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people's VOICE

BC's child poverty scandal

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**Say no to
war, racism
and terror:
Welcome
Syrian
refugees!**

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Marching to save the planet

People around the world protested for action on global warming on Nov. 29, the eve of the 2015 U.N. Climate Change Conference (COP 21) in Paris. Despite cancellation of the day's flagship Paris event, the Global Climate March still broke records as the largest climate mobilisation in history. More than 2,300 events were held worldwide, beginning with a demonstration of an estimated 45,000 people in Sydney, Australia...

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5 Corporate enslavement

The 6,147 pages of the Trans Pacific Partnership have finally been released. Behind the jargon, legalese, technical terms and fine print, the true meaning of the TPP is plain to see: corporate enslavement.

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Big jolt for Modi

For the second time since the BJP swept to power last year in India, voters have dealt PM Modi a big shock, this time in Bihar state.

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Imperiaist immorality

Why are terrorist attacks in Beirut, Islamabad, Ankara, Baghdad and Abuja so soon forgotten? And why does the "civilized world" ignore the millions who die of hunger each year?

OFL leadership shifts right

By Liz Rowley, Toronto

Delegates at the Ontario Federation of Labour Convention voted unanimously on Nov. 27 to adopt an Action Plan advocated and motivated by President Sid Ryan, chairing his last convention. Ryan was pushed out by a coalition of the "freight-payers" (unions which pay the largest per capita and are the biggest funders of the OFL), whose right-wing leaders have campaigned for his ouster since his 2009 election on a platform of mass independent labour political action against austerity. Ryan's crime? He delivered, making the OFL and its social and community allies in the Common Front a force to be reckoned with by reactionary governments and employers alike.

New OFL President Chris Buckley, along with running mate Patty Coates (Secretary-Treasurer) were acclaimed. The third member of their "FedForward" slate, Ahmad Gaied, won the Executive Vice-President position in a three way race that included Mark Brown from CUPW. Brown received a quarter of the votes on a day when the convention was almost twice its normal size, salted with one-day delegates bussed in by the FedForward "freight-payers". Minus the one-day delegates, his vote was viewed as a reliable measure of opposition to the new leadership's rightward shift, and to the disinformation and slander campaign that preceded the convention.

Sadly for delegates, they had no choice in the matter. The incoming leadership was settled in October when Ryan was effectively forced out after Unifor President Jerry Dias announced his union was backing Chris Buckley, a Unifor National Rep and former President of CAW 222 (GM Oshawa). Nancy Hutchison and Irwin Nanda were also told that they would face challenges and were encouraged to not run again.

Unifor's defection was critical, as Ryan's leadership had been supported by the CAW and CUPE - the two largest unions in Canada - as well as Labour Councils, the equity caucuses, and the left in the affiliates throughout his three terms. It was Ryan who brought the CAW back into the OFL after their long absence and return to the CLC. Why did Unifor walk away from Ryan?

In the 2011 and 2013 conventions, Ryan had been sharply attacked by the leadership of ETFO, Steel, UFCW, and other critics of his stand on issues like BDS and solidarity with the Palestinian struggle, his criticisms of the NDP and Liberals (both of which had the support of some unions), his determination to bring labour into the streets to fight austerity, and to link labour with



OFL delegates in the streets of Toronto. (Photo by Ed Bil)

the people's movements through the Ontario Common Front (a coalition of more than 90 people's organizations with branches centred on Labour Council) which was created on his watch.

At the 2013 convention, delegates rejected right-wing attacks that focused on accusations of mismanagement of the OFL's finances and harassment, and instead supported the mass mobilizations and progressive direction charted under Ryan's leadership. The OFL's rejuvenation as a force in Ontario stood in sharp contrast to the previous leadership's inaction (beyond unwavering support for the NDP). For 12 years, the OFL had been a sleeping giant. On Ryan's watch, it had awakened and was in motion.

Financial constraints were a real factor, and the OFL did lay off staff as a result. But the main cause was not spending, but slashed income - the direct result of a dues strike by OPSEU (\$3 million), and other large affiliates (\$2 million more) who objected to the campaigns, and to the Common Front seen by some as little more than a free lunch for 'activists'.

The 2013 convention debated a constitutional amendment to create an unelected special committee with control over finances that would act like a senate to an elected Executive. The amendment was defeated, despite efforts to whip convention delegates. It was a trial run for 2015.

In early 2014, as the OFL tried to convene affiliates to organize to defeat the Hudak Tories in the upcoming provincial election, CLC President Hassan Yussuff was inveigled to speak to a secret counter-meeting of 'freight-payers' who were attempting to by-pass and supercede the OFL meeting. Exposure forced cancellation of the gathering, while the OFL proceeded to organize the mass mobilization of affiliates, labour councils and social and community allies that defeated the Tory campaign for right to work legislation, and to cut 100,000 public sector jobs.

Undeterred, the freight-payers continued their campaign, beating the drums on the financial crisis.

They claimed the dues strike was the fault of the 'divisive' Ryan, who had to go for unity to prevail. Rumors abounded that other large affiliates including Steel and UFCW would also join the dues strike, and that the OFL building would be sold, if Ryan continued as President. Leaks to the media made the OFL's problems front page news and began to shape public opinion and workers' opinions about the crisis and who was responsible. The die was cast.

Hassan Yussuff appointed Unifor National Rep Chris Buckley to examine the OFL's books, and report back. The OFL gave Buckley free and full access to books and accounts, as well as to Officers, personnel, Committee and Board members and affiliates. In the middle of the examination, Buckley abruptly resigned his job and announced he was running for OFL President.

At the same time last summer, Yussuff abruptly convened a meeting of "the freight-payers", as he called them. The meeting deliberately excluded the elected OFL officers, the smaller affiliates, and the Labour Council and equity Vice-Presidents. The subject was the leadership of the OFL and the

need for 'unity', i.e. unity that would bring OPSEU and ONA back into the OFL, conditional on the departure of Sid Ryan.

As the walls started closing in, a sensational story about secret hidden cameras in the OFL building was leaked to the media, painting Ryan as morally and fiscally unfit to lead. Ryan responded that this was a security system put in place by a previous leadership, only installed in public places like stairwells and the main lobby. This defrayed some of the damage.

When Unifor jumped ship, President Dias told CBC radio that while Ryan was a great guy, he still had to go. Ryan responded that Unifor had cut a deal; abandoning their support for Ryan would let them put one of their own in the OFL President's chair.

With Ryan's announcement that he would not run, there was no progressive slate at the convention, and no time to put one together. Only Mark Brown from CUPW and Nancy Griffith-Bonaparte from PSAC contested the Executive VP position.

The FedForward slate's political action plan, according to its election flyer, is about "Building Political Influence - Political action training programs for grassroots members, and OFL lobby day days at Queen's Park with the labour councils, labour leaders, and rank and file participation." That's quite a shift from the mass mobilizations of the last six years.

In general, the new leadership is a reflection of the NDP's shift to the right, and of that party's strongly-held view that labour's role should be to support the NDP with money and workers during elections. Independent labour political action is not welcome, even when it's led by left NDPers like Sid Ryan. Criticism of NDP

policies, which Ryan also expressed after the 2014 provincial election, is also unwelcome, even criticisms widely held in the trade union movement. In fact, NDP leader Andrea Horwath did not attend the OFL convention, a clear sign of the strained relations.

The left will have to get much better organized and more influential at future conventions to turn this around. Its main task going forward is to hold the new leadership to account, to make sure it implements the main points of the Action Plan. Details of the amended Plan will soon be available on the OFL website.

The Action Plan and the Left Caucus

Delegates did the obvious, focusing on OFL policy, the strong Action Plan, building the Common Front, and moving the fight from the defensive to the offensive against the employers and right-wing governments.

The Action Caucus mobilized in a joint caucus with Take Back Labour, a new caucus born at the CLC convention, around Hassan Husseini's campaign for CLC President. The joint caucus worked hard to highlight key issues including the fight to stop ratification of the TPP by the Ontario government, the struggle to rescind Bill C-51, the privatization of Hydro One, and other urgent issues.

The joint caucus also led the fight from the floor against a Constitutional amendment to create a new, unelected Executive Committee with responsibilities for the budget and expenditures, comprised of the four largest private sector unions, the four largest public sector unions, plus one each from the building trades

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Protest against Modi government in Brampton

Braving cold weather, members of the Indo-Canadian Workers Association along with four other progressive organizations staged a protest against the Modi government at the BLS India International Centre in Brampton on November 21.

Members and leaders of the North American Rationalist Society, Canadian Punjabi Sahitya Sabha, Kalma Da Kafila and Punabi Sabhiachar Manch came together to express their deep anguish over growing intolerance in every sphere of Indian life, ever since Modi came to power last year. Most participants agreed that political dissent is being crushed under the current right wing government.

They expressed their solidarity with writers, scientists, historians, filmmakers and artists, who recently returned their awards in protest against fascist actions of Hindu extremists emboldened under Modi's administration. They also expressed deep concern over continuous attacks on religious minorities, Dalits and rationalist activists. They drew attention to the murders of at least three rationalists - Narendra

Dobhalkar, Govind Pansare and Prof. M.M. Kulbargi - allegedly by Hindu extremists. They observed that the Modi regime is invoking divisive policies to distract people from real issues like Inflation and growing unemployment. Ghar Vapsi, Love Jihad and cow protection are the emotional issues being excessively used to exploit religious sentiments of the people to divert public attention. They also expressed support to the ongoing farmers' agitation in Punjab. Some of the speakers pointed out that the state of farmers continues to deteriorate, as they commit suicides at an alarming rate across India.

All five organizations tried to hand over a memorandum of demands, addressed to the President of India through Indian consulate. But this could not materialize, so the memorandum was sent by post. It was unanimously resolved to make a joint effort to generate mass awareness in the south Asian community by holding more protests and seminars in the future, according to one of the main organizers, Shamshad Elahee Shams. ●

REDS ON THE WEB

www.comunist-party.ca

www.peoplesvoice.ca

www.ycl-ljc.ca

rebelyouth-magazine.blogspot.com

<http://solidnet.org>

The clock has been ticking for 500 years

By Kimball Cariou

After a decade of denial under the previous federal government, swift progress is now underway to launch a national inquiry into the tragedy of missing and murdered indigenous women and girls. For family members, grassroots activists and Aboriginal organizations which have campaigned since the 1990s for such an inquiry, this reversal is breathtaking, even among those who remain wary of the Trudeau government's intentions.

The new situation also compels everyone involved to think carefully about what comes next. The hunger for immediate answers

and genuine justice is tempered with the realization that conducting this inquiry in a comprehensive and respectful manner may take several years. On the other hand, a recent series of articles in the Globe and Mail points to the likelihood that serial killers continue to target young indigenous women, adding new urgency to the crisis.

A key part of the problem is the enormous scope of this issue. After years of sharing stories and researching statistics, most family members and activists who have led this struggle agree that over 1200 indigenous women and girls have been killed or gone missing across Canada since 1980. This will likely be the general period

addressed in detail by the inquiry, in part because shortcomings in data collection make it increasingly difficult to arrive at precise numbers for earlier periods of time.

But indigenous peoples and their allies are painfully aware that the past 35 years are only a fraction of the historical era of colonization of the Americas.

In 1534, Jacques Cartier "claimed" the Gulf of St. Lawrence for France, and the pace of land grabs and genocide soon accelerated, including the extermination of the Beothuk people on Newfoundland. Other forms of genocide were a deadly consequence of colonization, such as the 1639 smallpox epidemic which killed

half of the Hurons. Everywhere through the hemisphere, indigenous peoples died in huge numbers as European empires and then the independent settler-capitalist states expanded into their territories. Resistance was continuous, but as in the 1864 Tsilhqot'in War in central BC or the 1885 Metis Rebellion in Saskatchewan, was usually overcome by superior firepower and brutal repression.

For First Nations, Metis and Inuit peoples, the events of the last 35 years can only be viewed through the prism of stolen lands, broken treaties, residential schools, the "60s scoop," and shocking crimes committed by police and other state institutions. From this perspective, the 1200 murdered and missing women are not an exception; they are part of an ongoing pattern which weaves together complementary policies of extermination and assimilation. Even today, with a federal government which includes Justice Minister Jody Wilson-Raybould, the daughter of iconic First Nations leader Bill Wilson, the Canadian corporate elite remains deeply committed to the destructive extraction of tar sands and other resources from traditional aboriginal territories.

