's Defence Attaché Office (DAO) had reported that, "Field



Colombian police officers and soldiers stand by the bodies of alleged "rebels killed in combat."

"The Greek people have our whole-hearted solidarity"

Statement of the Central Executive Committee, Communist Party of Canada, July 21, 2015

The 3rd Memorandum debt refinancing pact signed between the Troika (European Commission, the IMF and the European Central Bank) and the Syriza-led government in Greece will have disastrous effects on the Greek working class and working people. It constitutes a monumental betrayal by the Syriza (social democratic) party of its previous promises to stand up to the European bankers and to end and reverse austerity imposed by previous bourgeois governments. The various attempts by Syriza (or its supporters abroad) to justify or excuse this sell-out agreement—or to deflect responsibility away from the Tsipras government in Athens—fail to alter that basic reality.

As the Communist Party of Greece (KKE) correctly noted in its recent statement, the government's essence is burdening the people with a new loan worth 86 billion and savage measures that accompany it, such as the further reduction of the people's income, the new heavy taxes, the maintenance of the new property tax, the significant increase of VAT on items of mass popular consumption, the reduction of pensions, the implementation of a new and worse social-security regime, the gradual abolition of supplementary assistance for poor pensioners, and the wholesale privatization of public assets.

The current crisis is rooted in Greece's membership in the EU, and especially its entry into the Eurozone. Governmental debt was high even before its entry, but after 2002 the European and Wall St. bankers flooded Greece with 'easy money' and extremely generous debt-refinancing arrangements. That, combined with tax evasion by Greek corporations and the super-wealthy, resulted in a huge and unsustainable 'debt bubble' (now estimated at almost \$400 Billion US). When the global economic crisis hit in 2008, Greece couldn't meet interest payments to foreign bankers without massive new 'bridging' loans—this time with onerous conditions requiring vicious austerity measures imposed on the people. Wages and pensions were cut, public sector workers laid off, and social services slashed, resulting in mass unemployment, poverty and misery on an unprecedented scale.

Although not quite as acute, a number of other European states face similar fiscal debt crises—Spain, Portugal, Italy, Ireland, France, and some of the Eastern European states swept up into the EU vortex. Everywhere, vicious austerity measures—imposed by the Troika and private bankers—have exacted a heavy toll on working people who have been made to pay for the capitalist crisis.

All of this stems from the class nature of the European Union itself, which is dominated by the European Capital—the giant monopolies and banks—and which serves its interests. The illusions of social democrats and other "left-wing" reformists that it was

possible to transform this imperialist centre into a progressive, democratic and 'social' Europe have been dashed on the rocks of this capitalist reality.

It is appropriate to recall Lenin's sage observation in his famous article penned one hundred years ago, "On the Slogan for a United States of Europe" (1915) that: "From the standpoint of the economic conditions of imperialism—i.e., the export of capital and the division of the world by the 'advanced' and 'civilised' colonial powers—a United States



of Europe, under capitalism, is either impossible or reactionary."

Illusions sometimes die hard, however. After years of suffering through austerity-imposed measures, the Greek people had hoped that with the election of Syriza, austerity would end and the crisis would ease. This was not a naive, erroneous judgment of the masses—it was what Syriza itself promised if elected.

But that early enthusiasm quickly dissipated when immediately following the election, Syriza struck a deal with the Party of Independent Greeks (ANEL), as its junior partner in a ruling coalition. ANEL includes extreme right-wingers, with some members having made explicitly anti-Semitic statements and expressed the wish for immigrants in Greece to "go back to their own countries". Then the new Syriza government sent its finance minister off to Brussels to renegotiate the terms of Greece's debt enslavement to the European bankers; then it reneged on its promise to rehire sacked government workers; then it offered NATO a new naval base on its soil; etc.

