

DEC.
1-31,
2010

VOL. 18
#20

\$1.50

people's VOICE

Hamilton steel lockout

See page 7

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

Hunger and poverty in Canada



**Food Banks
report record
demand - Page 6**

2 BC Fed meets

It's an election year for delegates to the B.C. Federation of Labour convention. There are huge issues facing working people on the west coast, and they need strong leadership in the coming year.

INSIDE

5
Harper's Declaration
Canada has finally adopted the U.N. Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples - but will the Harper Tories implement its provisions?

9 Gains in Greece

In the wake of huge popular protests against the Greek government's attacks on working people, that country's Communist Party scores important gains in the recent local and regional elections.

BC Fed delegates face critical issues

PV Vancouver Bureau

Delegates to the 54th annual convention of the B.C. Federation of Labour will start their work on Nov. 29, with a contest for a top executive position on the agenda.

A year ago, President Jim Sinclair opened the 53rd convention with a powerful speech that articulated the attack on working people. Pinning blame for the present crisis on capitalism, he went on to demand government action to protect the interests of workers, not bankers and CEOs.

"This is the fight of our lives," Sinclair said, "and it's between the vast majority of working people fighting to survive tough times and the corporations and their right wing governments... The corporate tax cuts are so deep, that in 2011 students will pay more in tuition (in BC) than corporations will pay in corporate taxes."

Reflecting the anger of workers like the Paramedics - legislated back to work without even getting to conduct a full strike - Sinclair's speech outshone the executive report, and infused a militant tone

into the convention. In response to the channelled options presented to workshops on the second day, delegates made some pointed criticisms of the lack of a solid fightback plan. Late on the final day, a composite resolution hit the floor, setting out an "Action Program" which was adopted with enthusiasm.

Analysing the "Action Program", B.C. Communist Party leader Sam Hammond later wrote that it was "a good start. Not perfect, but perfection is not needed as much as determination and a call to arms..."

The highlight of the Program was a call to build "a province-wide movement with our community partners to escalate opposition to stop the Liberal Government cuts to services and restore funding, including developing a unified message, co-ordinated advertising campaigns and regional actions leading to a province-wide day of action."

Other points included plans to produce popular education materials, lobbying of New Democratic Party MLA's "to ensure the party and the caucus

embrace a progressive economic and social strategy for British Columbia," co-ordinated bargaining strategies for public sector unions, a campaign against the HST and for fair taxes, work with community partners and First Nations to hold a Summit on Poverty, support for the Young Workers Committee and the fight to win a \$10 minimum wage, and campaigns to defeat the Campbell Liberals. The convention called for a strategic planning meeting of all affiliates to implement the Action Plan.

Since then, much water has gone under the bridge, including the slow-motion resignation of Premier Campbell, but the crisis facing working people in British Columbia has not disappeared.

Initial efforts to build a broad-based fightback coalition stalled after a rally of some 2,000 labour and community activists held in Vancouver last spring, and the province-wide action did not materialize. On the other hand, mobilizations around the minimum wage demand have continued, and the Liberals are under pressure to adopt the first increase in a decade.

Delegates at this Convention may have the opportunity to consider to what extent the Action Plan has been carried out, and to assess their leadership. The contest for secretary-treasurer, between longtime



At last year's BC Federation of Labour convention, Paramedics brought their struggle for decent pay and working conditions directly to their fellow trade unionists. (PV photo: K. Cariou)

incumbent Angela Schira and former B.C. Teachers' Federation president Irene Lanzinger, may indicate whether delegates want a more dynamic and militant executive body.

The debates on the convention floor may also send a signal to the B.C. NDP, which faces sharp internal divisions. The strategy by provincial leader Carol James to court the business sector continues to rankle many rank and file New Democrats and labour activists. Last year, about 15% of BC Fed delegates sat on their hands during the usual standing ovation for the NDP leader. It will

be interesting to gauge the reaction this year.

The pledge by James to maintain Campbell's tax cuts to the rich and the corporations is a particular bone of contention, since this would cripple a new government's ability to restore Campbell's deep cuts to social programs, health and public education.

During the upcoming referendum on the HST, the labour movement could play a critical role by fighting for the tax fairness proposed in the Action Program. This will be one of the most critical issues facing delegates, but also the incoming BC Fed executive. ●

how we see it...

People's Voice Builders #3

In recent issues, we have noted the contributions of several People's Voice press-builders. These are the dedicated volunteers who do literally hundreds of tasks that are necessary to publish a working class newspaper on a shoestring.

One of these tasks is getting the paper out into the eyes of the public. In the Vancouver area, one of the most effective ways to introduce People's Voice to activists young and old has been at the annual Under the Volcano Festival of Art and Social Change.

Launched by radical activist Irwin Oostindie in 1991, this event wrapped up a 20 year run last summer. The Festival brought thousands of people on the second Sunday of each August to Cates Park/Whey-Ah-Wichen, on unceded territory of the Tsleil-Waututh Nation in North Vancouver, to hear the latest in progressive music, poetry, and culture.

Starting in 1993, People's Voice was among the dozens of organizations and movements which took part in Under the Volcano. With a sun tent and tarps, our volunteers hauled in boxes of papers, books, leaflets, Che t-shirts, and buttons, for a fun day talking to Festival-goers. Often the PV table featured a petition on a current issue, from cutting military spending to raising the minimum wage, and we always collected pages of signatures to help build worthy campaigns.

Many of our Under the Volcano volunteers have been members of the Vancouver East Club of the Communist Party. Elwyn Patterson, for example, was in charge of security for the Festival for about a decade. Elwyn was also often responsible for organizing more than one display table, and usually took a few hours to help out at the PV display.

Under the Volcano is history now, a victim of rising costs, organizer burnout, and changing times. Oostindie hopes the event will return in some form, although probably smaller. Let's hope so!

The Editorial Board thanks all the supporters who took part in our tables at this Festival for 18 consecutive years. This effort particularly helped to promote the paper among radical-minded youth, many of whom picked up their first copy at Under the Volcano. ●



Talking to the public at the 2010 Under the Volcano Festival.

"Privatization, deregulation and greed" cause 43% Hydro hikes in Ontario

The Communist Party of Canada (Ontario) is calling on the labour and democratic movements to raise the roof over an estimated 43% hydro price hike to effect over the next year.

The cause of the hike is the break-up of the publicly owned Ontario Hydro under the Tory government of Mike Harris. Privatization and deregulation have shorn hydro users while "generating" huge profits for the private electricity generators, distributors, retailers, investors, brokers, and others on the for-profit gravy train.

"We need that rising tide of public anger to swamp the government and the Legislature with a demand to restore public power in Ontario, and put it under public democratic control," says a statement from the CPC (Ontario). "Otherwise, a 46% increase will be just one of many more coming down the wires to overloaded homeowners and tenants and small business owners.

"We need to end this gouging and profiteering by the corporate friends of the Tories and Liberals in Queen's Park once and for all. Putting energy under public ownership and democratic control means delivering power at cost, power that rightfully belongs to the people of Ontario, not the energy pirates and profiteers."

The Ontario NDP has responded to news of the price shocks with a proposal to remove the HST from hydro bills. But the Communists say this is addressing the impact of profiteering, not the cause. Privatization and deregulation of power must be addressed.