All this background hints at the complex issues around the convening of the national inquiry, especially to understand fears that the terms of reference could be set up to limit participation or to pre-determine an outcome favoured by the government.

It comes as welcome news that Indigenous Affairs Minister Carolyn Bennett has already started pre-inquiry consultations with families of the missing and murdered indigenous women and girls. Unlike her Conservative predecessors, Bennett has stated her intention to listen closely to the families, who are determined to be at the forefront of the inquiry process.

Bennett is also carrying out "engagements" with provincial and territorial governments, aboriginal organizations, and civil society groups. She wants an inquiry which will be culturally sensitive, not simply token attention to indigenous practices. So far, the Liberals have committed to spending \$40 million over two years, and they have not finalized the scope of the inquiry. Bennett is aware, for example, that the

systemic racism of the residential school system, which aimed to "take the Indian out of the child", also had a terrible impact on boys, and that many indigenous men have been murdered or gone missing.

None of this is any guarantee that the outcome will satisfy the families or others who have been deeply involved in this issue, or that the inquiry's final recommendations will be implemented by governments and other bodies. The Canadian state will still be in the hands of corporate interests determined to squeeze maximum profits from the exploitation of human beings and nature. The police, armed forces, the courts and prisons, spy agencies etc. will remain instruments of force to maintain the rule of the wealthy as long as they hold power.

Even if the inquiry exposes the systemic roots of violence against indigenous peoples, it will not by itself bring a final end to the legacy of centuries of colonial oppression and racism. As Buffy Sainte-Marie sang in *Now That The Buffalo's Gone*, "oh it's all in the past you can say / but it's still going on here today."

What might change, however, is something even more profound. Despite setbacks, the struggle to overcome the legacy of racism is gaining momentum. The Mohawk struggle at Oka, the Caledonia land reclamation by the Six Nations, the Idle No More movement, resistance against fracking and pipeline projects, and the demand for the national inquiry, have all won growing support across Canada. The Conservatives refused to accept the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's 94 recommendations - including the definition of cultural genocide - and were voted out of office less than four months later.

The fact that this inquiry is about to happen reflects a dramatic shift in public opinion, which the new Liberal government has chosen not to ignore. The Liberals must establish broad terms of reference and ensure that the inquiry will allow people to speak truth to power. But they must also act quickly. Justice delayed is justice denied, and the clock has already been ticking for nearly five hundred years.

(An earlier version of this article was published in *Radical Desire* magazine.) ●

BC government still in denial over child poverty rates

PV Vancouver Bureau

Touted by Premier Christy Clark's Liberal government as "the best place on earth," British Columbia is no paradise for hundreds of thousands trapped in poverty.

The 2015 Child Poverty Report Card issued by First Call and other anti-poverty groups shows that the situation here is not improving. Figures from Statistics Canada show that BC's child poverty rate continues to exceed the Canadian average, and BC remains among the provinces taking the least action on this issue.

For children living in lone-parent families in BC in 2013, a shocking 50% were poor. Child poverty touches every part of the province. In some regions, one-third or even half of all children were living in poverty. In some urban and suburban neighbourhoods, the proportion of children living in poverty was over 50%, and as high as 70%.

First Call stresses that "stubbornly high child and family poverty rates are a result of growing income inequality in BC and across Canada. They reflect the failure of employers, both public and private, to create decent full-time jobs with wages and benefits that enable parents to lift their families out of poverty. They reflect the choice by our federal and provincial governments to apply the squeeze of austerity to our public institutions and social safety net, while allowing and facilitating the massive accumulation of wealth in very few hands. They reflect an indifference by those in positions of power and influence to the high cost of poverty to individuals, families and society."

According to 2013 taxfiler data, 20.4% of British Columbia's children lived below the poverty line, representing one in five children in the province, as measured by Statistics Canada's Low Income Measure (LIM) after income taxes. This was the fifth-highest child poverty rate among Canadian provinces, with 167,810 BC children living in poverty in 2013. The BC rate was higher than the national rate of 19.0%.

Using the LIM after tax, 16.3% of British Columbians lived below the poverty line, higher than the

Canadian average of 14.6%, and second only to Manitoba. In 2013, according to this measure, 714,960 British Columbians were in poverty. The fact that child poverty rates are higher than overall poverty rates in Canada and in every province, concludes First



Call, "points to the need for systemic policy changes that better support families in their child-rearing years."

The overall statistics hide the fact that particular groups of children are over-represented in these numbers. Census data consistently show significantly higher poverty rates for children of recent immigrants, children of Aboriginal identity, children of female lone-parent families, children in racialized (visible minority) families, and children with a disability.

According to a study using 2006 census data, the poverty rate for status First Nations children in BC was 48%, and the rate for other Aboriginal children was 28%, compared to 17% for non-indigenous children.

Data from the 2011 National Household Survey indicated an all-ages poverty rate for recent immigrants in BC of 34% and a rate of 22% for visible minorities, compared to a non-immigrant poverty rate of 14% and a non-visible minority rate of 14%.

Many poor families live far below the poverty line. In 2013, the median after-tax income for poor lone-parent families with one child was \$14,300, or \$10,019 below the poverty line of \$24,319 for this family type. The gap for poor couple families with one child was even larger: their median after-tax family income of \$17,680 was \$11,851 below the poverty line of \$29,531 for this family type.

In the same year, the median after-tax income for poor lone-parent families with two children was \$18,590, or \$10,941 below the poverty line of \$29,531 for this family type.

(To read the full report, visit stillin5.ca.) ●

VDLC signs Leap Manifesto

By Peter Marcus, Vancouver

A resolution to be a signatory to the Leap Manifesto, which has already been signed by left, progressive, religious, environmental, aboriginal, labour and other groups and individuals across Canada, was passed at the November 19 Vancouver and District Labour Council meeting. The manifesto calls for tackling the climate change and environmental crises, reconstructing society around a sustainable economy, creating living wage green jobs and upholding social justice, human rights and democracy in the process.

The NDP candidate for the upcoming Vancouver Mount Pleasant byelection, Melanie Marks, a First Nations woman, spoke at the meeting. The provincial constituency was left vacant when former MLA Jenny Kwan won the federal Vancouver East riding, held by retiring MP Libby Davies since 1997.

The Trudeau Liberals promised to repeal two anti-labour bills passed by the Harper Tories, C77 and C525, said CLC representative Ron Stipp. The elimination of urban door to door mail service will be suspended, according to CUPW delegate Fruma Sloan.

In other news, mediator Vince Ready will present a final offer solution to the Teaching Support Staff Union (TSSU) members and their employer, Simon Fraser University, in a dispute that has continued since April 2014.

The meeting was shortened so that delegates could participate in a solidarity caravan to support the locked out workers at BCAA, members of MoveUP (formerly COPE 378). ●

La Trova Nuestra
Friday, December 11
"La Peña Nuestra"
 Centre For Socialist Education, Vancouver
 706 Clark Drive (Clark and Georgia st)
 \$10 Entry

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

EDITORIALS

International law and human rights

In a world where "might makes right" usually seems to prevail, it is highly instructive to remember that international law contains important protections for the rights of both human beings and sovereign states. For example, the term "a crime against peace" refers to "planning, preparation, initiation, or waging of wars of aggression..." Those who advocate escalated bombing of Syria should recall that the US-led war of occupation against Iraq in 2003 was not only the worst political and humanitarian disaster of the 21st century; it is also widely considered to be such a crime, the most serious violation of international law which a state can commit.

International law also requires states to protect basic human rights. The historic Universal Declaration of Human Rights was proclaimed by the General Assembly on December 10, 1948. The year 2016 will mark the 50th anniversary of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, which expands further upon the responsibilities of governments to protect a wide range of human rights, such as: free public education for all, "the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health," adequate food, clothing and housing, the right of unions to function freely and to strike, safe and healthy working conditions, the rights to take part in cultural life and to enjoy the benefits of scientific progress, and much more.

These remarkable documents were signed by Canada and the other leading capitalist countries. There is no international legal requirement to fight wars of aggression or to drive people into poverty for the sake of corporate profits. There are, however, binding legal obligations to ensure that people can live in peace and to have food, shelter, clothing and education. December 10th, International Human Rights Day, is an important occasion to demand that governments uphold those obligations.

Let the war resisters stay!

The first week of December is "Let Them Stay Week", an important occasion to tell federal Minister of Immigration John McCallum to take steps to allow U.S. war resisters to stay in Canada, and to end the vicious legal proceedings against them. For a decade, U.S. Iraq War resisters were the target of political interference in their cases by the previous Conservative government. Despite strong public opposition, some were deported by Canada, and received harsh jail sentences for opposing the illegal and immoral invasion of Iraq.

Before and during the recent federal campaign, Justin Trudeau's Liberals made a number of important promises in response to public pressure. The new PM is on record as backing the stand taken by Liberal governments of the 1965-1973 period, when some 50,000 conscientious objectors and other Americans were allowed to enter Canada rather than take part in the Vietnam War. Trudeau has also been a sharp critic of Conservative policies on this issue.

Now the Liberals must take swift action on their promises. The deportations must end, along with all legal and court proceedings against the war resisters. As the War Resisters Support Campaign says, this must include rescinding Operational Bulletin 202, a directive issued in July 2010 by the Harper Government which instructs Immigration Officers to flag all U.S. war resisters, label them criminals, and define them as potentially inadmissible before even hearing their cases. This draconian regulation must be replaced by a new Operational Bulletin that restores fairness for all war resister cases and reverses the harm done to date.

Too many war resisters and their families have already suffered for their brave stand. We urge readers to help end this tragedy. For more information on how to support the campaign at this crucial moment, visit www.resisters.ca.

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International Human Rights Day, December 10

Maurice Rush marks 100th birthday

One of the most significant leaders in the Communist Party of Canada's history, comrade Maurice Rush reaches his 100th birthday on December 4th. Born in 1915 in Toronto, Maurice was one of nine children in a Jewish family which had escaped from Czarist oppression in Poland.

The Rush family moved to Los Angeles in 1923, and then to Vancouver the following year. He attended his first Communist public meeting at the age of 14, and left school soon after to find work. Seeking better opportunities, the family moved to Kamloops in 1930, but economic conditions became worse as the Depression deepened. In January 1934, he and several other activists established a Kamloops club of the Communist Party, determined to organize the unemployed and fight for social justice. Working in a local cannery, Maurice helped lead a strike for better pay and working conditions.

By early 1935, the struggle of the Relief Camp Workers Union against Tory Prime Minister R.B. "Iron Heel" Bennett's slave labour camps was

gaining momentum. As the 19-year-old secretary of the Young Communist League club in Kamloops, Maurice was tasked with organizing billets and meals for about 70 RCWU delegates at the March 1935 conference which voted to take the demands of the unemployed to Vancouver. This was the origin of the On to Ottawa Trek later that spring.

Maurice was soon a key leader of the YCL and the Communist Party in British Columbia. He was involved in the famous 1938 Vancouver post-office sit-down strike by unemployed workers, and later served as an artillery instructor in the Canadian military from 1942-1944. He fought Hitler's fascists in Holland and Germany, where was taken prisoner in February 1945, and later liberated by British forces. Upon his return to Canada, he became the Party's provincial organizer, and later served as the BC labour secretary, Vancouver regional organizer and the national education director. In 1960, he was appointed associate editor of the *Pacific Tribune*, and then

became the editor in 1970. In 1977, he became the BC provincial leader, a position he held until retirement.

Over the post-war decades, Maurice was deeply involved in labour activities, campaigns against the arms race, the Coalition of Progressive Electors (COPE), and many other movements. He travelled overseas to various socialist countries on behalf of the Pacific Tribune and the Party, including to the USSR, the German Democratic Republic, Vietnam, and China. When a section of the leadership tried to liquidate the Party in the early 1990s, Maurice was among those who remained loyal to the Party and its ideology of Marxism-Leninism. After the Party's 30th Central Convention in December 1992 restored control to the membership, he became a frequent contributor to *People's Voice*, which carried on the traditions of the *Pacific* and *Canadian Tribunes*. In 1995, Maurice published his political memoir *We Have a Glowing Dream*, and he continued his participation in the North Shore Club CPC as long as his health allowed. Today he is a resident of a North Vancouver seniors' centre.