In mid-June—more than a month before this fateful agreement was approved—our Party predicted that Syriza's "structural and programmatic limitations, aimed at seeking accommodation and an 'historic compromise' with EU Capital will invariably lead to defeat, absorption and betrayal of their radical-sounding promises. In our view, genuine working class advance must be based on a complete 'rupture' with the logic of capitalist state rule, and a determined revolutionary struggle to supplant its power with working class power, with socialism."

When the crunch came, and the Troika refused to moderate its demands for conditionalities on a new set of bail-out loans, Syriza called a referendum to gather mass support behind its bargaining position. The 61% "No" vote was a significant popular rejection of austerity policies and the heavy-handed rule of the Troika. The government however was dishonest about the nature and purpose of the referendum. The "No" was in fact a "Yes" to

Syriza's counter offer, which was essentially the same as the EU offer. Only the KKE exposed this truth during the campaign.

By declaring in advance its fidelity to the EU system and to the Euro—and as well to the aggressive NATO alliance—the Syriza government had no negotiating position or alternative, and was destined to fail and be forced to accept the EU-imposed conditions.

By falsely raising the expectations of the Greek people to end austerity, and then to sign and approve the Memorandum, including further pension and social cuts, higher taxes, and forced privatizations, can only be characterized as an abject surrender to the dictates of EU capital, and as a betrayal of the people's trust and their class interests. There is no question that Germany and other like-minded 'hard-liners' prevailed in imposing this savage agreement, but Syriza must also be held accountable for this monumental debacle. For this reason, reference to a 'coup' by the Troika is dead-wrong, and is intended to absolve the treachery of the Syriza government, and to place all of the blame on Brussels.

The new situation is one of crisis—a social-economic crisis as the recession and the people's hardships will intensify, and a political crisis within Syriza itself is it shed 'critics' of the agreement within its own ranks, and prepares to find new, willing 'partners' among the bourgeois parties in order to cling to power.

It is clear that this drama has played out exactly as the Greek Communists predicted; that the maturation of the crisis in Greece, while obviously greater and deeper than elsewhere in the EU, is by no means unique, and that a "rupture" with the EU, and a cancellation of the entire debt, along with winning mass working class support for a fundamental, revolutionary alternative, now seems to be the only viable alternative to avoid complete collapse and the further resurgence of fascism.

In the meantime, the Greek workers, farmers and 'middle strata' (small business, professionals, etc.)—in other words the vast majority of the Greek people who are now burdened with even harsher austerity—have no choice but to unite and fight against the Memorandum and the economic and political forces responsible for thrusting it upon them. In this continuing fight, they deserve our wholehearted solidarity. ●



MUSIC NOTES

By Wally Brooker

Singer removes Confederate flag in SC

While South Carolina lawmakers talked about taking down the Confederate flag from the state capital in the wake of the racist murder of nine African Americans in a Charleston church on June 17, 30-year-old black singer and filmmaker Bree Newsome, spotted by white social justice activist James Tyson, shimmied up the 30-foot flagpole and unhooked the hated symbol of slavery. Newsome's response to security guards who ordered her to get down was one for the history books. "You come against me with hatred, oppression, and violence. I come against you in the name of God. This flag comes down today". Just as Rosa Parks' act wasn't that of a tired commuter, but a carefully wrought plan, so Bree Newsome's feat was the culmination of planning, in this case by an interracial group of young activists. Both she and Tyson come out of the Moral Mondays voting rights movement that began in North Carolina in 2013. The two could face three years in prison, but it seems likely that charges will be dropped. The South Carolina legislature, shamed by their bold action, voted on July 10 to permanently remove the flag. For a free download of Newsome's song *Stay Strong: A Love Song to Freedom Fighters*, visit <http://www.breenewsome.com>.