"Furthermore, why remove the hated HST only from hydro bills?" asked CPC (Ontario) leader Liz Rowley. "Why not abolish the HST altogether? This is another Tory/Liberal tax gift to the corporations, one that's costing the public \$4.5 billion annually.

"People feel like they've been had over the last 20 years - and so they have," Rowley added. "Ontario needs a new government with a progressive agenda that will put people before profits, and people's needs before corporate greed. That's what this is really about." ●

No time for spending cuts

CCPA/CALM

Given the fragile economic recovery and the weak job market, now is not the time for a sharp turn to spending cuts, says a study by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives.

"It would be a huge mistake to significantly tighten the fiscal screws," says the study's author, economist Andrew Jackson. "While debt has risen due to the recession, there will be a major human and economic cost if deficits are eliminated before a real recovery has been achieved."

The study points out that debt in Canada, even after two years of stimulus is still at low levels compared to other countries and compared to the mid-1990s. It warns against repeating the major spending cuts of the 1990s, which shredded social programs and

public services.

"Cuts will shrink rather than raise our economic potential. We need to maintain high rates of public and private investment to boost our future rate of growth," Jackson says.

Balancing the books can be done without spending cuts or raising taxes: deficits and debt will shrink rapidly so long as interest rates are lower than the rate of economic growth and interest rates are at historically low levels today. Once the economy has recovered, the report recommends changes in taxation to address the small structural deficit and to meet the costs of an ageing population.

Big Train Coming: Does Canada Really Have a Deficit and Debt Problem? is available on the CCPA website, www.policy-alternatives.ca ●



Trustees propose supports for Vancouver schools

PV Vancouver Bureau

Amidst turmoil within the B.C. Liberals, the next round of the struggle over public education policy is expected to unfold shortly. Vancouver Board of Education trustees are scheduled to vote Dec. 14 on possible closures of five schools, after an in-depth public consultation process.

The hearings wound up on Nov. 10, after hundreds of parents, students, teachers and community members gave overwhelming support for keeping the schools open. Many presented strong arguments that

closures would provide little net financial benefit to the Board, and place enormous burdens on poor and working class families.

On Nov. 12 - one of ten "school closure days" set by the Board's 2010-11 budget as part of cost-saving measures - hundreds of public education supporters gathered at Premier Gordon Campbell's constituency office to demand adequate funding for schools. Organized by APPLE-BC (Alliance of Parents and Partners to Lobby for Education), the rally was a powerful show of anger at the government's underfunding tactics.

Meanwhile, trustees from the

Coalition of Progressive Electors have introduced two notices of motion designed to support neighbourhood schools in Vancouver.

Trustee Allan Wong called on the Board to "convene a meeting with the Vancouver City Council, Vancouver Park Board, Community Associations, Neighbourhood Houses, childcare providers, and any other relevant community service providers to develop strategies to encourage the public use of public space."

Wong made it clear that COPE

Trustees want to do everything they can to see Board properties remain public use spaces in the event of any changes to schools. "These are extraordinarily valuable public assets that have helped support neighbourhoods across Vancouver for decades," said Wong. "We need to work with all community stakeholders and try as hard as possible to make sure these schools remain places that are publicly owned for the public benefit."

Trustee Jane Bouey's motion called on the Board to "develop a long-term neighbourhood schools

strategy in order to encourage neighbourhood attendance at local schools." She stressed that the Board would need to make sure community groups were front and centre in helping to develop the strategy.

"We have amazing, healthy, and vibrant neighbourhood schools in every corner of Vancouver," said Bouey. "The Board should be doing everything it can to help parents understand these are the perfect place for their children to learn: close by, with their neighbours, in a community they call home." ●

Big business wins Winnipeg civic election

By Darrell Rankin

Opportunistic failures by reform forces in the civic election blocked a shift in the balance of forces in Winnipeg city council, but voters delivered a stinging rebuke to the right wing majority on October 27.

Sam Katz was re-elected Mayor largely as a result of his massive election budget and the fire-proof pants he had to wear throughout the campaign to defend his record. Votes for labour-backed or reformist candidates increased in several races, including in Judy Wasylycia-Leis' mayoralty bid and in some suburban races.

Left divisions and too-small independent labour political action in the campaign were a major cause of another big business majority. For example, election night saw the defeat of both NDP candidates in Elmwood, including one who was not officially endorsed, allowing the election of a Tory-affiliated councillor. Two NDP candidates also ran in the core area Daniel McIntyre ward, where one

narrowly defeated a Liberal-affiliated candidate.

The effect of Ross Eadie's NDP victory in the core area Mynarski ward was cancelled by the Elmwood Tory victory. Eadie was the only candidate who called himself a socialist at October's Labour Council meeting, which makes his victory perhaps the most promising. The Labour Council distributed tens of thousands of voter cards to promote NDP-endorsed candidates and served as a source of traditional election-style workers in those campaigns.

The efforts of the Labour Council, the Winnipeg Citizens Coalition (an NDP-Liberal alliance), public transit and water groups, and two coalitions focusing on arts and food issues were uncoordinated and largely informational.

The Winnipeg Labour Election Committee, an independent civic reform group, campaigned for the targeted defeat of the right-wing majority on City Council, to mobilize people and urge a high voter turn-out. ●



Students from schools considered for closure joined this Nov. 12 rally at Campbell's office.

Toronto elects progressive majority on School Board

In our previous issue, Liz Rowley looked at the outcome of the Oct. 24 civic elections in Toronto. The second part of her article examines the School Board results and the outlook for next year's provincial election.

The Toronto and District School Board (TDSB) is ahead of the game

with a progressive majority, and a clear view of the problem - not spending, but an inadequate and unstable revenue stream from the provincial government.

A new funding formula has been a demand of School Boards across the province for almost a decade. Even the right-wing has been compelled to concede this point, pressed by angry and mobilized parents and public school supporters.

Almost one-third of the Trustees on the TDSB are new, providing fresh voices in the struggle for funding, and to secure staff and programs to fulfill the Board's mandate of providing universal quality public education.

Newcomer Howard Kaplan, elected in Ward 5 (the North York area) will be an added new voice from the left. As a trustee, Kaplan is committed to unite the most progressive members on the Board to fight school closures and budget cuts, and to push the provincial government to fund education from

provincial general revenues, and take it completely off the property tax.

Kaplan campaigned hard on this issue, and was rewarded with the support of almost 5,000 electors who also want better education and property tax reform - the biggest tax cut of all for homeowners and tenants.

Now the question is, can the TDSB move forward on the funding issue, uniting with School Boards across Ontario heading toward the provincial election of October 6, 2011.

The municipal elections in Toronto, and (in less spectacular ways) in other Ontario cities, do send a message: a demand for substantive and real economic relief for homeowners and tenants - working people, in short. For good jobs, services, and fair taxes, and for good schools and quality education too.

In a perverse way, those who voted for Ford think this is what they're going to get over the next four years. "A chicken in every pot." That's the message provincial Tory leader Tim Hudak is pushing, and it's the message Mike Harris pushed too.