On the occasion of his 100th birthday, the Central Executive Committee and BC Provincial Executive Committee of the CPC send our warmest greetings to comrade Maurice Rush and to his family. We salute Maury's many decades of contributions to the cause of the working class, and his powerful revolutionary spirit, which have been an inspiration to new generations of Canadian Communists! ●

OFL leadership shift...

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unions, the Labour Councils, and the equity VPs.

Passage of the amendment was apparently a key part of the deal to bring back OPSEU and the other unions involved in the dues strike.

The amendment was a slight variation on the 2013 version, aimed to dampen criticism of its undemocratic nature. After a short debate that was quickly cut off by persistent calls for the question, the amendment passed by just two votes over the required two-thirds majority. The OFL is now closer to the US model, where transparency, accountability and membership control are far removed from the delegates and concentrated in the hands of unelected committees and individuals.

An angry Hassan Hussein told delegates that the amendment would not have carried in a secret ballot. CUPW President Mike Palecek later told *People's Voice* that the fight next time will be to make every position on the newly created committee directly elected by the convention.

The convention heard from many invited speakers and guests, including Dennis Edney, the lawyer for Omar Khadr, who received a standing ovation and \$53,000 from the OFL towards his expenses in the Khadr case. Edney painted a frightening picture of Canada's role in the US war machine, in Afghanistan and in the US torture centres and black sites around the world.

A session on police racism was animated, as delegates got a firsthand description of policing in Black neighbourhoods, where "carding" puts Black youth into the system where their names come up as "known to police" whenever an employer requests a police check on a new employee or job applicant. Black journalist Desmond Cole moderated the panel discussion.

Natalie Mehra, Executive Director of the Ontario Health Coalition, also addressed the Convention, with an expose of the growing momentum of healthcare and hospital privatization in the province. She called on the labour and people's movements to redouble their struggle to save Medicare in Canada.

In his final remarks to the Convention, President Buckley spoke about the Common Front strikes in Quebec and his intention to send greetings of solidarity from the OFL. Mass protests were held in Quebec the next day, heading towards a general strike. ●

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Open Letter calls for public consultation on C-51

An important Open Letter to the new Prime Minister calls for broad public consultations around Bill C-51, the so-called "Anti-Terrorism Act 2015," which Trudeau pledged to amend. Signed by civil society groups (see below), the letter was issued on Nov. 20. It reads as follows:

Recent events in France have left people around the world, including Canadians, understandably shaken. It is difficult to see our friends suffering, and to imagine their lives under attack. However, as we look toward how we can best help our stricken friends, we are also calling on you to lead our country in helping Canada stay true to its values.

As you quite rightly said just last week, "Governments have a responsibility to keep their citizens safe while defending our rights and freedoms. And that balance is something that the Canadian government and indeed all governments around the world will be focusing on."

The recent events in France are a stark reminder of the need for effective security legislation. However, it is in times of adversity that the challenge of upholding our values is greatest. Former Bill C-51, the Anti-Terrorism Act, 2015, represents precisely the type of disproportionate and excessive response to adversity that a truly democratic country must avoid. The new powers, mandates, and crimes it established continue to pose a direct and ongoing threat to Canadian innovation, political discourse, freedom of expression, privacy, and civil liberties more generally — without providing increased or effective security.

Your government has made a commitment to address some problematic elements of Bill C-51, and we are encouraged by that pledge. However, we are con-

cerned by indications that you will seek to introduce a Bill C-51 reform package before engaging in public consultations. The case for Bill C-51 has never been made to the public, and Canadians have not yet been provided with an opportunity to provide meaningful input regarding its faults. Such consultation must precede any further legislative initiatives.

Bill C-51's one-sided expansion of Canada's security powers was adopted without any regard to the many long-standing and well documented problems in Canada's already permissive security regime. These problems, which span information-sharing, flight restrictions, intelligence oversight, foreign intelligence mandate creep, vaguely defined state powers, and proceedings lacking constitutional protections, to name a few, have already caused serious harm. Not least amongst these harms is the torture of innocent Canadians, including Maher Arar, whose wrongful imprisonment and torture in Syria is directly attributable to overly permissive information sharing mechanisms that Bill C-51 expanded. Instead of addressing these problems, many of Bill C-51's provisions directly compounded them.

It is little surprise that hundreds of organizations, academics, independent experts and entrepreneurs, as well as over 300,000 concerned Canadians, have spoken out against Bill C-51. Despite the significant and sustained opposition to the Bill's introduction and adoption from all elements of Canadian society, the previous government failed to engage in meaningful consultation on its provisions. In fact, the government has yet to make a credible case for any of its elements. An informed and democratic debate must begin with a public explanation of the

government's rationale for Bill C-51, demonstrating why Canada's pre-Bill C-51 security apparatus was insufficient, and justifying changes to that apparatus.

Canadians remain concerned with Bill C-51's legacy. Its constitutionality is in question and



many of its elements are currently being challenged in court. In the last week alone, more than 10,000 Canadians have sent you emails inviting you to take part in a public conversation about Bill C-51. A proportionate legislative approach to security — one that does not unduly impact our civil liberties — is necessary if Canadians' trust in our government and justice system is to be restored. Finding the proper approach to security requires a meaningful public consultation on the various elements of Bill C-51, and of Canada's approach to security in general. It is clear that Canadians want to participate in formulating a balanced solution.

As civil society groups and experts with a vested interest in the outcome of this process, there are three phases that we believe are essential for an effective, credible, and fruitful public consultation process that we hereby ask you to adopt:

1. Government position statement: An informed and democratic debate must begin with a public explanation of the govern-

ment's rationale for Bill C-51. Such a document must clearly demonstrate how Canada's pre-Bill C-51 security apparatus was inadequate, and justify any changes introduced by Bill C-51 that the government seeks to retain. It should also outline any anticipated impacts on civil liberties and explain why these are justified.

2. Public consultations: The Canadian public remains gravely concerned about the implications of Bill C-51. Through a national online consultative process, members of the Canadian public should be given adequate opportunity to have their voices heard and acted upon, prior to the tabling of new legislation.

3. Consultation with experts and stakeholders: Once the government has made the case for its vision of security reform, it must undertake an open and unbiased public consultation with civil society groups, academics, businesses, Indigenous peoples, and other stakeholders on the basis of the Government's position statement and plans to move forward, again prior to the tabling of new legislation. It is only through meaningful engagement with stakeholders that the government can hope to address security in a manner that appropriately respects civil liberties. In light of the sweeping and fundamental nature of the changes imposed by Bill C-51, such consultation must occur before the parliamentary reform stage begins.

Democracy requires robust debate, as does any bona fide attempt to address security. You have assured Canadians that you want to govern in a more participatory and transparent manner. To rebuild public trust after Bill C-51 we need to restore a democratic dialogue that is more collaborative and generates results

that are constitutional and consistent with Canadian values. We urge you to set the proper tone for a truly participatory democracy by committing to an open public debate on Bill C-51 as a precondition to the tabling of any legislative changes.

In light of last week's tragedies, it is more critical than ever to ensure that we have effective, thoughtful, and measured legislation in place. We hope that you will act quickly to advance these public consultations and address the legacy of C-51 — an urgent issue for all of us. As we look to move forward, we hope that you will invite us to work together, and ensure that we get this right.

We believe that we are better as a country when we work together. We look forward to working with you to build a better Canada.

SIGNATORIES: *BC Freedom of Information & Privacy Association; British Columbia Civil Liberties Association; Canadian Civil Liberties Association; Canadian Internet Policy & Public Interest Clinic; Canadian Journalists for Free Expression; Canadian Access and Privacy Association; Centre for Free Expression, Ryerson University; Centre for Law and Democracy; Canadian Institute of Access and Privacy Professionals; Council of Canadians; FACIL; Free Dominion; International Civil Liberties Monitoring Group; Keepers of the Water; Leadnow; National Council of Canadian Muslims; Ontario Civil Liberties Association; OpenMedia; Privacy and Access Council of Canada; Privacy International; PrivaSecTech; The Student Coalition for Privacy; United Steelworkers; Voices-Voix; Youth Vote Canada; and many prominent individuals.*

For further information, visit <https://killc51.ca/canadians>. ●

TPP text reveals corporate enslavement

By Bob Briton, *The Guardian*, weekly newspaper of the Communist Party of Australia

The planners behind the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) have bowed to mounting international pressure and released the text of the trade and investment pact. Revelations from WikiLeaks and the alarm they have caused are the likely cause for the sudden shift towards "transparency". The architects no doubt believed that few would be able to plough through its 6,147 pages to discern the dangers to their future collective well-being. "The agreements — filled with jargon, convoluted technical, trade and financial terms, legalese, fine print and obtuse phrasing — can be summed up in two words: corporate enslavement," as US journalist Chris Hedges noted.

The deal comprises 12 countries — the US, Chile, Mexico, Peru, Canada, Japan, Brunei, Singapore, Vietnam, Malaysia, New Zealand and Australia. This accounts for roughly 40% of the world's economy. If and when it comes into effect and combined with the corresponding Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP), 85% of the global economy will be operating under a new, very different

order. The related Trade in Services Agreement (TiSA) will complete the transformation to untrammelled corporate dictatorship.

These agreements leave out some very major countries and economies, notably those involved in BRICS — the economic co-operation framework established between Brazil, Russia, India and China. The TPP will enhance competition with this rival bloc by stripping away the rights of previously sovereign countries to legislate in any way that limits transnationals' profitability. Trade unions will be further sidelined.

The rules set out in the TPP will trump any commitments made at the climate change conference in

Paris. There are references to a "low-emissions" future economy but none to climate change. This document was written by and for the big polluters.

Governments are giving assurances that they will retain the right to regulate. This is misleading. The agreement will work to lock in any weakening of regulation and this has been the trend with governments covered by the TPP, with their commitment to cutting "red tape", removing "obstacles to investment" and hiring and firing.

The same governments say that problems with the highly controversial Investor State Dispute Settlement provisions have been fixed. Not so. As the New Zealand

It's Our Future website points out, "Most arbitrators are still likely to come from a small club of investment lawyers, with no effective control of conflict of interest rules (though some are promised). There is no guarantee they will apply consistent rules and no way to appeal if they make rogue decisions. There's no cap on damages or compound interest."

The case of Oceana Gold versus El Salvador, which has the mining giant suing the Central American country for affecting profits through a moratorium on mining activity, is a foretaste of the corporate bullying to become widespread under the TPP. Nothing will stop the exporting of jobs to low wage centres.

Though the trade and investment regime is designed chiefly to favour US corporations, it will dramatically and negatively impact the people of the United States. Fifty-one percent of working Americans now earn less than US\$30,000 a year. Forty percent are getting less than US\$20,000 a year and the federal government considers a family of four on an income of less than US\$24,250 to be living in poverty. This crippling reality has developed despite official promises of highly paid jobs to flow from the North American Free Trade Agreement,

aprecursor of the TPP and TTIP, concluded between Canada, Mexico and the US in 1994.

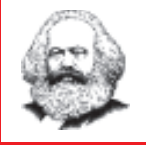
Presidential candidate Hillary Clinton has picked up on widespread concern and gone public with her "reservations" about the rash of new trade and investment agreements. The people in countries to be impacted by the TPP would be wrong to take comfort from these comments. Her Democrat colleague, current US President Barack Obama, has done all he can to limit debate and "fast track" the agreement becoming law. It is estimated that corporations paid US\$200 million-worth of contributions to members of the Congress to vote for a Trade Promotion Authority to negotiate treaties like the TPP. Hillary will change her tune if elected.

The text does nothing to dispel fears of the people of Australia for their public services, including health and education and the viability of the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS). There is some eyewash concerning "legitimate public policy" but market models will remain the norm. Any new state owned enterprise, such as a public national superannuation scheme can receive no advantage



Anti-TPP protest in Japan

see TPP, page 11



**Marxist
Theory**

The Pathologies of Capitalism

By Zoltan Zigedy, November 10, 2015

Capitalism owes its resilience to its ability to devise novel tactics to deflect, distort, and deflate mass resistance. Even with the casualties of global capitalism mounting, capitalism's fixers have channelled public dissatisfaction and disappointment into private diminished self-worth and self-destructiveness.