Lisitsa's historic Donetsk concert

Ukrainian-born American pianist Valentina Lisitsa gave an outdoor concert on June 22 in the besieged city of Donetsk. The concert was dedicated to the 74th anniversary of the start of the Great Patriotic War. Two months ago, Lisitsa made international headlines when concerts she was to perform with the Toronto Symphony Orchestra were abruptly cancelled by the orchestra management because it did not like her outspoken opposition to the Kiev regime's war in eastern Ukraine. Lisitsa and the Academic Symphony Orchestra performed works by Shostakovich, Rachmaninoff and Prokofiev. After the concert she had this to say to the people of Donetsk: "It is a great honour to be here with you on this day to enjoy this beautiful music together. Music is our spiritual legacy, just like our language, our faith. This is what is worth fighting for. It is our history, which no one can take away and rewrite. Seventy years has passed since we defeated fascism the first time, and now our role is to defend Europe, to defend the entire world from this brown plague, which is raising its head once again. And you are on the front-line, defending the entire world, the entire humanity. I am grateful to tears to be with you on this day. Thank you!"

Gotta go down and join the union

Every month this column carries news about musicians who stand up for social justice. Here are a couple of recent stories about their union. In Seattle, AFM Local 76-493 got their city council to declare May 20th "Fair Trade Music Day". This victory follows on a campaign that has resulted so far in 21 performance spaces pledging to respect their 'Fair Trade Music Principles', which include musicians' right to negotiate fair wages and enforceable contracts in bars, restaurants, and other small venues. Elsewhere in May, the AFM/CFM won an appeal in the BC courts to nullify an agreement that the concession-minded executive of CFM Local 145 had made with the Vancouver Film Orchestra to introduce a tiered wage structure. The appeal court's decision affirmed the right of the parent union to protect fair wage standards and working conditions. If you're a professional musician, or even semi-pro, you should join the union. Visit www.cfmusicians.org.

B.B. King: 1925-2015

Blues great B.B. King died on May 14th. He is son of Mississippi sharecroppers was the most successful blues artist of his time and a unique guitar stylist who inspired several generations of blues, rock, and jazz musicians. A moving tribute was published in Counterpunch on June 26 by Jeffrey St. Clair. He describes B.B. King's lifelong commitment to the inmates of America's vast prison industrial complex, citing in particular the 1971 album 'Live in Cook County Jail', which captures B.B. and his band playing for a thousand inmates at one of Chicago's most notorious facilities. Earlier that day, writes St. Clair, King had spoken with inmates, about 80 percent of whom were black. "They told me how they came to be locked up," King said. "They would stay for seven or eight months before the trial took place because they couldn't afford the bail. And then when they did go to trial, if they were guilty, the time was not deducted from the time they were given. And if they were innocent, they got no compensation." Plus ça change, one might say, but actually things have got much worse. In 1971 the U.S. prison population was 450,000. Today it's 2.3 million. Read St. Clair's tribute at www.counterpunch.com.

IMF and World Bank face new challengers

By Baldev Padam

On July 8-10, Russian President Vladimir Putin hosted the BRICS and SCO Summits under one roof at Ufa. Economists and social scientists watch such developments closely, because the economies of China, India, Brazil and Russia are likely to shape the world's new economic and political order as US influence is on the decline.

BRICS (an acronym of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa), is an organization of fast-developing economies spread over Europe, Asia, Africa and South America. These five countries represent approximately 40% of the global population. Their combined nominal GDP is approximately 20% of the gross world product, and they have an estimated US\$4 trillion in combined foreign reserves. BRICS has created its own "New Development Bank" to render financial help to underdeveloped nations for their economic growth, without subjecting them to harsh loan conditions.

The SCO (Shanghai Cooperation Organization) is a Eurasian political, economic and military organization which was founded in Shanghai by China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan. India and Pakistan have attended SCO meetings as observers, and next year they become full fledged members.

Initiated two years ago by Beijing, the AIIB (Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank) now has support of more than 50 countries from Europe, Oceania, Africa and South America. The \$100 billion AIIB was conceived to support infrastructure development in lower- and middle-income Asian countries. Its influence is growing fast, and developed countries like Australia and Canada stand in queue to join AIIB.