To block the Tories and dump the Liberals next fall, the NDP and the labour and progressive forces in Ontario will have to take up genuine tax reform. The biggest issue on the table remains: who's going to pay for this crisis? Will it be the corporations and the wealthy, or the working class, the poor, and the unemployed?

If the progressive forces don't have an answer, the Tories and the right will, but it won't be one that favours working people. ●



Toronto Trustee Howard Kaplan

Put the Communist Party on your holiday gift list!

The Communist Party needs your support in 2010 to stimulate and help lead the fight for peace, jobs, democracy and sovereignty in 2011 - a year when the corporate attack on labour and democratic rights, on women, workers, youth and racialized communities will be sharper than ever.

With economic recovery exposed as nothing more than a recovery for profits, while working people are forced to pay the price with escalating wage cuts, job cuts, collapsing living standards and security. Youth face the prospect of a jobless future. The situation demands urgent action, mass political struggle, and an alternative and progressive vision for the future.

A small party with big ideas, the Communist Party is Canada's party of socialism. A working class party, we know the future will be grim without a powerful People's Coalition that can

mount a counter-offensive against the large corporations and their reactionary governments, and that can turn the tables in favour of working people, for real and fundamental change opening the



doors to socialism.

Please help us this holiday season, with a tax deductible donation. Help us build a strong Communist Party and a powerful and united People's Coalition to defeat war and reaction in Canada.

Your donation up to \$400 will generate a \$300 tax rebate when you file your 2010 taxes, costing you just \$100. A \$500 donation

will cost you just \$150. A \$750 donation will cost \$275.

Here's how it works:

For donations up to the first \$400, you receive a federal tax rebate of 75%. For the next \$350 in total donations, receive a tax rebate of 50%. And for the next \$350, the tax rebate is 33%. The maximum allowable annual federal donation is \$1100, for which the rebate totals \$600.

The Communist Party is solely supported by contributions from people like you. Every donation, large or small, helps us. With your donations, we can keep organizers in the field, publish new leaflets and pamphlets, build the fightback, and campaign for a progressive people's alternative to the crisis - during and between elections.

Thank you for your support! We couldn't do it without you.

Please make your cheque or money order payable to "CPC", and mail to: 290A Danforth Ave, Toronto, ON, M4K 1N6. ●

EDITORIALS

Harper isolated on climate issues

As the next round of climate negotiations resumes in Cancun, an Environics poll finds that the Harper Tories are out of step with Canadians on this crucial issue. The survey finds that 87% of Canadians agree that too much focus on economic growth and consumerism is a root cause of climate change, and that 85% think that industrialized (*i.e. major capitalist*) countries which have produced the most greenhouse gases also bear the most responsibility for reducing emissions.

The poll has other important results. Over 70% agreed that "the money spent on wars and the military would all be better spent on efforts that reduce greenhouse gas emissions and the impacts of climate change." Similar numbers support a World Climate and Justice Tribunal to judge countries and corporations which have contributed to climate change. And 83% want the government to invest in "green jobs" and transition programs for workers and communities negatively affected by a shift away from fossil fuels.

These results prove that the overwhelming majority of Canadians - including a big chunk of Conservative voters - support serious action on the environmental crisis.

What do we get instead? A government which gives the finger to Canadians, while ramming through its own pro-corporate, pro-U.S. imperialist priorities. The real Harper agenda was exposed yet again by the cynical, deceitful use of the new Tory majority in the Senate to defeat Bill C-311, the Climate Change Accountability Act, which passed the House of Commons last May.

Together with other surveys which reveal strong support for public ownership of the energy industry, this poll proves that many Canadians want to seriously challenge the corporate domination of the economy. Far from being on the "fringe," the Communist Party of Canada - the only federal party which stands for such policies - speaks for millions of voters who are increasingly angered by the destructive impact of the capitalist system on our country and the planet.

Broken promises on Afghanistan

To the surprise of few and the dismay of many, the Harper Tories have unilaterally extended Canada's military mission in Afghanistan by three more years, allegedly for the purposes of "training" Afghan security forces. The decision violates a long-standing pledge by the PM to adhere to the 2011 pullout date, itself an extension of earlier deadlines. If nothing else, this proves that Mr. Harper can never be trusted to keep his word on anything, other than his commitment to turn Canada into a loyal foot-soldier for U.S. imperialism.

Events will quickly prove that this "non-combat" role is a myth. The brutal war in Afghanistan makes little distinction between various categories of occupation forces. Canadian troops will continue to kill and be killed, and more thousands of Afghan civilians will be slaughtered. Those who support the extension on the argument of "protecting the women" should listen to former Afghan MP Malalai Joya, who replies that the withdrawal of NATO troops would leave her people one less enemy to fight.

We must also note the shameful role of other Parliamentary parties in this endless war. On this occasion, Michael Ignatieff's Liberals were the main offenders, singing the "humanitarian" chorus which gave Harper a fig leaf to claim support for extending Canada's military role. But Jack Layton's NDP also bears its share of blame. For years, Mr. Layton has praised the Canadian Armed Forces, without condemning the deaths and destruction wreaked by the NATO occupation. The NDP even voted against an earlier Liberal motion in the Commons calling for an end to Canada's combat role in 2009. While the Harper Tories are the most dangerous, militaristic party in Parliament, the Liberal and NDP opposition parties also have blood on their hands.

PEOPLE'S VOICE

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

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

Volunteers and contributors for this issue:

Dave Arland, Ed Bil, Johan Boyden,
Sam Hammond, Dave McKee, B. Prasant,
Darrell Rankin, Liz Rowley, and our mailers in
Vancouver & Toronto.

Editor: Kimball Cariou Business Manager: Sam Hammond

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

LETTERS

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

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



SPEAKING FRANKLY

A "Strategic Concept" for Peace - Disband NATO!

Canadian Peace Congress
Executive Council, Nov. 18,
2010

The eve of the Lisbon Summit of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) is pause for reflection and action on the future of the world's biggest instrument of war, and the necessity of anti-imperialism and peace. In the face of the military alliance's invitation to "rethink, reprioritize and reform" itself, the Canadian Peace Congress calls for all peace movements and peace-supporting people in Canada to increase their demand for Canada's immediate withdrawal from NATO.

For over 60 years, NATO has served as a key mechanism for imperialist aggression and expansion, with its roots as an anti-Soviet institution that was dominated by the military-industrial complex of the United States. Since the end of the Cold War, NATO has repeatedly sought to redefine itself and legitimize its continued existence; each time with increasingly tragic and violent conclusions. Since 1991, NATO has been the key participant in the bombardment and forced division of Yugoslavia, numerous reactionary coups and countless bloody regimes and dictatorships.

NATO has also used the war in Afghanistan to deeply integrate itself with the United Nations, further weakening both that organization and the institutions of international law. As the Canadian Peace Congress stated in 2009:

"NATO's ongoing war against Afghanistan is the current theatre of operations for the new strategic concept, and it clearly exposes the intent of U.S. imperialism and its NATO and EU allies to perpetuate in the 21st century the cycle of wars of aggression, militarization and economic crisis that characterized the 20th century. Afghanistan represents two significant and troublesome 'firsts' for the alliance: it is the first time NATO has undertaken a mission outside of the North Atlantic arena, and it was the first time that the alliance's 'mutual defence' clause had been invoked.