London Review of Books reviewer, Katrina Forrester, aptly captures this insidious ploy: when faced with oppression and exploitation "Don't join a union, pop a pill." In her perceptive review of William Davies "The Happiness Industry: How the Government and Big Business Sold Us Wellbeing" (22 October 2015), she exposes the widespread practice of defining rebellious behaviour or negative attitudes as psychological disorders. "...if you're not happy, wish things were

different, or find it hard to adapt to the conditions of modern life, you may be diagnosed as suffering from a mental illness."

More and more often, academics and therapists have accepted the notion that depression or dysfunctional behaviour is a mark of mental problems regardless of the causes of the behaviour or attitude. They "...think of unhappiness as a pathology, a psychological or mental state amenable to behavioural and medical intervention.

This is the logic that underpins the growth of the 'happiness industry.'" Thus, for example, when an Iraqi mother loses two sons fighting a foreign occupier, when her personal security is constantly threatened, and living conditions continue to deteriorate, her unhappiness is pathological. It is not the horrid conditions of her life (conditions which could have been avoided or can be altered),

but her "negative" feelings that must be changed.

As Forrester points out, "Many people are unhappy for good reasons, which the new therapeutic practices of the happiness industry largely ignore."

She goes on: Where once the solution to unhappiness at work was social reform and collective action, now it's individual uplift and "resilience"; when we want to resist, we don't join a union but call in sick. If you lose your job and feel demoralized at the prospect of looking for a new one, that too might be a diagnosable condition.

Forrester reports that in the UK some have taken to rebranding unemployment as a psychological disorder with claimants' "attitude to work" used as a determinant of benefit worthiness.

While appreciative of the book under review, Forrester faults the author for his weak answer to the happiness industry. Rather than

recognizing that happiness-obsession serves capitalism by trivializing capital's destructive nature, William Davies sees it as somehow a threat to democracy.

By touting "democratizing" the work place, Davies joins all social democrats in assiduously avoiding placing capitalism's pathologies at capitalism's doorsteps. And Forrester sees this flaw clearly: "Happiness and depression are tied up with capital in ways far more concrete than Davies allows."

Pathological Blowback

It is no secret that whites have often been the most socially compliant demographic group. Middle-aged white people are today inclined to cling to the dominant ideological narrative, to support the ruling class "verities." But they are paying a heavy price for the trust that they have placed in wealth and power.

A recent study, *Rising morbidity and mortality in midlife among white non-Hispanic Americans in the 21st century*, shows that whites, especially less educated whites, between the ages of 45 to 54 have suffered a dramatic increase in mortality since 1999. The authors, Professors Case and Deaton, argue that much of this increase is caused by an over four-fold increase of drug and alcohol overdoses, an over 50% increase in suicides, and an over 25% increase of chronic liver disease.

Further, they have related this abuse to mental-health problems and problems in handling personal difficulties, especially economic stresses. Case and Deaton speculate that increased mortality may have caused 488,500 deaths that could have been avoided between 1999 and 2013 - what the anti-Soviet Kremlinologists of the Cold War era would label "unnecessary deaths."

While there is much alarm in the mainstream academic and social work community, there are few theories about how such mass

"unhappiness" could occur and about how to arrest it.

But is it really that difficult to discern the causes of this mental health epidemic?

Should it be a surprise that white people who came of age during and after the Reagan era of fanatical US boosterism, who experienced the period where all social questions were settled with the mantra "Are YOU better off now?", and who endured a time when personal "success" trumped social relations and social responsibilities, would now find disappointment, even despair in the unrelenting crises of the twenty-first century?

Capitalism fostered an ever-present trend of alienation, isolation, and subjectivism that accelerated dramatically over the last forty years. Extreme competitiveness for jobs, status, and power nurtured the virus of selfishness and insensitivity. In the Hobbesian State of Nature that ensued, many were consumed by ruthless competition - the struggle for success. Those who were "losers" - and there must be losers, if there are winners - were stripped of their self-worth.

With the promise of boundless prosperity and the ideology of self-advancement rocked by two devastating economic crises in the first decade of the twenty-first century, those most committed to this faith were devastated. Harsh realities caught up with the fairy tales spun by capitalism's apologists. For those seeing no options, alcohol, drugs, and suicide became an answer.

But causes of this epidemic are not found in the soul or mind, but in capitalism. And solutions are not found on the therapist's couch, in self-help sessions, the drug store or the bottle, but in creating a world where everyone has a welcoming, useful, and satisfying place.

That place will never be found where capitalism reigns.

(Read Zoltan Zigedy's articles at zsz-blg.blogspot.com.) ●

Guantanamo: The ultimate barrier to US-Cuban relations

From the UK Morning Star, Nov. 27, 2015

Embassies have opened in Havana and Washington, but Cuba has made it clear that the process of normalising relations with the US will not be possible while the blockade or illegal occupation of Guantanamo remain in place. According to the US official heading up negotiations with Cuba, "the issue of Guantanamo is not on the table."

Marjorie Cohn, former president of the National Lawyers Guild and an expert on human rights law and US foreign policy, has recently written on the issue of the prison and the base:

"President Obama has yet to fulfil the promise in his January 22 2009 executive order to shut Guantanamo 'no later than one year from the date of this order.'

"Any individuals remaining there at the time of closure, Obama wrote, 'shall be returned to their home country, released, transferred to a third country or transferred to another United States detention facility in a manner consistent with law and the national security and foreign policy interests of the United States.'

"After threatening to veto the final draft of the annual National Defence Authorisation Act (NDAA), partly because it forbids the transfer of Guantanamo detainees to the US and tightens barriers to sending them to other countries, Obama caved. A White House spokesperson said Obama would sign the legislation, which passed overwhelmingly in the House and Senate. Bernie Sanders was one of three senators to vote against the Bill.

"Nearly seven years after Obama's promise, 112 men remain at Guantanamo, half of whom have been cleared for

release. Obama has released 54 prisoners and is reviewing the cases of others still being held.

"In April 2013, Obama said: 'I think it is critical for us to understand that Guantanamo is not necessary to keep America safe ... It hurts us in terms of our international standing ... It is a recruitment tool for extremists. It needs to be closed.' Yet it remains open.

"In spite of the NDAA, Obama has the power to close Guantanamo. Former White House counsel Gregory Craig and Cliff Sloan, former special envoy for Guantanamo closure, maintain 'the president does not need Congress's authorisation to act.'

"They wrote in the Washington Post: 'Under Article II of the Constitution, the president has exclusive authority to determine the facilities in which military detainees are held ... The determination on where to hold detainees is a tactical judgment at the very core of the president's role as commander in chief.'

"Of the 780 men held at Guantanamo since 2002, only eight were tried and convicted of war crimes. Of those, just three remain at Guantanamo. Many of the detainees reported being assaulted, prolonged shackling, sexual abuse and threats with dogs.

"Australian lawyer Richard Bourke, who has represented several Guantanamo detainees, charged they have been subjected to 'good old-fashioned torture.' Detainees who engage in hunger strikes are subjected to force-feeding, a practice the UN Human Rights Council has called torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment. At least seven men have died at the prison camp.

"The US has illegally occupied Guantanamo since 1903, after Cuba's war of independence against Spain. Cuba was forced to include the Platt Amendment in the Cuban constitution. The amendment

granted the US the right to intervene in Cuba as a prerequisite for the withdrawal of US troops from the rest of Cuba.

"That provision provided the basis for the 1903 Agreement on Coaling and Naval Stations, which gave the US the right to use Guantanamo Bay 'exclusively as coaling or naval stations, and for no other purpose.'

"President Roosevelt signed a new treaty with Cuba in 1934 that allows the US to remain in Guantanamo Bay until the US abandons it or until both Cuba and the US agree to modify their arrangement. According to that treaty, 'the stipulations of [the 1903] agreement with regard to the naval station of Guantánamo shall continue in effect.'

"That means Guantanamo Bay can be used for nothing but coaling or naval stations. Article III of the 1934 treaty also says that Cuba leases Guantanamo Bay to the US 'for coaling and naval stations.' Nowhere in either treaty did Cuba give the US the right to utilise Guantanamo Bay as a prison camp.

"Former Cuban president Fidel Castro has long maintained that Guantanamo is part of Cuba and that the US illegally occupies it. One of Cuban President Raul Castro's requirements for normalisation of relations with the US is the return of Guantanamo to Cuba.

"If there is probable cause to believe a detainee committed a crime, he should be sent to the US for trial in federal court. The remaining detainees should be returned to their countries of origin or third countries if that is not feasible. After shuttering the prison camp, Obama should return Guantanamo Bay to Cuba, its rightful owner."

(Excerpted from an article by Marjorie Cohn which was originally published by www.telesur.tv.net.) ●

**WORLD YOUTH
AGAINST IMPERIALISM**

PEACE

SATURDAY ★ DEC 5th ★ 7PM

706 CLARK DR., VANCOUVER

As imperialist powers use the latest attacks against civilians in France, Lebanon, Nigeria, and Turkey to intensify their attack on the peoples of the Middle East, young people from around the world are fighting back against war, Islamophobia and attacks on democratic rights at home.

Speakers: Rozhin Emadi, YCL delegate to the recent General Assembly of the World Federation of Democratic Youth, and Drew Garvie, YCL General Secretary, and more.

LIVE MUSIC & FOOD

A fundraiser for the YCL's participation at the WFDY meeting in Cuba

Say no to war, racism and terror - welcome Syrian refugees!

Statement by the Central Executive Committee, Communist Party of Canada, Nov. 29, 2015

Just weeks after the most racist and reactionary government in recent Canadian history suffered a major defeat at the polls, far-right forces are making a brazen attempt to use tragic events in other countries to press the new Liberal government to adopt the discredited right-wing agenda of the Harper Tories. This right-wing drive must be blocked by united and powerful resistance by the labour and democratic movements, bringing together all those who want a future based on economic and social justice, human rights, and world peace.

The imperialist drive towards increased militarization and war on a global scale is an intrinsic feature of capitalist development in general. In turn, it inevitably has a negative impact upon domestic politics, including a pattern of "selective attention". Events such as the bombings in Beirut, Ankara and other cities, the US military's massacre at a civilian hospital in Afghanistan, the Saudi aggression in Yemen, or the Ukraine government's shelling of civilians, are downplayed or ignored in the West. However, the shocking Nov. 13 attack in Paris quickly became the focus of a hypocritical attempt to whip up fear and hatred against refugees and immigrants.

In Canada, the most immediate feature of this xenophobic campaign has been a conscious and deliberate attempt to smear Muslims and members of racialized communities as the alleged source of terrorist threats, crime, and economic problems. This campaign has been fanned by far-right, racist elements in the United States, such as Donald Trump and other Republican presidential candidates who call for fascist measures such as surveillance and registering of Muslim people in a database, removal of citizenship rights, and even the mass incarceration and

expulsion of racialized communities. Similar racist voices emerged from the shadows during the federal election to support the Tories in their attempt to bar refugees from war-torn areas of the Middle East, central Asia and Africa, and then to fight the new Liberal government's plan to bring 25,000 Syrian refugees to Canada.

These forces have adopted the rhetoric used by racist movements in Europe, such as the lie that refugees and immigrants aim to use their higher birth rate to "swamp" Canada's supposedly "white Christian" values. Earlier in the election, they demonized Islamic women who choose to wear the niqab, in an attempt to claim that they support women's equality – equality rights which in reality were systematically attacked and undermined for a decade by the Harper Tories. The most cowardly and despicable elements among these racists torch mosques under cover of darkness and assault Muslim women and children in the streets. Politicians such as Saskatchewan premier Brad Wall openly spread lies and misinformation, claiming that bringing Syrian refugees to Canada will lead to a dramatic escalation of terrorist recruiting. These forces condemn the Liberal government's plan to end Canadian participation in



bombing of targets in Syria and Iraq, and demand an immediate escalation of military force and a major increase in the military budget.

All of these efforts are connected to a wider corporate push to



Participants in the rally and march against Islamophobia, Nov. 21 in Toronto. (Photo by Ed Bil)

further erode labour, civil and democratic rights in the name of "protecting" Canadians. The political and physical attacks against Muslim-Canadians are part of a long-standing drive to intimidate and silence all those who reject the agenda of austerity, poverty, environmental destruction, corporate trade sellouts, and war.