The existing international money lenders - IMF, the World Bank and Asian Development

Bank (ADB) - are dominated by the US and Japan, and consider these new regional and global financial setups as rivals. These have emerged because IMF and the WB sanctioned loans which subject debtors to harsh and sometimes even humiliating conditions.

The IMF and the World Bank were created in 1944 to help reconstruction of infrastructure damaged during WW2 in Europe. Their other stated objects were to foster monetary cooperation among nations for sustained economic growth, and for reduction of global poverty. The World Bank gave loans to developing countries for their capital programs as well.

But the World Bank and the IMF worked under US direction, and their loans came with conditions that interfered not only in the economy but also in internal political affairs of recipient countries. The earliest example was France, which approached the World Bank for post-war reconstruction loans. But the US State Department told the French coalition government to first get rid of its Communist cabinet ministers. Within hours, the loan to France was approved.

The latest victim is Greece, where the IMF and others, in the name of austerity measures, ordered governments to freeze wages, reduce pensions, increase taxes and implement privatization in return for loans. These restrictions proved counter-productive, giving rise to poverty rather than improving the economy. In late June the banks were closed in Greece.

When the Syriza-led government of Alexis Tsipras approached the IMF for a new bailout package, even more humiliating terms were presented. Under the 86-billion euro bailout terms, in addition to earlier austerity measures, Greece will now be required to sell state assets to private entrepreneurs. An agency "under the supervision of

the relevant European institutions" will handle government asset sell-offs. But what else could be expected from Shylock?

As mentioned above, Russia recently hosted BRICS and SCO Summits, allowing world leaders to hold informal discussions on sensitive matters outside the official agenda. In this connection, it is pertinent to note that China, India and Pakistan, three participants in the Ufa Summit, are nuclear-powered neighbours, who, at one time or another in the past, had engaged in wars over territorial disputes that remain unresolved. These leaders have now put their heads together in an effort to strengthen peace in South Asia.

Having said that, let it be understood that the USA continues to be the top military and economic power, even when its dominance in world affairs has declined. As well as BRICS and AIIB, new economic centres and regional organizations have emerged, like the African Union (AU), European Union (EU), the Organization of American State (OAS), the Arab League (AL), Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC). The shape of the new world order will be interesting to look at.

Dealing with this issue, Prof. Amitav Acharya of CRP (Center for Rising Powers) in his recently published book, "The End of American World Order", says that the US is not out of the international games. It will, however, be just one of the anchors along with emerging and old powers shaping a new world order which is "not unipolar or multipolar, but more like a multiplex theater offering a choice of plots (ideas), directors (power), and action (leadership) under one roof". Acharya hopes that the US, emerging powers and regional actors would promote stability in this de-centered but inter-dependent, multiplex world. ●

What's Left

Vancouver, BC

Moncada Day Celebration, Sunday, July 26, 2 pm, 2128 Grant St., speakers & music, food (\$15) & BYOB, sponsored by Canadian-Cuban Friendship Association, ph. 604-940-0420 for info.

Peter and Margaret's 130th Birthday! Swim, sun and hang out to celebrate the birthdays of PV builder Peter Marcus and Margaret Sutherland, noon until dark, Sunday, Aug. 2, at the picnic area near the south end of Trout Lake Park. Pot luck sandwiches and salads, call 604-873-2924 for info.

Latin Summer Fest 2015, Vancouver's original Latin outdoor celebration, Sunday, August 16, 12 noon to evening, Trout Lake Park (Victoria @ 15th). For details, visit latinsummerfest.com.

Surrey, BC

People's Voice Walk-A-Thon, Sunday, August 9, Bear Creek Park (picnic area at 140 St. & 88 Ave.). Walk through the park at 11 am, followed by delicious international lunch and cultural program. Organized by Lower Fraser Club CPC, for info, call Harjit, 604-543-7179.

Rally against militarization of Canadian foreign policy, Sat., Sept. 5, 4 pm, Holland Park (across from King George skytrain), organized by Fraser Valley Peace Council, ph. 604-940-0420 for details.