Both of these developments were nothing less than desperate attempts to secure a role for NATO in the world. Specifically, NATO and its core membership of Western imperialist states have used the war in Afghanistan to secure a foothold in the resource-rich areas of Asia, controlling strategic pipeline routes and encircling China and Russia."

Canada's contribution to NATO's search for a new role in the world has been shameful. In addition to supporting and participating in the aggressions against Yugoslavia and Afghanistan, Canada was a central player in facilitating the transfer of command of the Afghanistan mission from the United Nations to NATO. Presently, the government of Stephen Harper is committed to extending Canadian involvement in the Afghanistan war to 2014 or beyond, in a bid to prolong the conflict and NATO's active presence there.

There must be no illusion that NATO's search for a "New Strategic Concept" will diminish the imperialist drive for war, or that it will advance the cause of world peace, or that it will secure a democratic and progressive international order for the peoples of the world. NATO's expansion - its very continued existence - is a threat to world peace. The strategic concept that is necessary for peace and progress is the disbandment of NATO, and all other imperialist military alliances.

The Canadian Peace Congress was formed in 1949 - the same year as NATO - and since that time has well understood that Canada's participation in the military alliance not only threatens world peace, but also undermines Canadian sovereignty in both international and domestic affairs. Through NATO's nuclear sharing program and its longstanding nuclear first-strike policy, Canada is brought into the group of nuclear weapons states. NATO's position on the Middle East, which ascribes to Israel the role of "deputy enforcement officer" for the region, has contributed heavily to recent

and dramatic changes in the Canadian government's policy toward the Middle East and toward Arab and Muslim Canadians. Since 1949, the policy of the Canadian Peace Congress has been that the necessary first step for securing an independent foreign policy of peace, disarmament and international cooperation is Canada's withdrawal from NATO.

On the occasion of the Lisbon Summit, the Canadian Peace Congress:

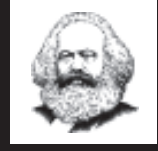
- * denounces NATO and the Lisbon Summit, and reiterates the demand for NATO's dissolution;
- * calls for Canada's immediate unilateral withdrawal from NATO;
- * condemns the continued war and occupation of Afghanistan, and calls for immediate withdrawal of Canadian troops and all occupying forces;
- * declares solidarity with the "Peace Yes! NATO No!" Campaign of the Portuguese Council for Peace and Cooperation and the World Peace Council;
- * remains committed to building and expanding the continued struggle against NATO, against imperialism and for peace and solidarity. •

Renew today!

Check your label

Please check the address label on the front page to see if it's time to renew. Subscribers who find "2010/12/01" on their label, for example, will have their subscriptions expire with this issue, Dec 1-31, 2010.

Don't miss a single copy - renew today!



Marxist Theory Today

Arundhati Roy's Embedded Essay

The violent armed campaign by India's Maoists against the Left Front government of West Bengal has killed hundreds of members of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) and other Left Front supporters. The Maoists have won the admiration of many "left" anti-communists, including writer Arundhati Roy. This response is by Sudhanva Deshpande, an actor and director with Jana Natya Manch in Delhi, who also works as an editor at LeftWord Books.

"Embedded journalism refers to news reporters being attached to military units involved in armed conflicts. Gina Cavallaro, a reporter for the *Army Times*, said, "They're [the journalists] relying more on the military to get them where they want to go, and as a result, the military is getting smarter about getting its own story told." (Wikipedia on "Embedded Journalism")

It was early morning, about 5, and I was waiting at the station for the train to arrive. As the book stall opened, I dove into the Hindi pulp fiction section. Surendra Mohan Pathak's first two Vimal thrillers, in a single volume, beckoned me. As I paid for the book, Arundhati Roy's name leapt out at me from the cover of *Outlook*. It was her long essay on the Maoists.

Whether we agree with Roy or not, we read her because she surprises us. There is always some statistic, some quotation, some ironic observation, that makes one say, "Hey, I hadn't thought of that before". This time though, I found myself being disappointed by her. It is almost a cliché of such reportage (of a writer's encounter with an underground group) to begin with the rendezvous and end on a note of wistful longing. Roy does both. Come on Arundhati, I wanted to say, surprise us - for clichés I can read Surendra Mohan Pathak.

One is of course glad that voices like hers exist, and that she commands enough star value for *Outlook* to bill their issue a "collector's item". Roy writes with feeling, and she is superb at catching irony - e.g., the description of Dantewada as a border town smack in the centre of India, or the Indian rulers' adoption of China's path as their own path. Her writing is poetic, it seduces. Even when you are not persuaded by the argument, you want to side with her.

In this essay, she introduces us to a veritable cast of characters: Comrade Maase, who "seems to have to swim through a layer of pain to enter the conversation"; the senior Comrade Venu (Sushil, Sonu, Murali) who "looks for all the world like a frail village schoolteacher"; Comrade Sukhdev, "a crazy workaholic"; Comrade Kamla, who prefers watching "ambush videos" to Hindi movies.

Er... ambush videos? Roy describes one, which starts with "shots of Dandakaranya, rivers, waterfalls, the close-up of a bare branch of a tree, a brainfever bird calling. Then suddenly a comrade is wiring up an IED, concealing it with dry leaves. A cavalcade of motorcycles is blown up. There are mutilated bodies and burning bikes. The weapons are being snatched. Three policemen, looking shell-shocked, have been tied up."

Roy was outraged and shocked, as all of us were, when Hindutva goons reportedly videographed

violence against Muslims in Gujarat and these videos then did the rounds of lending libraries. Comrade Kamla, who only likes watching "ambush videos" of "mutilated bodies and burning bikes", is marching. Roy wants to persuade us, "to keep hope alive for us all". Some ironies escape the best writers, it seems.

Consider the joke she recounts at the end of the essay. Sukhdev asks her if she knows what to do if they come under fire. "Yes," she says, "immediately declare an indefinite hunger strike." Sukhdev laughs so hard he has to sit.

So what is Sukhdev laughing at? At Roy's writerly wit? Or at her scorn for "indefinite hunger strikes"? In an earlier day and age, Roy helped focus the world's attention on a massive, peaceful, neo-Gandhian protest against destruction in the name of development. On countless occasions, hundreds of thousands of people took part in "indefinite hunger strikes" and other forms of non-violent and moral resistance. One may or may not have agreed

with every aspect of their, and Roy's, critique. But the moral force of their argument was unquestioned. By recounting her joke without irony, however, Roy mocks her own past, her commitment to a movement she was (and is?) so passionate about.

Reading Roy, one is struck by her refusal to debate. She sees nothing wrong in the Maoists becoming a handmaiden of the Trinamool Congress in West Bengal to exterminate cadres of the CPI(M), mostly tribals, Muslims, and other rural poor.

Well, ok. But what about the critics of the CPI(M) who are also the critics of the Maoists? Recently, several articles in the *Economic and Political Weekly* posed probing questions about whether we have reached the limits of bourgeois democracy in India, about the Maoists' belief in violence as the only instrument of change, the sheer brutality of their violence, their penchant of taking over peaceful resistance, their intolerance of dissent and debate, their programmatic understanding of the Indian revolution, etc.