The Communist Party of Canada joins with all other progressive people in condemning every form of terrorism, including both the imperialist wars and occupations of the US, Canada and other NATO countries, and those committed by fundamentalist movements such as Daesh and al-Qaeda. At the same time, we stress once again that these dangerous forces have gained strength in large part because of the state terrorism, interventions and exploitation of the Middle East, central Asia and Africa by the imperialist powers and their regional ally, Israel. Many of the terrorist attacks in recent years have been carried out by forces which were in fact spawned and supported by the US and its NATO allies, the root source of mass terror and destruction on our planet today. ●

Both the al-Qaeda affiliated al-Nusra Front and ISIS (or "Daesh") – the main forces attempting to overthrow the Assad government in Syria – have long been financed and armed by Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Turkey, with the direct knowledge and support of Washington. Our Party condemns the imperialist-orchestrated campaign to impose 'regime change' on Syria, the real cause of the conflict which has virtually destroyed the country and driven millions from their homes as refugees. The downing of a Russian jet by Turkey, under highly dubious circumstances, has further heightened tensions, and could provoke a wider regional and even global war.

The Communist Party calls for an immediate cessation of all foreign military, political and economic interference and aggression in both Syria and neighbouring Iraq, not an expansion of foreign military operations under the pretext of a "war on ISIS". We express our solidarity with the Syrian people struggling to defend their sovereignty and territorial integrity, and favour negotiations to end the 'civil' war as determined

by the Syrian people themselves, without outside involvement, interference, or 'dictat'. The crisis needs a political solution that has the elected government of Bashar al-Assad at the table. This is the only path to de-escalate the war tensions in the region, and to end the humanitarian tragedy that has afflicted its peoples.

We also call for full solidarity with the Syrian refugees coming to Canada, and for restoration and adequate funding of the services they desperately need, including housing, language training, legal aid, social assistance and much more. Instead of expanding the Canadian Armed Forces, we demand a complete end to the Syria/Iraq mission, and a 75% reduction in military spending, which would provide \$15 billion annually for social programs, housing and infrastructure projects in this country.

Finally, we demand swift action against the racist groups and individuals which are engaged in violence against the Muslim community. These criminal elements must not be allowed to conduct their campaign of racist terror under cover of sympathy for the victims of the Paris attacks.

Global marches call to save the planet

PV Vancouver Bureau

People around the world protested for action on global warming on Nov. 29, the eve of the 2015 U.N. Climate Change Conference (COP 21) in Paris.

Despite cancellation of the day's flagship Paris event, the Global Climate March still broke

records as the largest climate mobilisation in history. More than 2,300 events were held worldwide, beginning with a demonstration of an estimated 45,000 people in Sydney, Australia. The largest action in Canada saw over 5,000 take to the streets of Vancouver.

Organizers report that over 785,000 people took part in 175

countries, calling for a clean energy future to the planet. The March was front page on media platforms worldwide, and the impact was felt at the summit in Paris.

Many countries, from Bangladesh to Ireland, saw the largest climate marches in their history. In Australia, 120,000 people marched, in India, over

100,000. Even in Sana'a, Yemen, organisers went ahead with their march despite bombs falling close to the route.

In France, massive planned marches of over 500,000 people were cancelled, but organizers collected and displayed over 20,000 shoes of people who wanted to march - including Pope Francis and UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon - at the Place de la Republique, on the doorstep of the climate talks. Protesters did form a human chain along the route of a march that was banned under the state of emergency declared by the Hollande government after the Nov. 13 terror attacks.

In his opening address to world leaders, Ban Ki-moon stressed: "The peoples of the world are also on the move. They have taken to the streets, in cities and towns across the world, in a mass mobilization for change... They expect each and every one of you to show leadership equal to the test. History is calling."

These days, capitalist leaders often talk about becoming "the greenest government ever." But in most cases, slavish devotion to the profits of the big energy monopolies has trumped investment in a sustainable future. Austerity cuts have devastated public services, workplace safety, affordable housing, and clean energy programs.

This must change, and very soon. Scientists estimate that current levels of emissions from burning oil, gas and coal would warm the planet by 3.5°C over the next 60 years. The consequences include rising sea levels that may submerge many of the world's biggest cities, ferocious hurricanes and typhoons, and more severe droughts.

The message from the streets is that the world leaders gathered at COP 21 in Paris need to agree on an urgent action plan. The next issue of People's Voice will include analysis of the outcome of this crucial conference. ●



Thousands rallied for Climate Change Action in Vancouver. (PV photo by Roberto Diaz)



GLOBAL CLASS STRUGGLE

Mass strikes hit Indonesian law

Indonesian workers rallied in several cities during the last week of November to demand the government repeal a new rule that limits pay increases. Labour unions say the rule only allows a maximum 10% increase per year in monthly salaries and puts them in a weak position in negotiations with employers.

"We decided to go on strike because the government of Joko Widodo has reinstated low-wage politics for the sake of attracting investors," said Indonesian Labour Union Confederation chief Said Iqbal.

Protests were held in Jakarta, the neighbouring town of Bekasi, Medan in North Sumatra and other cities. Unions said 5 million workers across the country took part in the four-day strike to pressure the president to change the rule issued in October. Police cracked down on the protests and arrested a number of workers and union leaders.

The government claims the new pay regulation was aimed at preventing mass layoffs and providing security for businesses struggling at a time when consumer purchasing power is weak. Annual growth slipped to 4.7% in the second quarter, the slowest pace in six years, because of weaker exports and sluggish domestic demand.

Korea unions resist onslaught

Trade unions around the world are demanding that the South Korean president act to end the government and police onslaught against workers and unions over their right to organise. The Korean Public Service and Transport Workers' Union (KPTU, an affiliate of the International Transport Federation, ITF) has been repeatedly raided by police as part of a government attack on the labour movement.

Recent incidents include the brutal arrest of seven KPTU members and the arrest of 51 Korean Confederation of Trade Unions (KCTU) members and others during a mass mobilisation in Seoul on November 14. During raids on KPTU, KCTU and other union offices a week later, police seized hard drives and other materials related to union events including the mass mobilisation, the KPTU-TruckSol's safe rates rally and May Day rallies.

ITF general secretary Steve Cotton wrote to president Park Geun-hye: "The wide-ranging nature of these seizures reveal that these raids were nothing less than an attack upon the Korean trade union movement itself... A chorus of disapproval is being

sounded worldwide, and will be raised in important forums such as the International Labour Organization and OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development). The ITF and its affiliates will be coordinating our response to these latest grave developments with our colleagues in the ITUC, the global unions, and across the international trade union movement. There is still time for your government to step back from this dangerous process. The ITF therefore once again urges you to: cease the attacks against



the KPTU-TruckSol Pulmuone drivers and the KPTU, including by cancelling arrest warrants and releasing arrested workers; facilitate negotiations between Pulmuone and KPTU-TruckSol; and cease the intimidation of trade unionists that has been clearly evidenced by the police raids on union offices in recent weeks."

The ITF is urging workers and unions to support the Korean union movement through a new LabourStart appeal at <http://goo.gl/pvIIUe> and via Facebook and Twitter, using #kptu

Pay equity by 2133?

In a report on the global gender gap, published for the tenth time, the World Economic Forum estimates that women will only achieve pay parity in 2133. More and more women are taking up paid work. But on a global scale women are still only earning what men earned ten years ago, while men's pay has moved on. In 97 countries more women than men are university students, but women only make up the majority of skilled workers in 68 countries. Even worse, women make up the majority of leaders in only four countries in the world.

The Global Gender Gap Report ranks 145 countries on their ability to close the gender gap in economic participation and opportunity (salaries, participation and leadership), education (access to basic and higher levels of education), health and survival (life expectancy and the sex ratio), and political empowerment

(representation in decision-making structures).

According to the report the ten most gender equal countries are Iceland, Norway, Finland, Sweden, Ireland, Rwanda, Philippines, Switzerland, Slovenia and New Zealand. The lowest ranked country in the index is Yemen.

Find the complete report at www.weforum.org

Miners killed in landslide

At least 117 people were killed in a landslide in the jade mining area in northern Myanmar on November 21. Workers and their families were asleep in tents that were buried under the piles of rubble.

The landslide happened at night, in a small-scale jade mining area in Myanmar's Kachin state. The mine is run by a Chinese subcontractor, Kan Oo Pone, and the Mine Workers Federation of Myanmar (MWF), attributes the deaths to the company's unsafe piling procedures. Jade mining in Myanmar is often perilous due to unsafe working conditions, and landslides are common. The pile believed to have caused the accident is thought to have been over 300 meters high. The moving rubble landed on the tents where workers and their families live, making a living out of searching for left-over stones among the rubble.

As Myanmar is opening up, both politically and financially, capital is flowing into the country. Trade unions were illegal in Myanmar until 2012, meaning that both workers' and employers' knowledge of rights and obligations is at best low, and in many instances non-existent. Corruption is also widespread in the country, and the MWF claims that labour inspections in the area have not been carried out the way they should. MWF organizes workers at the mine site, and is in the process of registering three new trade unions with the authorities.

US-Okinawa labour solidarity

On November 20, delegates from the All Okinawa Council visited the Washington, DC headquarters of the AFL-CIO, the largest federation of labour unions in the United States, with 56 affiliated unions and 12.5 million members. The delegates asked for cooperation in getting U.S. Marine Corps Air Station Futenma relocated outside of Okinawa. AFL-CIO director of foreign affairs Cathy Feingold expressed her support and her desire to spread the struggle for peace.

A delegation of All Okinawa Council members arrived in the United States on November 15 to convey Okinawan opposition to the planned construction of a new base in Henoko, Nago as part of the planned relocation of Marine Corps Air Station Futenma. At the Nov. 20 meeting, All Okinawa Council co-representative Goya called for support and cooperation, emphasizing that the U.S. and

Japanese governments are forcefully pushing forward with the relocation to Henoko in spite of widespread Okinawan opposition. "In Okinawa, we are facing a crisis of peace and democracy," Goya stated.

Norio Oshiro, chairman of the Okinawa Trade Union Confederation, stated, "Okinawan labour unions, business leaders, civic organizations, and elected officials are all working together to oppose the Henoko relocation. We hope the AFL-CIO will join our struggle."

Feingold explained that the AFL-CIO places great importance on military base issues and the anti-nuclear movement. She also referenced a resolution in solidarity with the Okinawan people in opposition to the new base construction passed on November 15 by the Asian Pacific American Labour Alliance (APALA), an umbrella organization of the AFL-CIO with around 20,000-30,000 members. Feingold expressed her understanding of the importance of solidarity and her hope to increase widespread participation in the struggle together with APALA.

The All Okinawa Council delegates also held a demonstration in front of the White House and met with staff representatives of Congress members. After wrapping up their activities, the delegates held a press conference, stating that understanding of the Okinawan situation has not progressed in the United States.

Education workers strike in Latvia

Over 24,546 education and science workers in Latvia were on strike on Nov. 15, according to the Trade Union of Education and Science Employees. The strike closed 912 schools and preschools, as well as a number of universities and research institutes.

According to the Education and

Science Employees Union, over 80% of the union's members participated in the strike, plus a large number of education and science employees who are not members of the union. Some other educational institutions decided not to strike, and expressed support for reforms proposed by the Education and Science Minister Marite Seile.

The union has demanded the government allocate 9 million euros for improving the remuneration system for all those employed in education, especially in preschools and small schools, and also to provide sufficient funding for higher education and science.

Indian workers rescued from Oman

Exploited by their employers and deceived by labour agents, a group of workers from India's Kendrapara district returned from Oman on November 26, two months after they went in search of work. Each had spent 80,000 rupees to get plumber jobs overseas. Although they were assured a salary of 45,000 rupees each, the workers were engaged as construction labourers in Hasan Juma Baker Construction Company for 25,000 per month and made to work for more than 14 hours a day under inhuman conditions.

The men had borrowed money and sold ancestral land to arrange funds for going abroad and pay the labour agents. The owner of the company confiscated their passports in Oman and compelled them to work. When the workers contacted the labour agents to be rescued, they were ignored. The villagers were eventually assisted by a Member of Parliament, who wrote to the Indian Ambassador in Oman asking for help to rescue the stranded workers and bring them home.

Join the Communist Party of Canada



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

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

Big jolt for BJP in Bihar Assembly polls

B. Prasant, PV
correspondent in India

India's BJP-led "national democratic alliance" or NDA has been defeated in Bihar, and in a big way. This is the second time the so-called 'Modi wave' was wrecked on the rock of popular will, following the comprehensive defeat some months back in the Delhi state polls.