Toronto, ON

20th Annual Toronto-Cuba Friendship Day, celebrating 70 years of Canada-Cuba diplomatic relations, Sat., Aug. 29, 7 pm, Steelworkers Hall, 25 Cecil St. (east of Spadina, north of College St.). Please note time and location change due to City Hall unavailable after Pan Am Games.) Free admission, featuring live band: Pablo Terry & Sol de Cuba, plus salsa lessons, display tables, cash bar, Cuban food. Sponsored by the Canadian-Cuban Friendship Association Toronto, www.ccfatoronto.ca.

Niagara, ON

Celebrate 70 years of Canada-Cuba diplomatic relations, with the Canadian-Cuban Friendship Association (CCFA) of Niagara, 1:30-6 pm, Sunday, August 2, 1760 Ridge Road in Ridgeway (Fort Erie). Meet Toronto Consul-General, Javier Domokos Ruiz and his staff, Cuban food and music, \$10 admission.

People's Voice deadlines

September 1-15 issue: Thursday, August 20
September 16-30 issue: Thursday, Sept. 10

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

Annual People's Voice Walk-A-Thon

**Bear Creek Park, Surrey, BC
Sunday, August 9**

Meet at the picnic area near the 140 St. parking lot, just south of 88 Ave.



11 am - Walk around beautiful Bear Creek Park
12 noon - Enjoy an international potluck lunch
1 pm - Relax and watch our speakers and performers

Vancouver backs Living Wage

A motion introduced by Mayor Robertson to make the City of Vancouver a Living Wage Employer was debated July 8 at the Standing Committee on City Finance and Services, and passed unanimously. This means that direct employees and employees of companies that have city contracts will have to be paid a minimum of \$20.68 when this new policy is enacted. City staff are developing the plan to implement this new rule.

Before the motion was debated, about 125 union members and other Living Wage campaigners rallied outside Vancouver City Hall. ●

Colombian army killings...

continued from page 1

officers who cannot show track records of aggressive anti-guerrilla activity (wherein the majority of the military's human rights abuses occur) disadvantage themselves at promotion time..."

A CIA intelligence report, also from 1994, went even further, finding that the Colombian security forces continued to "employ death squad tactics in their counter-insurgency campaign".

Just over ten years ago, another US intelligence report, previously published by the National Security Archive, and based on a conversation with a Colombian Army colonel, suggested that the steep rise in paramilitarism during that era was related to a "body count syndrome" in the Colombian Army.

"This mindset tends to fuel human rights abuses by well-meaning soldiers trying to get their quota to impress superiors. It could also lead to a cavalier, or at least passive, approach

when it comes to allowing the paramilitaries to serve as proxies for the COLAR [Colombian Army] in contributing to the guerrilla body count." The 4th Brigade, a traditional launching point for officers seeking to move up the military chain-of-command, has long been accused of collusion with local paramilitary groups. The Los Angeles Times reported in 2007 on a classified CIA report linking General Montoya to joint military-paramilitary operations in Medellín while he served as brigade commander in 2002.

"In no case were the 4th Brigade's paramilitary ties more evident than in a February 2000 false positives operation in which both the ACCU paramilitaries and the Colombian Army almost simultaneously claimed credit for having killed two long-demobilised guerrillas near Medellín. A declassified US Embassy cable on the matter, signed by Ambassador Curtis Kamman, reported the case with shocked disbelief.

"The ACCU (which witnesses say kidnapped the two) claims its forces executed them, while the Army's Fourth Brigade (which

released the bodies the next day) presented the dead as ELN guerrillas killed in combat with the Army. After these competing claims sparked localised fear and confusion, armed men stole the cadavers from the morgue..."

"Kamman called the killings 'a clear case of Army-paramilitary complicity' that would 'further increase the already high-level of international NGO interest in the issue of 4th Brigade ties to paramilitaries'."