Aditya Nigam wrote a thoughtful essay, and Sumanta Banerjee had a fascinating exchange with a spokesperson of the CPI(Maoist). These are criticisms from the left - not by Gandhian pacifists. All that is water off Roy's back. In rubbishing powerful critiques by cocking a

rhetorical snook at them Roy demeans herself.

On every criticism of Maoist tactics and methods, she responds with rhetoric, not reason. Charu Mazumdar fetishises violence and gore - but, says Roy, look at the beautiful dancing tribals. The Maoists believe in protracted war - naturally, counters Roy, because the really protracted war is being waged by the Indian state. The Maoists do not take part in non-violent protest and mass politics - why should they, asks Roy, what did non-violence win the Narmada Bachao Andolan? The Maoists dish out summary justice in kangaroo courts - but they don't kill everybody, Roy tells us earnestly, and in any case we all know how skewed our judicial system is. And so on.

In the end, though, the problem with Roy's essay is that it is a piece of embedded journalism. Trekking day and night with gun-wielding rebels is doubtless a reporter's fantasy. We need to get more such accounts, which give us a sense of the dreams and desperations that drive young women and men to the gun. What she does not do is question the Maoists' conceptual framework.

Reading her essay, one is struck by the binary oppositions that frame it - brutal state repression versus ruthless armed rebellion; mining corporations versus innocent tribals; rampaging

industrialism versus primitive communism. There is no middle ground, there are no other players. There is no conception of militant mass protest and resistance that does not take the shape of armed insurrection. I am not coy about the necessity to resort to violence, especially when you are under attack. The Maoists, however, are a different kettle of fish - they resort to bloodshed at the first instance, not the last, and the nature of their violence is also particularly gruesome.

The Maoists and the tribals, according to Roy, are one entity. If you have any sympathy for tribals and other poor, you must, *ipso facto*, support the Maoists. This is the terrain where the interests of the Indian ruling classes and the Maoists converge perfectly. In this framework, the only alternative to the violence of the state is the violence of the Maoists. Either you are with the one or you are with the other.

It is in the nature of embedded journalism to get close enough to the "action" to give us an authentic sense of the smells and the sights. Roy does that. It is also in the nature of embedded journalism that it remains prisoner to the conceptual framework of the embedder. A truly critical intelligence would cut through it and assert itself. Roy, however, chooses to be smitten. ●

"Implement UN Declaration in a principled manner"

Joint Statement in response to Canada's endorsement of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

On November 12th the Canadian government endorsed the United Nations *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*. We urge the government to move ahead with the implementation of its provisions in a principled manner that fully respects their spirit and intent.

The *Declaration* is more than an aspirational instrument. Governments, courts and other domestic and international institutions are increasingly relying on the *Declaration* to interpret Indigenous peoples' human rights and related state obligations. It establishes minimum standards for the survival, dignity, security and well-being of Indigenous peoples.

The *Declaration*'s provisions reflect established international human rights norms, including standards that are already legally binding because they are part of general and customary international law. It is simply inaccurate for the government to continue to claim that the *Declaration* "does not reflect customary international law". This is a "manifestly untenable position" as concluded by the UN Special Rapporteur on the rights of Indigenous peoples.

Canada was one of only four countries to vote against the *Declaration* when it was adopted by the UN General Assembly on September 13, 2007. In the last three

years, the government aggressively campaigned against the *Declaration*, opposing its use. Both domestically and in international fora, the government has attempted to undermine the specific rights and related state obligations in this human rights instrument. Such ongoing actions are affecting present and future generations in international negotiations on biodiversity, climate change and intellectual property.

"We remain concerned that Canada's actions, both domestically and abroad, are not reflecting the standards that the government now professes to support," says Grand Chief Edward John, First Nations Summit, "Actions are more important than words. We will be carefully looking for concrete evidence that the government's endorsement of the *Declaration* reflects a genuine willingness to uphold its provisions."

International human rights standards are vital tools in the promotion of rights that states have failed to uphold. They are intended to help guide the reform of laws and policies. It would be inherently contradictory to support an international human rights instrument only to the extent that it is consistent with current national laws and policies. International standards are crucial in ensuring respect and protection of all Indigenous rights, including those in treaties.

"The purpose of instruments like the *Declaration* is to encourage governments to change policies and laws that are discriminatory or that fail to uphold and fulfill the

human rights protections guaranteed to all," said Alex Neve, Secretary General of Amnesty International Canada. "Canadian laws and policies are not above reproach. We strongly encourage the government of Canada to use the *Declaration* as a tool in reforming laws and policies that fall below international human rights standards."

"The *Declaration* is important because it recognizes that the social and economic challenges facing Indigenous peoples are not isolated problems but part of a long-standing and deeply entrenched pattern of racism and exclusion," said Merrill Stewart, Clerk of Canadian Friends Service Committee (Quakers). "Honouring the *Declaration* requires a commitment on the part of government and civil society to forge a new relationship with Indigenous peoples based on partnership, equality and justice."

For the past four years, the Canadian government has not fulfilled its constitutional duty to consult Indigenous peoples and accommodate their concerns in respect to the positions taken on the *Declaration*. As affirmed by the Supreme Court of Canada, the government is not above the law. Following Canada's endorsement, it is our hope that the government will respect the rule of law and uphold the honour of the Crown.

"The UN *Declaration* is a vital tool for understanding and living up to the government's existing legal obligations toward Indigenous peoples," said Ellen Gabriel, President of Quebec Native Women. "Having given its support

to the *Declaration*, it's vital that the government genuinely work with Indigenous peoples to ensure that the *Declaration* is fully implemented."

The statement was signed by the following organizations and nations:

Amnesty International Canada, Amnestie Internationale Canada francophone, Atlantic Policy Congress of First Nations Chiefs Secretariat, Canadian Arab Federation, Canadian Council on Social Development, Canadian Friends Service Committee (Quakers), Chiefs of Ontario, First Nations Child and Family Caring Society of Canada, First Nations Confederacy of Cultural Education Centers, First Nations Summit, First Peoples Human Rights Coalition, Front d'action populaire en réaménagement urbain (FRAPRU) Québec, Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee), Indigenous World Association, Innu Council of Nitassinan, Innu Takuaikan Uashat Mak Mani-Utenam, Institut Culturel Tshakapesh, International Organization of Indigenous Resource Development (IOIRD), Kaniien'keha:ka Onkwawen:na Raotitiohkwa Language and Cultural Center, KAIROS: Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives, Louis Bull Cree Nation, National Association of Friendship Centres, Public Service Alliance of Canada, Quebec Native Women/Femmes autochtones du Québec, Right On Canada.ca, Samson Cree Nation, Treaty 4 Chiefs, Treaty 6 Medicine Chest Task Force, Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs ●

Food bank report: Hunger stalks Canadians

PV Vancouver Bureau

Despite the hype in the big business media about the so-called "economic recovery," hundreds of thousands of Canadians face a hungry holiday season and a long cold winter. That's the only possible conclusion from the latest HungerCount report on food bank use in Canada, and economic indicators which peg the "official" jobless numbers at over 1.5 million.

The HungerCount 2010 report, released Nov. 16 in Ottawa, is based on detailed surveys of food banks across Canada. The report shows a 28% rise in food bank visits over the last two years - the largest increase on record. Nearly half of all people needing food bank assistance are children or pensioners.