The chief contestants in the crucial Bihar assembly elections, held in six stages during October and November, were: the former Socialist group parties Janata Dal-United (JD-U) and Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD), which combined and led a string of smaller secular parties; the BJP-led NDA; the Congress; a small bloc of Communist and left parties; and regional groupings.

The BJP, which dominates the NDA, organised its electoral battle around Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who found time between foreign junkets (he has been on close to thirty trips abroad in the past fifteen months or so), to unleash massively belligerent speeches at carefully-orchestrated 'mass' rallies.

Modi principally played the Hindu card, but little else is expected from a dyed-in-the-wool RSS organiser and leader. In his addresses, the Prime Minister attacked the secular forces as 'pseudo entities,' questioned the political veracity of the former Socialists, attacked the RJD and JD-U leaders for their 'incompetence' to rule a state as diverse as Bihar, promised the Biharis billions of rupees of 'packages' (without budgetary underpinning of course), and finally, repeatedly ad nauseum,

that the rule of the jungle (a jangli raj) would follow an electoral sweep by the former Socialists.

Modi's most infamous memorandum during the rallies was that should BJP lose the election in Bihar, patakas (firecrackers) would burst and lamps would be lit in celebration in Pakistan.

He never tired of consistent, arrogant attacks on secular politics, in the process condoning by default the constant uttering of the many

RSS mass fronts, which in the run up to the Bihar elections called at various times for a ban on cow slaughter, attacks on select Muslims for their food habits, assaults against "low caste" Hindus, and finally calling upon those who would not support the idea of a Hindu state (*Hindu rashtra*) to go away bag and baggage to Pakistan.

The former Socialists, on the other hand, spoke about all round

development, constantly emphasising sadak-bijli-paani-ghar (roads, electricity, water, and housing). They also pointed to the manner in which Biharis could come out of the deteriorating law-and-order situation with determined political will. The RD and JD-U underlined how minorities, dalits and mahadalits (low-caste and very low caste) not only remained secure in Bihar, but also had opportunities for development in the past 25-odd years. They never attacked Modi *per se*, which paid off in the face of the very personal attacks that the BJP supremo launched on the RJD and JD-U leadership.

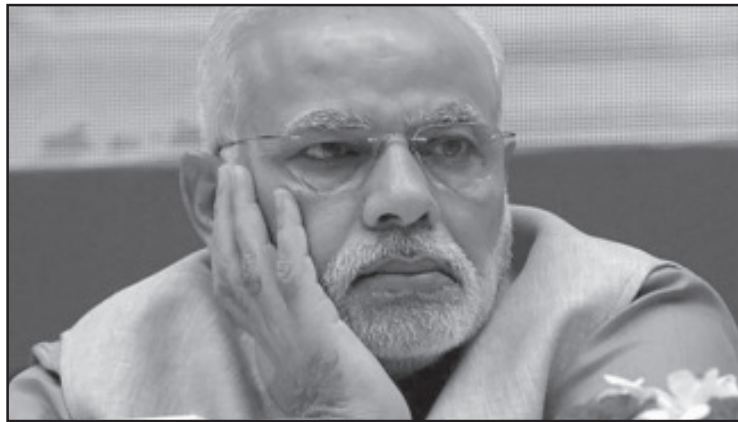
Of the 243 Assembly seats, the JD-U, RJD alliance won 151, compared to 27 for the Congress, 58 for the NDA, and seven for left parties and independents.

Meanwhile, the Communist Party of India (Marxist)-led left and democratic front (LDF) scored an important success in elections recently held in the urban and

rural bodies in Kerala, a state presently ruled by a Congress-led "United Democratic Front" (UDF) government.

The LDF was able to register wins in a large majority of the municipal bodies and in the three-tier Panchayats at the village, block, and district levels. This is significant because the UDF exerts strong political domination Kerala. In the local polls, the BJP electioneered on both communal and caste lines, a new development.

Finally, the BJP has lost two Lok Sabha (parliament) byelections: the Ratlam-Jhabua seat in the BJP-ruled Madhya Pradesh state, and the Warangal seat in Telangana, where a regional party heads the state government. Losing a seat each in north and south India is a significant debacle. Both constituencies have sizeable tribal populations, and clearly the well-publicised hostile stance of the RSS against the lower castes had an impact on the poll outcome. ●



A glum PM Modi after his party's defeat in Delhi earlier this year.

Stopping ISIS: Follow the money

By Peter Van Buren,
Information Clearing House

Wars are expensive. The recruitment and sustainment of fighters in the field, the ongoing purchases of weapons and munitions, as well as the myriad other costs of struggle, add up.

So why isn't the United States going after Islamic State's funding sources as a way of lessening or eliminating their strength at making war? Follow the money back, cut it off, and you strike a blow much

more devastating than an air strike. But that has not happened. Why?

Many have long held that Sunni terror groups, ISIS now and Al-Qaeda before them, are funded via Gulf States, such as Saudi Arabia, who are also long-time U.S. allies. Direct links are difficult to prove, particularly if the U.S. chooses not to prove them. The issue is exacerbated by suggestions that the money comes from "donors", not directly from national treasuries, and may be routed through legitimate charitable organisations or front companies.

In fact, one person concerned about Saudi funding was then Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, who warned in a 2009 message on WikiLeaks that donors in Saudi Arabia were the "most significant source of funding to Sunni terrorist groups worldwide."

At the G20, Russian President Vladimir Putin said out loud what has otherwise not been publicly discussed much. He announced that he has shared intelligence with the other G20 member states which reveals 40 countries from which ISIS finances the majority of its terrorist activities. The list reportedly included a number of G20 countries.

Putin's list of funders has not been made public. The G20, however, include Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France,

Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, South Korea, Turkey, the United Kingdom, the United States of America, and the European Union.

One source of income for ISIS is and has robustly been oil sales. In the early days of the air campaign, American officials made a point to say that the Islamic State's oil drilling assets were high on the target list. Yet few sites have actually been targeted. A Pentagon spokesperson explained that the coalition has actually been trying to spare some of ISIS's largest oil producing facilities, "recognising that they remain the property of the Syrian people", and to limit collateral damage to civilians nearby.

The US only this week (mid-November) began a slightly more aggressive approach toward the oil, albeit bombing tanker trucks, not the infrastructure behind them. The trucks were destroyed at the Abu Kamal oil collection point, near the Iraqi border.

Conservative estimates are that Islamic State takes in one to two million dollars a day from oil sales; some see the number as high as four million a day. As recently as February, however, the Pentagon claimed oil was no longer ISIS's main way to raise money, having been bypassed by those

"donations" from unspecified sources, and smuggling.

One of the issues with selling oil is bringing the stuff to market. Oil must be taken from the ground using heavy equipment, possibly refined, stored, loaded into trucks or pipelines, moved somewhere and then sold into the worldwide market. Large amounts of money must be exchanged, and one to four million dollars a day is a lot of cash to deal with on a daily basis. It may be that some sort of electronic transactions that have somehow to date eluded the United States are involved.

Interestingly, the UK *Guardian* reported a US-led raid on the compound housing the Islamic State's chief financial officer produced evidence that Turkish officials directly dealt with ranking ISIS members, including the ISIS officer responsible for its oil and gas operations in Syria.

Turkey's "open door policy", in which it allowed its southern border to serve as an unofficial transit point in and out of Syria, has been said to be one of ISIS's main routes for getting their oil to market. A Turkish apologist claimed the oil is moved only via small-diameter plastic irrigation pipes, and is thus hard to monitor.

A smuggled barrel of oil is sold for about \$50 on the black market. Several million dollars a day worth of oil would require a very large number of very small pipes.

Others believe Turkish and Iraqi oil buyers travel into Syria with their own trucks, and purchase the ISIS oil right at the refineries, transporting it themselves out of Syria. Convoys of trucks are easy to spot from the air, and easy to destroy from the air, though up until now the US does not seem to have done so.

ISIS's sources of funding grow curious and curiously the more one knows. Those seeking to destroy ISIS might well wish to look into where the money comes from, and ask why, after a year and three months of war, no one has bothered to follow the money.

And cut it off. ●

A note on the ideological basis of the IS

By B. Prasant, PV correspondent in India

Political action is mobilised through ideology. The case of the Islamic State (IS) is no exception. The decline of political Islam and the vast empowerment of the western civilisation resulted in a 'back to basics' religious approach among a small section of the Arab scholars or ulema.

The fundamentalist movement started with the teachings of al Wahhab in the late 18th century. The movement is known as the Salafi movement. Called the Wahhabya ideology in the West, the movement preaches every fundamentalist form of Islam extant. It is intolerant, demonstratively cruel, patriarchal (hence misogynist), and stands in militant opposition to Christian practices in particular. It also opposes every form of liberalism in life. The basic aim was to self-strengthen Islam and enable it to recover political supremacy.

The movement, funded from the beginning by the house of Saud (the self-proclaimed defender of Islam in the wake of the successive decline of the Seljuk, Ilburi and Ottoman Turkish empires) moved towards a pinnacle with the pumping in of petro-dollars especially from the end of the last century.

Initially, and this is a tragedy, the western allies and patrons of the house of Saud would not even pontificate in discouragement of militant Islam, especially when their Arab ally funded the pouring-in of trained militants or jihadis into Afghanistan, then under a Soviet-backed government.

The tragedy started to unfold in the wake of the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the defeat of socialism in the east European countries. The jihadis, now in search of fresh conquests, and their ranks including bin Laden, came home to roost: they denounced the house of Saud for having allies in the West, and led the attack on Saudi Arabia's putative ally, the US.

From then onwards, the Salafi followers have been eager for an international political existence, drawing support from deprived sections of the population in Islamic countries, but also from elsewhere. The declaration of the formation of the Islamic State is considered an interim achievement by the extremist leadership. Clearly, the aggressive designs of IS can only increase in the days to come. In order to understand the propaganda war that has accompanied the aggression of the IS, it is necessary to speak about the clever use of media, but that is a story by itself. ●



Cultural figures promote climate mobilizations

In late November, prominent actors, musicians, and authors including Academy Award Winner Emma Thompson, Indigenous rights advocate and actress Tantoo Cardinal, Juno award winning artists Joel Plaskett and Claire Boucher (Grimes), Mrs. Universe Canada 2015 Ashley Callingbull, and Order of Canada author Margaret Atwood urged people across Canada to mobilize in the thousands to push the Canadian government to act on a growing climate crisis and transition the country to 100% renewable energy.

"The time has come to stop Arctic drilling and tar sands expansion," said Academy Award Winner Emma Thompson. "100% renewables is 100% possible. On Nov. 29 come out and make some serious noise so our leaders know we humans can't wait, the planet can't wait!"

"I'm supporting 100% Possible because I see climate change as the biggest threat to the planet our children will inherit. We are slowly breaking our reliance on fossil fuels but time is of the essence," said Juno award winning artist Joel Plaskett. "The world is behind the eight ball and Canada as a country must step to the plate and do our part. Where there's a will there's a way!"

"Canada can solve climate change, and do it in a way where Indigenous communities are first in line to benefit. March with me this Sunday in Ottawa!" said Miss Universe Canada 2015 Ashley Callingbull from Alberta's Enoch Cree Nation.

"As a grandmother and someone who has really woken up to what's at stake for our planet, we need to turn away from the tarsands and arctic drilling and embrace the tremendous opportunity Canada has to go 100% renewable," echoed Jane Fonda.

The Nov. 29 mobilizations were part of a global push the day before the U.N. climate summit opened in Paris. Over 2,000 events took

place worldwide, with the keystone event in Canada being held on the steps of Parliament.