Of course, the "false positive" scandal is but the tip of the iceberg of Colombia's human rights nightmare. Thus, as a result of the Colombian military-paramilitary assault on the population, Colombia now has around six million internally displaced peoples, and has suffered well over 50,000 (and quite possibly 250,000) forced disappearances.

Indeed, the situation confronting Colombia can only be described as catastrophic, and this catastrophe would have been impossible without the massive military funding of the US which continues to this day. ●

Portuguese election campaign about to begin

By Adrien Welsh, Paris

“Eles comem tudo e não deixam nada/ They eat everything and leave nothing” says the song by Zeca Afonso.

The singer-songwriter also wrote “Grândola Vila Morena”, which became an anthem during the Portuguese April Revolution. These words are probably the best description of the situation the people of Portugal are currently living in. The title of this song is “Os Vampiros/The Vampires”, referring at the time it was written to the capitalists who kept Portugal under the rule of a fascist dictatorship until 1974.

Although the country was able to overthrow the Estado Novo regime and adopt one of the most progressive constitutions in Europe (thanks largely to the Communists), Portugal, along with Greece, is one of the European countries most affected by austerity programs imposed by the Troika. The European Union, the European Central Bank and the International Monetary Fund are the new vampires who “eat everything but don’t leave anything” for the people.

More than 128,000 people from Portugal chose to leave their country in 2013, and their number keeps increasing year after year. More than 1.5 million Portuguese have decided to live in France. That is about 15% of the total population currently living inside Portugal.

This is why, on May 30, Jerónimo de Sousa, General Secretary of the Portuguese Communist Party (PCP), came to Puteaux near Paris to present his Party’s electoral program to the Portuguese community in France. This was in preparation for the upcoming legislative and presidential elections of Portugal which will take place in September and October.

The goal of this meeting was to take into account the difficult reality of Portuguese migrants and integrate this in the program of the PCP, which was presented publicly on May 26.

Among the main themes discussed by the 23 associations who

attended the meeting, was the theme of the lack of recognition of Portuguese immigrants by French and Portuguese governments. De Sousa identified this situation as a consequence of the successive cuts in public services and due to the “state shedding its responsibility”. This is connected to the cuts in public funding carried out throughout the last 38 years of right-wing government rule.

In the last four years, about 400,000 jobs have been lost, which has meant the unemployment rate has risen to 14% in the country. As a consequence, official data states that there are more than 2.5 million people living in poverty. To add to this there are millions more affected by the cuts in wages, retirement pensions, social services, and so on. Just like everywhere else, among the most affected are the youth.

This situation is not a “divine punishment” according to the Communist leader. Nor is it because the Portuguese people lived above their means, which supposedly increased the national debt and justified these cuts. On the contrary, it is a result of the concrete and concerted policies of successive governments, who have become more and more aggressive since signing the “aggression pact”

The PCP launched its electoral campaign earlier in June by organizing a massive national rally, the “People’s Force” in which more than 100,000 people marched in Lisbon.

presented by the Troika four years ago.

However important the role of the Troika is in this process, Jerónimo de Sousa insisted on emphasizing the role of the Portuguese government in implementing austerity. This is the opposite of where various opportunist political formations place the emphasis. The PCP’s viewpoint seems to have been proven correct since the memorandum policies are still being applied even though the memorandum came to an end around one year ago.

Concerning the objective of



Portuguese Communist leader Jerónimo de Sousa

these austerity measures, the ruling class’s hypocrisy was outlined. Austerity’s imposition on the Portuguese people was supposedly to impede the country’s bankruptcy. The aggression pact worsened the situation: the debt is much higher than before and the country is more dependent on foreign countries than ever. Since 2008, 160 billion Euros have been allocated for interest payments on the debt alone. The numerous bailout plans for financial institutions, such as banks, have to be added to this sum.

De Sousa also took the opportunity to talk about the election program of the PCP and Democratic Unity Coalition (CDU - an electoral coalition of PCP and the Ecologist Party, PEV). These elections will have an important impact on the political developments of the country. Portugal is now confronted with a dilemma: either “continue with this policy that leads to disaster” or search for another alternative.