The rapid jump in food bank use since the capitalist economic crisis broke out in 2008 follows four previous years of decline. Every province has seen an increase in the number of individuals requiring help, and nearly three-quarters of all Canadian food banks helped more people this year than in 2009.

The report shows that the effects of the recession are still being felt across the country. Last March, the month used as an annual baseline for data collection, 80,150 people accessed a food bank for the first time. Since March is a typical month for food banks, this indicates that more than 80,000 people walk through the door of a food bank for the first time every single month.

Here are some of the facts and figures which jump out from the HungerCount report:

- * The need for food assistance increased almost across the spectrum this year: food banks saw more adults, children, and youth; more families with children and more single people; more women and men; more Aboriginal people; more seniors; more people with disabilities.

- * In March 2010, 867,948 individuals were assisted by a food bank, an increase of 9.2% over March 2009, on top of an 18% jump the previous March. This is the highest level on record, passing the previous benchmark of 803,335 in 2004.

- * Every province saw a swell in the need for food banks, with the highest increases in Manitoba (21%) and Saskatchewan (20%). While a large portion of the increase in these provinces was concentrated in Saskatoon, Regina, and Winnipeg, smaller food banks also saw demand rise significantly in 2010.



04 2008 union-art.com

- * Food banks in Prince Edward Island, Quebec, and Nova Scotia also reported larger than average increases over 2009 (13%, 12%, and 11%, respectively).

- * Of those who access food banks, 38% are children or youth under age 18; 51% of assisted households are families with children, and nearly half of these are two-parent families.

- * Those under age 18 saw especially high representation in the prairie provinces: 51% of food bank clients in Manitoba, 44% in Saskatchewan, and 43% in Alberta.
- * The number of seniors helped by food banks rose suddenly, from 5.5% of adults in 2008 and 2009 to 7.2% in 2010. The proportion of seniors was highest in Ontario (12%) and Manitoba (15%).

- * 40% of food bank clients are single-person households, many of them counting social assistance as their primary source of income.
- * Households with income from employment account for 17% of the total - the "working poor" who earn poverty-level wages.

- * The number of food banks users who identify as First Nations, Métis, or Inuit has increased from 10.8% of the total in 2008, to 11.6% in 2009 and 12% in 2010. The overall number of Aboriginal people accessing food assistance programs grew by 26% in 2009, and again by 13% in 2010.

- * Each month, between 81,000 and 84,000 new Canadians are assisted,

accounting for 9% of the 2010 total.

Often seen as an "urban problem," hunger is also a very real issue in small towns and rural areas. Forty-five percent of the food banks surveyed by the 2010 HungerCount are located in municipalities with fewer than 10,000 people. These 597 organizations assisted 123,777 individuals - 14% of the total, up from 11% in 2009 - in March 2010. Almost 10% of these people (12,180) were being helped for the first time.

Facing a second consecutive year of increased need, the food banks say that the ability to acquire enough food remains their top challenge. Those which report buying more food than usual are 57%, up from 32% in 2008, prior to the recession. Half of all food banks had to cut back on the amount of food provided to each household in 2010. Twelve percent of food banks actually turned away individuals and families asking for help, something that was rare in past years. Six percent were forced to close early, or simply did not open during their regular hours.

Nearly one-third of food banks have made special appeals through the media this year, and the majority have looked for help from corporations, faith communities, service organizations, and other food banks. Even after taking these measures, an astonishing 35% of food banks reported running out of food in 2010.

First launched during the recession of the early 1980s, food banks were already providing assistance to nearly 400,000 Canadians each month by 1989. During the past decade, that number has grown to over 700,000 per month, and now well over the 800,000 figure in 2010.

These rising numbers have long been the source of debate among anti-poverty movements. Many social justice activists argue that while food banks provide immediate assistance to hungry people, they also make it easier for governments to cut social assistance rates and eligibility by transferring responsibility for tackling poverty

to the private sector, churches, and individual donors.

Food bank operators have countered that while such arguments are valid, they have a moral responsibility to feed the hungry while continuing to pressure governments for improved social assistance.

After nearly three decades, a pattern has become obvious. Food banks have become institutionalized, a significant replacement for part of Canada's shredded social safety net.

However, HungerCount does make a sharp critique of official policies, pointing out that despite the slow rate of economic recovery, "federal and provincial governments are already planning to end stimulus programs, cut spending, and shrink their accumulated debts. It is crucial that they consider their next moves carefully, in light of both the economic issues that have plagued Canadians since the advent of food banks in the 1980s, and the lasting damage faced by individuals and families in this uncertain time."

The number of low-income people living in Canada, the report

points out, has not dropped below 2.7 million in many years. Despite overall economic growth, middle-income earners take home no more now than during the 1980s, and those in the lowest income brackets actually earn less than 30 years ago.

"The manufacturing, forestry, mining, agriculture, and fishing industries have all been weakened, and are able to provide a decent living for fewer and fewer Canadians," says the report, which argues that the health and social consequences of low income are extremely expensive in the long run. It notes that "losses related to health care expenditures, the justice system, social assistance, and foregone tax revenue stemming from the effects of low income have been estimated at \$24.4 billion annually."

The report calls on governments "to create long-term strategies for preventing and reducing poverty, hunger, and food bank use in Canada. These strategies must be integrated, and they must take account of the experiences of low-income Canadians, and of the changing nature of the economy and the labour market." ●

Jobless benefits denied for majority

In a critique of the Harper government's policies, labour economist Andrew Jackson recently pointed out that "Well under one-half of Canada's 1.5 million unemployed workers are collecting EI benefits today, even though the unemployment rate is still almost 8%. Special EI measures introduced as part of the 2009 Budget, notably an extra five weeks of benefits for all claimants, expired this fall, long before a real labour market recovery has taken place."

The additional five weeks of EI benefitted 900,000 workers, and temporarily boosted the "B/U rate" (EI beneficiaries as a percentage of the unemployed) to a high of 51% during the summer of 2009. But the measure does not apply to claims filed after September 11, 2010.

Jackson notes that the October unemployment rate of 7.9% is down from the recession high of 8.6%, but still well above the pre-recession level of 6.0%. Little change is expected in the near future; the latest official Economic and Fiscal Update projected joblessness to average 7.7% in 2011, and 7.4% in 2012. TD Economics has forecast an 8.1% unemployment rate for 2011.

Meanwhile, the number of regular EI beneficiaries is falling as workers exhaust their benefits, and others fail to qualify for EI due to high requirements for hours worked. By August 2010, the proportion of all unemployed workers collecting regular EI benefits dropped from 51.3% to 44.4%, close to the pre-recession figure.

Less than one in three (32.0%) of unemployed Ontario workers received regular EI benefits in August, even though the Ontario unemployment rate is 8.6%, well

above the national rate of 7.9% in October.

The federal government has announced that the Extended EI Benefit Pilot Project will be reinstated for two years until September 2012. Effectively this restores the extra five weeks of benefits, but only for the 21 EI regions which had unemployment rates above 10% when the pilot project began in 2005. These 21 regions cover most of rural Atlantic Canada, rural Quebec and Northern Canada, where unemployment rates generally remain high.