The full list of artists includes: Basia Bulat (musician); Claire Boucher (Grimes – musician); Daryl Hannah (actress); Dallas Good (musician); Emma Thompson (actress); Jane Fonda (actress); Jen Grant (musician); Joel Plaskett (musician); Margaret Atwood (author); Peter Keleghan (actor); Raffi (singer, author); Rosanne Barr (actress); The Sadies (musician); Tantoo Cardinal (actress, First Nation activist); Yasmine VanWilt (actress, musician); Ashley Callingbull (Mrs. Universe Canada, from Alberta's Enoch Cree Nation). ●



Actress/activist Tantoo Cardinal and musician Joel Plaskett



MUSIC NOTES

By Wally Brooker

Ron Hynes: 'Man of a Thousand Songs'

Newfoundland is a province with a famously rich musical culture, both past and present. It comes as a surprise therefore, to discover that Ron Hynes, the beloved singer-songwriter who died on November 19, was the first Newfoundland musician to release an album composed of totally original content (*Discovery*, released in 1972). Hynes was born in 1950 in St. John's and raised in the outport of Ferryland. During his long career he won many awards and distinctions, first as an East Coast artist, then nationally, and ultimately internationally. His songs have been recorded by more than 100 artists, including Emmylou Harris and Christie Moore. Ron Hynes was so warmly embraced in his home province because his many poignant and beautifully-crafted songs explore experiences common to several generations of Newfoundlanders. As is the case with much great folk music, his broad appeal is directly related to those local stories. The affection in which he is held was evident in the outpouring of tributes at his statue in downtown St. John's and in the public singalongs of his famous song "Sonny's Dream". That song is a good place to start if you're new to Ron Hynes. Recommended also is the 2012 CBC documentary *Ron Hynes: Man of a Thousand Songs*.

Instrumental music for activists

When thinking of the kind of music used in struggles for social justice, most people probably think of music with lyrics. Over the past fifteen years, Stefan Christoff, a Montreal-based musician and activist, has been exploring something different: the role of instrumental music as a force to unite people and cultivate transformative visions. Christoff seeks to create instrumental music that nurtures the "dream-based and imaginative zone" of activism, and sustains the energy and mental health of activists. Stefan Christoff first began working as a musician in solidarity with Montreal anti-poverty groups in the late 90's. The scope of his work expanded when he organized concerts for activists during the Summit of the Americas in Quebec City in the spring of 2001. Since then, his artistic projects have included organizing Artists Against Apartheid concerts in solidarity with Palestine, as well as concerts in solidarity with indigenous struggles and migrant workers. Recommended recordings include: 'Duets for Abdelrakik'; 'Regard sur le 7^e feu', and 'Flying Street' (with Egyptian-Canadian musician Sam Shalabi). Check out Stefan Christoff's music at <http://soundcloud.com/spirodon>.

Highlights from the Latin Grammys

Mexican rock band Maná, one the most popular groups in the Spanish-speaking world, and Los Tigres del Norte, long considered the voice of the Mexican community in the U.S., joined forces at the Latin Grammys on November 19 to perform the Tigres' pro-migrant song "Somos Más Americanos". It's worth looking up the English lyrics to this proud anthem to appreciate the political nature of their performance, coming as it does after recent outbursts of racist, anti-immigrant rhetoric by politicians, notably Republican presidential front-runner Donald Trump. At the song's end, with the audience cheering, the musicians unveiled a banner that read "Latino unidos, no voten por los racistas" ("Latinos united don't vote for the racists"). The action was well-timed to coincide with an online Latino voter registration campaign. In other news, Cuban music fans had plenty to cheer about at the glitzy Las Vegas event. Best Video award went to Cuban maestro Silvio Rodríguez and Puerto Rican duo Calle 13 ("Ojos Color Sol"), Septeto Santiaguero won for Best Traditional Tropical Album ("No quiero llanto/Tributo a los Compadres"), and Cuban trova maestro Pablo Milanés received a lifetime achievement award.

The 'audiopolitics' of Noise Uprising

Verso Books has published an important new book on music by the American cultural historian Michael Denning. *Noise Uprising: The Audiopolitics of a World Music Revolution* is a study of the sound revolution that took place between 1925 and the onset of the Great Depression, a time when record companies from the imperial metropolises recorded musicians in colonial port towns and released millions of 78 rpm shellac discs for both local and international consumption. Although the first electronic recording boom fizzled out during the early thirties, it nurtured a revolution in the craft of music-making, as well as in musical tastes. While folklorists of the day argued about the purity as "folk music" of the recordings that local urban musicians made in New Orleans, Havana, Buenos Aires, Rio de Janeiro, Cairo, Shanghai, and elsewhere, these same recordings, with their non-European timbres and rhythms, challenged the musical orthodoxy of the colonial overlords, and were celebrated as subversive by many local revolutionaries. Denning makes a fascinating case for a 'decolonizing of the ear' - one that preceded the political decolonization that came after World War II. *Noise Uprising* is rightly being hailed as a classic. (Added bonus: a playlist of recordings mentioned in the book can be streamed for free on Spotify.)



New books to interest PV readers

Soviet Princeton: Slim Evans and the 1932-33 Miners' Strike, by Jon Bartlett and Rika Ruebsaat, published by New Star Books, ISBN 978-1-55420-109-9. Review by Paul Bjarnason

The authors of *Soviet Princeton*, Jon Bartlett and Rika Ruebsaat, retired to Princeton about ten years ago. They are well known for their leadership in the folk music realm, and for their long time research and publications in that field.

During their research of working class poems and songs in southern B.C. they came across a photo of a tombstone with the inscription "IN MEMORIAM PRINCETON. Killed. Winter, 1932-33, by Evanskivich & his DUPES. R.I.P." This led to the conclusion that there was a story worthy of investigation resulting in an extensive trip through museums, archives, and even the CSIS records of Arthur (Slim) Evans.

If ever one doubted what an inspired individual could accomplish, this book will put the mind at rest. The basic story is straightforward. The mine owners reduced wages in the spring of 1932 with the promise of a return in the fall. They reneged on this promise.

This was during the Depression and there was no union and anyone advocating a union would be fired. So the miners sought outside help from the Workers' Unity League (WUL) and Slim Evans came to

help. He organized a local of the Mine Workers Union of Canada and signed up the unemployed into the Canadian Labor Defense League (CLDL). Through careful tactics the strike was quickly won. But the local business men were not pleased, and started a campaign of anti-sovietism, cross burning in the name of the KKK and at one point kidnapped Evans and shipped him out of town.

The government, in the heavy handed manner of the day, charged Evans with sedition under Section 98 of the Criminal Code. Consequently, he was banned from organizing in the Princeton area.

The mine owners, not having learned the first time, again reduced wages, resulting in a second strike. Evans, not able to organize, became a candidate in the upcoming election and could thus appear and speak out.

This book is a fascinating look at the depression era and the history of the left: the IWW, OBU, WUL, CLDL, the Communist Party of Canada, and Slim Evans in the years leading up to the On-to-Ottawa Trek. ●

The Dog's Breakfast, by Kevin Dooley, PV Review

Another new book of interest to

PV readers is "The Dog's Breakfast," the fourth novel by Ottawa activist and writer Kevin Dooley, who is also well known in the Vancouver area where he lived for many years.

"Life is a pain in the ass." That comment by Tommy Brennan, the central character of Dooley's novel, expresses a microcosm of the condition throughout the world from time to time and place to place of political and social turbulence.

That condition, described in a captivating plot and recognizable and painful setting, expresses the ongoing experience of Brennan in Western Canada. It is an echo of his turbulent memories in Ireland during the "troubles" and the proceeding centuries during which his Irish kin struggle to survive and to find peace and comfort. The novel takes place in a housing co-operative in Vancouver, set in the 1990's. The action, frequently violent, revolves around Brennan an elderly, veteran radical, who is trying to protect his home and surrogate family from criminals and quasi-religious cults. Powerful forces of good and outstanding women rise to the occasion, including a family member who finds him. ●

"Soviet Princeton: Slim Evans and the 1932-33 Miners' Strike," can be purchased at Spartacus Books or People's Co-op Books in Vancouver. A Dog's Breakfast can be ordered online at www.baico.ca.

Tell Liberals to scrap anti-communist memorial

By **Johan Boyden, Central Organizer, Communist Party of Canada**

Visiting picturesque Ottawa a few weeks ago for a meeting with Elections Canada, I found a city still breathing a sigh of relief. Locals described a certain air of solace inside the beehive of tens of thousands of federal employees. The Harper Conservatives had shifted labour relations with the

public sector towards a neoliberal orthodoxy that at times felt like the Spanish Inquisition. This year, almost 20,000 layoffs of government employees had been expected in Ottawa.

A host of issues are still buzzing around, like flies over Harper's garbage, such as Bill C-51 (which the Liberals want to "amend"), and democratic reform (specifically "a special parliamentary committee to

consult on electoral reform, including preferential ballots, proportional representation, mandatory voting and online voting").

In coming issues of People's Voice, we will write about a wide range of issues which urgently require big policy changes under the new government. But swift action is needed to put the "Victims of Communism Memorial" into the dustbin of history.

Everyone apparently now agrees that this monument planned for Ottawa was ugly, expensive, poorly thought-out and imposed on the city, and "ideological". The new Minister of Heritage, Melanie Joly, has vowed to make consultations, and letters can be addressed to the Minister care of Parliament Hill. Some are already coming. "There appears to be an assumption that the majority of Canadians are in favour of the monument, and just want it in a less wildly inappropriate location," Oxfam activist Cathleen Kneen wrote Joly, adding that actually "it is time to can the idea altogether."

Exactly. Now is the time to send that message, in the form of resolutions and letters from across the country. ●

After the shock....

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Major strikes were planned next week against the cuts to holidays for workers in the AHP (hospitals), against the degradation of the working conditions at the RATP (transit), against the liquidation of the remnants of the public company of Air France, and against mergers and staff cuts in the public sector. These demonstrations have a good chance of not happening. With the lure of national unity and the manipulation of fear and emotion, union and political tendencies of class collaboration have been calling workers to surrender without resistance under the latest attacks of the bosses against social rights, by cancelling all the strikes and the labour fightback.

As union and political activists, we refuse to give in to this blackmail: the deception of "the spirit of January 11th" (*the period just following the attack on Charlie Hebdo in Paris in early 2015*). Capital, throughout that time, did not stop its destructive anti-social policies. It won't stop its imperialist wars. Workers in Syria and France are paying with the cost of their lives for wars that are not theirs. Since earlier this evening, activists are posting on social networks the words "your wars, our deaths". This spontaneous and imprecise message comes from the frustration and anger of all of us for the victims of imperialist policy denounced tirelessly, every day in high schools, universities, and in workplaces.

We, young communists of the 15th district of Paris, more than ever, denounce imperialism and its mirror image: blind and complicit terrorism. More than ever, we will rise against the pursuit and deepening of imperialist conflicts and wars led by our governments, for peace and international solidarity. In all the places of expression, despite attempts to stifle debate and dissent, we have only one cause: to put forward and defend the workers' demands, in France, Africa, the Middle East and around the world. Workers of the world, unite! ●

TPP equals "corporate enslavement"...

continued from page 5

over commercial rivals. People will simply not be able to reverse the neoliberal agenda.

Threats to food labelling, regulation of mining, fracking and action on climate change are still there. Medicines will be more expensive with pharmaceutical companies' monopoly over drugs to be extended from five years to eight years. New generation biologic medicines to treat diseases like cancer and diabetes with low side-effects will be more expensive for longer than they need be.

"The TPP creates a web of corporate laws that will dominate the global economy," as US attorney Kevin Zeese and TPP opponent said. "It is a global corporate coup d'état. Corporations will become more powerful than countries. Corporations will force democratic systems to serve their interests. Civil courts around the world will be replaced with corporate courts or so-called trade tribunals."

The people of the world are responding to the threat. Large demonstrations are occurring in the US. Over 250,000 people in Berlin protested recently against the TTIP. Australians must play their part in binning the TPP. The trade unions, which have shown considerable energy in opposing negative aspects of the China Australia Free Trade Agreement, must take an even stronger stand against the much bigger threat posed by the TPP. ●

ARDIS HARRIMAN

Ardis Harriman passed away in late August, surrounded by her family, after a long battle with cancer. A life long Communist, Ardis spent much of her life working in Latin American solidarity. An executive member of CCFA and the Cuban Five Committees, she was also active in solidarity with the struggles of Chilean people after the Pinochet coup d'etat in 1973. Alphonso, her partner of many years, was a militant in the Chilean CP organization in Toronto, and together they were well known for their cultural performances in English and Spanish of the poetry and prose of Pablo Neruda and other internationally known Communists and revolutionaries. A librarian by profession, Ardis organized the Communist Party's extensive library housed in Toronto. She was also a member of both the Central and the Ontario Audit Committees, and an Executive member of the Parkdale Club CPC. She is deeply missed by all of her comrades. The Central and Ontario Committees express deepest sympathies to Ardis' family and children Sarah and Stafford Harriman.