For the PCP, there is no doubt that the only way out of this situation passes through a break with these rightist policies implemented at the service of the European Union and the big monopolies. Communists put forward strong opposition and a real alternative, a patriotic and left program at the service of the working class and the people, which will carry forward the values of the April Revolution.

This policy puts forward the renegotiation of the debt, a defense of public services, a program of higher wages and pensions, and a defense of the constitutional rights in a context where Portugal’s constitution is being violated by

government. One of the important points to defend in the constitution is the right to free, universal and quality education for all Portuguese youth, even those living outside the country. Another highlight of the CDU’s policy is public investment in productive sectors of industry instead of

right-wing forces (PSD, CDS, PP) agree on majority of the important points in their programs, and since they are equally responsible for the current desperate situation, there is no possibility of any type of alliance in government.

This meeting was also an occasion to prove that the people of Portugal can win a better future. However, without a fundamental break with the policies in the interest of the monopolies; without fundamental opposition to the political actors responsible for this disastrous situation, the working class and the people in general cannot aspire for better conditions. This policy of rupture is only defended by PCP and the CDU.

Whatever the balloting results end up being, the fight for progress, social justice and for the



continued dilapidation of industry in the hands of the big trusts. To reach this objective, the Communists insist on the importance of nationalizing the banking sector and imposing a tax on financial transactions.

Portugal has many assets that could sustain a healthy economy, but many were destroyed by austerity governments. Portugal’s shipbuilding industry is a prime example.

In the current parliament, the PCP has 14 members of the assembly and the PEV has two, bringing the CDU’s total assembly members to 16. Concerning the possibility of joining a governing coalition after the next election, the position of the Party is clear. It isn’t based on a principle of refusal to join a governing coalition necessarily. The question can only be answered by analyzing which interests will be served by joining such a coalition. The PCP is ready to take part in a government only if it will fulfill the interests and needs of working people. But for now, as long as the Socialists and the other

advancement of democratic rights will continue in the streets. “The PCP is a party with a long history of unity [...] which doesn’t work towards its own interests, but works in the interest of the people with whom it fights permanently, and not only when it is time to ask for votes.”

As De Sousa concluded, “when we fight, we don’t always win, but if we don’t fight, we surely lose.”

The PCP launched its electoral campaign earlier in June by organizing a massive national rally, the “People’s Force” in which more than 100,000 people marched in Lisbon. This sends an important message: that the Communists are eager to keep fighting along with the people, but it also shows that far from being an out-dated ideology, communism is linked inseparably with the people’s concerns: “We are not above the people. We are men and women with concrete beliefs and values. [...] We serve the most noble cause: the one of the liberation of the people and the workers.” ●

(Adrien Welsh is the chair of the YCL-LJC Canada’s International Commission and is currently living in Paris, France. This article appeared first at rebelyouth-magazine.blogspot.com)

NEWS FOR PEOPLE, NOT FOR PROFITS!

Every issue of PEOPLE’S VOICE gives you the latest on the fightback from coast to coast. Whether it’s the struggle to defeat the HarperTories, resistance to social cuts, solidarity with Cuba or workers’ struggles around the world, we’ve got the news the corporate media won’t print.

And we do more than that—we report and analyze events from a revolutionary perspective, helping to build the movements for justice and equality, and eventually for a socialist Canada. Read the paper that fights for working people—on every page—in every issue!

people’s
VOICE

- \$30 for 1 year \$50 for 2 years
 Low income special rate: \$15 for 1 year
 Outside Canada: \$45 US or \$50 Cnd for 1 year

Name _____

Address _____

Postal Code _____

Send to: People’s Voice,
706 Clark Drive, Vancouver, BC, V5L 3J1

402-15/13

REDS ON THE WEB

www.comunist-party.ca

www.peoplesvoice.ca

www.ycl-ljc.ca

rebelyouth-magazine.blogspot.com

<http://solidnet.org>