Left out in the cold, says Jackson, are five EI regions which have unemployment rates above 10% today, mainly in hard-hit industrial Ontario: Huron (10.5%); Windsor (11.5%); Niagara (10.4%); and Oshawa (10.1%). Also excluded is the Southern Interior of BC (10.8%).

As Jackson says, "the EI system has been dialled back to its pre-recession parameters, which mean as little as 14 weeks of benefits for those who just manage to qualify. But nothing is being done to help the many workers who have exhausted their benefits in especially hard-hit industrial Ontario."

The "recovery" also masks a crucial shift in employment patterns. While the overall employment numbers in October have returned to the pre-recession level, full-time jobs remain 102,000 below the former peak, and the number of part-time workers has grown by 110,000. Total hours worked in the labour market fell steeply during the downturn (-3.7%) and have since picked up, increasing by 2.9%. The number of hours worked in October 2010 remained 0.9% below the October 2008 level. ●

How to ride out the recession!

Step one:
be a capitalist
Step two:
don't be a worker



© Mike Constable 04 2008 union-art.com

Locked Out Steelworkers Head to Ottawa

"This is everyone's fight"

By Liz Rowley

A busload of Hamilton's locked out steelworkers went to Ottawa Nov. 15 to press Local 1005 USW's demand that the federal court grant the union intervenor status in the case of the *Attorney General vs US Steel*.

They also met with Tory MP David Sweet, Chair of Parliament's All-Party Steel Caucus and of the Commons Standing Committee on Industry, Science and Technology, to insist that the government must prosecute US Steel for breaking the terms of its Investment Canada agreement to maintain production and employment levels at Hamilton's Hilton Works, and for price fixing and manipulating the Canadian market place in 2009.

The Attorney General has finally moved against US Steel, which bought the former Steel Company of Canada in 2007. But not before US Steel had banked the last furnace, locked out its unionized workforce, and is now trying to turn out the lights in Hamilton.

US Steel Admits Price-Fixing

Local 1005 wants intervenor status to put before the court the admissions of price fixing and manipulating the Canadian steel market by closing down two Hamilton steel mills in 2009. The admissions are contained in an Ernst & Young document that US Steel has submitted to the court in its own defence. US Steel contends that it did not break its commitments made under the Investment Canada Act. In the document, Ernst & Young argue that the company's price rigging and manipulation of the Canadian market provide a "net benefit" to Canada.

But the union wants the court to focus on the admissions of price fixing and manipulating the market, which are criminal acts no matter who benefitted, and should be dealt with by the court as such.

In fact, while the two Hamilton mills were being closed and hundreds laid off, US Steel was opening two new mills in the US where labour - including unionized labour - is cheaper and municipal taxes are often waived for new capital investment. In fact the beneficiary was US Steel: what a surprise.



(Photo from Local 1005 website: www.uswa1005.ca)

The Investment Canada Act

The sale of the former Stelco to US Steel was widely protested by those concerned with Canadian sovereignty and independence. The transaction marked the closure of the last Canadian owned steel company, decimating any hope of a Canadian industrial strategy, and leaving workers at the mercy of powerful transnational corporations and their global institutions and governments.

Labour in particular was concerned that US Steel would close the Hamilton operation and move production and jobs to the US - a concern that grew with the economic meltdown.

The Harper government responded with the Investment Canada Act, which it said protected Canada's interests and guaranteed jobs and production levels for at least three years. Thin on details, the signed agreement between US Steel and the government was never made public.

But US Steel began laying off steelworkers and cutting back production shortly after the deal was signed, citing the global economic crisis as justification for flouting their legal obligations. The Harper government refused to act, and kept the terms of the deal secret to prevent others from taking action. Meanwhile US Steel (like others in the steel and mining

sectors) has been pressing its unionized workforce to make deep wage and benefit concessions, and most significantly, to give up their defined benefit (DB) pension plans.

Busting unions and pension plans

The Hilton Works in Hamilton, with 900 hourly employees still working, and 9,000 pensioners dependent on the DB pension plan, was the last Local union to come to the bargaining table. Local 1005's efforts to achieve a joint bargaining strategy with the Lake Erie Works fell through last year, when early bargaining resulted in a two-tier pension plan for the unionized workers and new hires at Nanticoke. The new hires will get a defined contribution pension - essentially a savings plan that is fully exposed to market conditions like the crash of 2008. Within 20 years the DB pension will be an artifact, and the well-paid, indexed pension plans won over a century of struggle will be gone.

The key difference between the two Locals were the number of retirees - not many in the relatively young Lake Erie Works, 9,000 in the century old Hilton Works. The company made the most of the difference.

During the same timeframe, the Brazilian-owned Vale bought out the International Nickel Company of Canada in Sudbury, and Xstrata bought out Falconbridge Noranda, also in Sudbury. The entire nickel basin, Canadian-owned and operated since mining began there, is now completely foreign owned and controlled.

There too, Harper pulled out the Investment Canada Act to justify the Inco sale. Vale, the second largest mining company in the world, pushed for massive concessions and an end to the defined benefit pension plan. The result was the longest mining strike in Sudbury history. Miners and smelter workers, supported by their community, courageously fought back against scabs and deep corporate pockets for more than a year, before returning to work for want of any other option.

Left out of the settlement by a vengeful, vicious employer, are about 100 workers at Voisey's Bay,

who remain on strike because Vale refused them the same settlement imposed on the workers at Sudbury and Port Colborne. A large proportion of the miners at Voisey's Bay are Aboriginal, a group Vale is known to super-exploit and oppress at its operations around the world.

A strategy to win

The fight in Hamilton has started out differently, and not only because it's a lock-out.

In Sudbury, the entire battle strategy was mapped out from the start in Toronto and Pittsburgh with a focus on bargaining, mobilizing local support for the strike, and holding out "one day longer" than Vale.

In Hamilton, the Local union is at the centre of the struggle, working to mobilize the whole labour movement and the Canadian public around the issues at stake: Canadian jobs, foreign ownership, the Canadian steel industry and the need for a made-in-Canada industrial strategy, Canadian labour and investment

PV readers, trade unions, and supporters everywhere can support the locked out workers with food, toys, donations, and messages or resolutions of solidarity this Holiday Season. Mail to: USW Local 1005, 350 Kenilworth Ave. North, Hamilton, ON, L8H 4T3, or call 905-547-1417 (email info@uswa1005.ca) to offer assistance. Check www.uswa1005.ca for information and updates.

Public ownership of steel key to rebuild industry, says Communist Party

The Communist Party of Canada (Ontario) calls on the federal and provincial governments to put US Steel's Canadian operations under public ownership and run it as a crown corporation. Canada's interests would best be served with a publicly owned and democratically controlled, domestic steel industry, an essential building block in the development of an environmentally sustainable industrial strategy for Canada. Ontario urgently needs to rebuild and expand its manufacturing and secondary industries, including a machine tool industry, agricultural implements, ship-building, rail, light rail, public transit, and appliances. It is also an urgent priority to build hundreds of thousands of units of affordable social housing, and municipal and provincial infrastructure. These industries would create hundreds of thousands of jobs in the short and long term, raising living standards, increasing purchasing power, and re-starting a stalled economy. The current crisis was caused by corporate greed. Workers didn't cause the crisis - they shouldn't pay for it.