A Celebration of Ardis Harriman's Life will be held Sunday, Dec. 6, 2 pm, at the GCDO Hall, 290 Danforth Ave., Toronto.

What's Left

Vancouver, BC

World Youth Against Imperialism, Sat., Dec. 5, 7 pm, at the CSE, 706 Clark Drive. Live music and food, fundraiser for YCL participation at the WFDY meeting in Cuba, with speakers Rozhin Emadi (YCL delegate to the WFDY meeting) and Drew Garvie (YCL General Secretary), and more. See ad on page 6 for more info, or all 604-254-9836.

La Trova Nuestra, monthly Latin American social evening, Friday, Dec. 11, 8 pm, at the Centre for Socialist Education, 706 Clark Drive, admission \$10.

Ayotzinapa Solidarity event, Sat., Dec. 12, 706 Clark Drive. For details, call 604-254-9836.

Toronto, ON

Celebration of Life for Ardis Harriman, Sunday, December 6, 2 pm, at the GCDO Hall, 290 Danforth Ave. (Chester subway.) To send messages, contact Liz Rowley, 416-469-2446.

SEASON'S GREETINGS to all People's Voice readers and supporters, from our Editorial Board!

People's Voice deadlines

January 1-31 issue: Thursday, Jan. 7

February 1-14 issue: Thursday, Jan. 21

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

This year, put the Communist Party on your gift list!

This holiday season the Communist Party is celebrating the end of 10 years of Harper's extreme right-wing, pro-war government, and the upsurge of public opposition that ushered him out October 19!

But significant parts of the Harper agenda remain on the table, still in play with the new Liberal government:

- * the Trans Pacific Partnership, which will decimate the auto industry in Canada; undermine the supply management system, cut farm incomes, and compromise Canada's food security; protect drug company patents for years, making drugs even more expensive, draining our Medicare budgets, and fattening profits for Big Pharma; and allow transnational corporations to override elected governments.

- * a foreign policy of permanent involvement in US and NATO dirty wars against countries that pose no threat to Canada.

- * Bill C-51, which must be repealed, not amended, to protect our civil, labour and democratic rights.

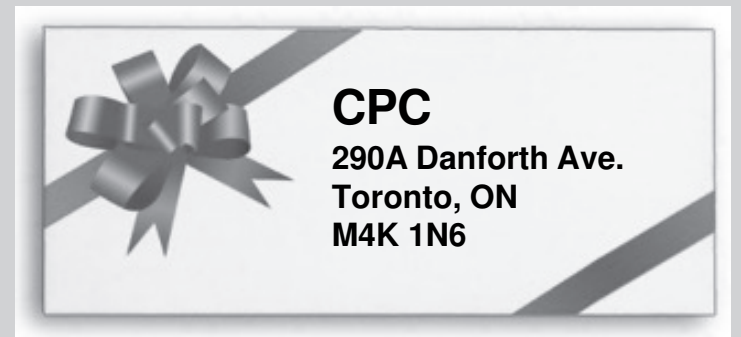
- * mass unemployment and austerity policies designed to drive down wages, incomes and living conditions, leaving our youth without a future,

- * the privatization of Medicare and attacks on the Canada Health Act.

- * the Immigration and Refugee Act which welcomes the wealthy and rejects the rest.

- * the Foreign Temporary Workers' Program that turns foreign workers into indentured labour with no rights and no access to citizenship

Canadians may not see it yet, but a massive struggle is shaping up. At issue is the kind of country we want, vs. the country the transnational corporations and their governments intend to impose. In this, they have the



support of both the Liberals and Conservatives, and on too many occasions even the support of the NDP.

The Communist Party has consistently opposed this anti-human capitalist agenda in the streets, in the factories and workplaces, on the picket lines, sit-ins, protests and demonstrations, on the hustings, wherever people are in struggle. Since 1921, we have fought for a better life for workers, youth, and women, for peace and disarmament, for sovereignty, democracy, and equality. We fight for working class and people's unity, and for strategies and tactics to strengthen the working class movement, while always advocating for a socialist Canada as the real alternative to imperialism, racism, fascism and war. Today this struggle is international as well as in Canada, and more important than ever.

We need your support now to help us organize through the winter, when many of the struggles mentioned above will be in full swing.

Your contributions help us organize across Canada around issues like C-51 and the fight to Save Canada Post, to print booklets and leaflets, to hold public speaking tours, educational events, and seminars. All of this and more is paid for by your donations.

The Communist Party is supported solely and only by its

members and friends – working people like you who know why these struggles are so important.

Thanks to tax rebates available from Revenue Canada for political donations to the Communist Party of Canada, contributors can make their donations stretch up to four times more than the actual cost, after rebates are applied.

For example, a \$400 donation will only cost the donor \$100, after filing the Official receipt with your taxes, and receiving the 75% rebate. A \$100 donation will only cost \$25 after applying the rebate, while a \$200 donation will cost \$50, and a \$300 donation will cost \$75, after the rebate. Please note that donors must have a taxable income of at least \$20,000 to qualify for the rebate, according to Revenue Canada.

Donors in Ontario can get around this by making their donations to the CPC (Ontario) which has no income requirements for rebates to apply. Every donation to CPC (Ontario) receives a rebate of 75% on every donation up to \$372.

For a 2015 tax receipt, donations must be dated and mailed before midnight December 31st.

Please make out your cheque today, payable to "CPC", and mail it to CPC, 290A Danforth Ave., Toronto, ON, M4K 1N6.

Thank you for your support! Central Committee, CPC

Anti-imperialist struggles today

IMMORALITY

By Kemal Okuyan, General Secretary of the Communist Party, Turkey

The Paris attacks had a bigger public outcry than the one in Ankara. And the one in Ankara caught more attention than Beirut, Beirut more than Baghdad, Baghdad more than Islamabad and Islamabad more than the one in Abuja.

After the Ankara massacre, the oddity named Mehmet Barlas* "relieved" us with the following words: "Get used to bombs, this is the Middle East". There are regions where people need to get used to violence and blood and then there are "sterile" regions, is that so? Given the amount of excerpts from Erdogan in the piece he wrote after Paris attacks, it is clear that this palace clown could not figure out what to write this time.

Not just massacres, but hunger and to poverty... one can not get used to any of them!

The number of deaths worldwide due to starvation has reached 8 million per year. How is one expected to get used to this? Go and ask a mother in Sudan if she "got used to hunger"... But since hunger is not prevalent in Paris, and hundreds of thousands in London, Berlin and New York are surviving for the moment, digging the street trash for food, it does not get on the public agenda. And the 50 bodies that were decimated by a bomb that exploded in a market in Baghdad is a news piece not more worth than a single column for the "civilized" world...

But why is this the case?

Because, before anything else, there is something called imperialism. International monopolies rule over almost everything from economy, to media, to arts and

The number of deaths world-wide due to starvation has reached 8 million per year. How is one expected to get used to this?

culture market, social perception. Or at least they attempt to. They would like all that happening in the rest of the world condemned to poverty to be reflected in the

However, there is something that goes beyond that point: Europe also happens to be the center of the most developed working class. This is the case historically; every



Western societies with the sentiment "Let's be thankful for what we've got". Anything more is dangerous. They won't let the ads of the food monopolies be overshadowed by the death of 8 million due to starvation!

Imperialism inculcates not only the rich class but all the layers of the society with the feeling of "privilege". This is something beyond nationalism. Western societies have been turned into fanatics of stability and calmness. This is to the extent that millions are ready to trade their freedoms for an exchange of stability. In this environment, their lives are more important, more valuable. They believe in that. That is why the bomb exploding in Paris resonates much more than the drone attacks that slaughter poor people in Pakistan.

Additionally, since the emergence of the bourgeoisie, humanity is in the hands of a Euro-centered approach. In short, the standards of civilization are defined there and thanks to those who came from there, also in the U.S.! Why should a security problem in one of the capitol of Europe, a relatively "small" continent, and a bomb that explodes in the country of Mehmet Barlas have the same impact?

This is pure immorality. It is the propaganda and fabrication of the damned imperialist centers.

period the class struggle intensified, say 19th century Germany, one of the phenomena that left its mark on the continent was without doubt the proletariat. And it is not immorality that the proletariat creates, it is the struggle for equality-freedom, it is courage, it is solidarity!

It is such in the objective sense too. Even today's working class in Europe is relatively more organized, it has one way or the other some form of class consciousness, it is more condensed and is reinforced by immigrant workers.

It is such in the ideological-political sense too; if the working class around the world is to rise up and reclaim humanity, the proletariat of Europe is bound to play a special role in this. We have the experience from 20th century, when the working class is defeated in Europe, in the final analysis it is defeated as a whole even if it scores victories in other places. This is the case because the opposing capitalist class is settled there, it is solidified there.

The claim that there is another Europe is wrong, the Europe of labour has been invented to serve as the breath of life for capital. Today, Europe is the Europe of the monopolies and that Europe has to be destroyed.

That the bomb attack in France catches more attention than the

one in Nigeria can only be excused by the following: a working class movement to rise in France will also help with the suffering of the poor and hungry in Nigeria.

But if you are not raising this class struggle, if you are still going around concepts like marginalization, Islamophobia and instead of pushing forward the class struggle, you are hiding behind words such as tolerance, multi-culturalism, you are immoral.

If you cannot admit the class behind ISIS, you do not state loud and clear how Obama, Hollande and all the ladies and gentlemen of England and Germany have handed humanity over to fundamentalism, terror and militarism; if you have no radical objections to the thesis that it is possible to collaborate with the bourgeois to save the civilization, then you are immoral number one.

In that case, the expression "no discrimination based on language and religion" is nothing more than a tool to normalize the grave problems of the capitalist world,

in other words nothing more than the whistling past the graveyard. If the explosion in Paris is not interpreted as the call to rise up in Europe against imperialism, international monopolies and capitalist exploitation, if the myth of "we are all on the same ship" is circulated once again to lull people, you may be better off enlisting in the charity organizations as a volunteer, to at least be the remedy for the suffering of a couple of hundred people!

The only privilege of living in Europe is the privilege of owing humanity. Europe will pay this debt only when its working class rises up, standing against inter-national monopolies, E.U. and NATO.

As far as that mission goes, the communists in Turkey are Europeans all the way; apart from that, they don't mind being easterners, highlanders or islanders.

*Mehmet Barlas, a columnist for the pro-government Sabah daily, consistently provides liberal cover to help legitimize the rule of Turkey's right-wing Justice and Development Party (AKP). ●



Aftermath of the Oct. 10 terrorist bombing in Ankara, Turkey

After the shock, more than ever, we must fight back against imperialism and its nightmares

Statement from the Communist Youth of the 15th district of Paris, republished by Rebel Youth

Paris, 14th of November: young communists from the 15th district, whom gathered with comrades from the province and the public sector unions discussed the events that occurred the night before.

The terrorist attacks claimed by the fascist and Islamist group "Daesh" caused more than 120 casualties with more than 200 injured, and the numbers are still increasing. Our first reaction was shock and a great deal of emotion. Everybody was concerned and affected by these events and many of us were near the actions as they occurred. Others worked close to these areas, as bus drivers and nurses, and lived close to the places where the disturbances occurred throughout the Paris region. Some of us, finally, knew some of the victims of these terrible acts of violence.

In these serious moments, when fear and tension are strong, we were revolted by the first declarations from our government and President François Hollande. Since 2012, imperialist governments have been supporting a war from France and the United States to destabilize Syria. Motivated by economic interests, they have put the Middle East and Africa through blood and fire and have not hesitated in supporting the most shady and reactionary movements. The biggest allies of Mr. Hollande, the theocratic dictatorships of Saudi Arabia and Qatar, are directly supporting Islamist groups in Syria: delivering arms, vehicles, and financial support. Yesterday, the monster Daesh, created by the imperialists, turned against the civilian population thousands of kilometres from Syria. Yesterday in Paris, innocent people of all ages, workers from many professions, paid with their lives and were killed by acts of folly fed by imperialist wars.

Yesterday evening, President Hollande announced the adoption of exceptional measures: the declaration of a state of emergency, the closure of the borders, the banning of demonstrating and gatherings, the right to police searches without judicial oversight, etc. These measures are the first of their kind since the Algerian Independence War (1962) and we are greatly worried by the attack on democratic and social rights.

see "After the shock..." page 11

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