GLOBAL CLASS STRUGGLE

Chile copper strike continues

A copper-mining strike by 1,551 members of the Collahuasi Workers' Union in Chile began on Nov. 5, with the miners dismissing company rhetoric about ongoing production as a deception for the benefit of world copper markets.

The company is Dona Ines de Collahuasi, the world's fourth largest copper producer, owned by global mining giants Xstrata and AngloAmerican, and Mitsui & Co. The union is demanding a larger share of the mine's profits and improved social provisions for their families.

The company claims the open-cast Rosario mine is operating normally under a strike contingency plan, but the union says the "plan" consists of 300 scab workers from outsource companies, providing output of no more than 18% of total production.

Key issues include health benefits, education for miners' children, and work schedules. Considering the vast profits of Collahuasi - net earnings in 2009 totalled US\$1.56 billion - the union wants company-paid health costs raised from the current 80% to 100% and education costs hiked from 50% to 100%.

Located in the Atacama desert in Chile's northern Region I, the mine is at an altitude of 4,000 metres, where oxygen levels are low and stress levels on the body are high. A US\$750 million mine expansion is underway that will lift production from 550,000 tonnes to a million tonnes annually, with altitudes expected to reach 5,000 metres in new mining areas.

Another concern is silicosis. Because of massive dust clouds containing crystalline silica particles, miners are endangered by the deadly lung disease. Miners work seven days on, seven days off, and a further point of contention is management's proposed changes to exceptional days off.

Most of the strikers have taken up residency in the shuttered Santa Maria School in the Pacific port city of Iquique, 285 kilometres from the mine.

Another Vahed union member arrested in Iran

Homayoun Jabari, a member of the Vahed Syndicate, has been arrested in yet another attack on the Teheran bus drivers' union. He was held on Nov. 9 when he accompanied the wife of Gholamreza Gholamhosseini - another driver violently picked up by police - to the Intelligence Office to try and discover her husband's whereabouts. Security agents then went to Jabari's home, took away his computer and books and warned his wife that if he didn't cooperate he would be in custody "for a long time".

Gholamhosseini was violently arrested with Saeed Torabian, publicity director of the bus workers' union, who was later

released. That incident came just a week after hopes were dashed that the union's treasurer, Reza Shahabi, who has been detained since June, might be set free. There are now five members of the union being held in jail.

Mac Urata of the International Transport Federation described the arrest of Jabari as "a blatant and contemptible attack on the union", and vowed that the ITF would continue campaigning on behalf of the union and its imprisoned members.

German retirement age to be raised

Labour Minister Ursula von der Leyen has defended a controversial decision to increase Germany's retirement



age from 65 to 67 starting in 2012, saying the country had no alternative as society continues to age rapidly.

Presenting a report on pensions to the cabinet, von der Leyen dismissed criticism from the opposition, trade unions and social organisations and said delaying retirement was "necessary and justifiable." Without it the country would be forced to cut pensions or drastically increase employee contributions, both of which would be unfair, she said.

The new retirement age will begin for those born in 1964. Only about half of Germans older than 55 still work, but von der Leyen said that was also changing.

"There are not yet very many, but there will be more," the conservative Christian Democrat said, referring to labour market statistics showing the number of workers between 55 and 65 jumping by more than one million between 2005 and 2009.

But social policy advocacy association VdK argued that increasing the retirement age was unrealistic.

"Anyone unemployed beyond 50 has hardly a chance at finding a new job," VdK leader Ulrike Mascher told news agency DAPD. "Ageism still rules in human resources for most sectors."

Over fifty percent of Workers older than 60 are likely to be unemployed, according to Institute for Employment Research expert Martin Dietz.

"The difficulties of older workers in the job market has less to do with biological reasons and much more with wrongheaded institutional policies," said Hilmar Schneider, director of labour market policy research at the Institute for the Study of Labour.

Tea pickers lose jobs to machines

Some Kenyan tea workers who took part in a strike against the introduction of tea plucking machines have not been reinstated, raising complaints from their union.

The Kenya Plantation and Agricultural Workers Union (KPAWU) said on Nov. 12 that two multinational tea companies in Kericho had not reinstated 40 employees for leading workers in the industrial action.

"The workers should be recalled to work since it is wrong for the tea companies to victimise them," said KPAWU national treasurer Joshua Oyuga. Most workers had resumed work after the union called off the strike in late October to pave way for negotiations with companies that had introduced the machines, he added.

"Operations at most tea estates are going on smoothly after the workers reported to their stations without any victimisation or harassment," said Oyuga.

More than 10,000 workers downed their tools for two weeks, resulting in the affected multinational companies incurring losses running into millions of shillings.

The Ministry of Labour is acting as an arbitrator between the union and the firms using the machines. More than 2,000 workers have lost jobs following the introduction of the equipment by multinational tea companies in Kericho, Nandi and Sotik districts.

At the same time, police officers deployed to patrol affected tea estates have been withdrawn. The police were sent in after the companies hired scabs to replace the strikers.

"Irregular" workers seize Hyundai assembly lines

Hyundai Motor Co.'s plant in Ulsan could call a temporary halt to operations if the irregular workers' sit-in strike continues. Hyundai vice president Kang Ho-don said in a Nov. 18 statement that if the situation continues, a reduction in production hours and even a temporary closure of some facilities will become unavoidable.

Irregular workers employed by a Hyundai subcontractor began their action on Nov. 15. On that day, about 400 irregular workers from a Hyundai subcontractor began a sit-in strike at the Ulsan plant, demanding to be hired on a regular contract. The carmaker claims it has no responsibility or power to negotiate with the striking workers, since the company is not their employer.

The workers initially occupied two assembly lines causing 1,200 vehicles and \$10.1 million damages in lost production and sales. The strike was expanded to three assembly lines by Nov. 17. Although the carmaker brought in additional workers on two of the three assembly lines, one of the lines continued to be under striking workers' control.

According to the carmaker's estimates, the strike had caused 4,300 vehicles and \$36 million in

lost production and sales during the first three days. The company has filed legal suits against the workers, seeking compensation.

Landlord murders cotton picker

Roop Chand, a Dalit caste cotton picker in Pakistan who was set on fire at the instigation of a landlord, died four days later in a Karachi hospital on Nov. 16. The henchman of a landlord in Rabo village, Kot Ghulam Mohammad Town, accused Chand of stealing 25 kilos of cotton. The men detained Chand at the landlord's home and tortured him for days, trying to make him confess before setting him on fire.

After his death, scores of Dalit community people carrying the body of Roop Chand held a demonstration outside the Karachi press club. Others staged a sit-in outside the District police office demanding the arrest of the landlord, Mir Abdul Rehman Talpur, a well connected political heavyweight of the area. Police have apparently arrested three other suspects, but the landlord was still at large several days later.

This kind of severe heinous crime against peasants is common in cotton growing areas of Pakistan, where wealthy suspects abuse their influence over police, district administration, and courts.

It is currently the cotton picking season in Pakistan, one of the largest cotton producing countries. Agricultural workers, including those on cotton farms, are not recognized as workers in Pakistan's labour law. They have no right to form unions and negotiate with owners, or even any legal right to use "workers courts" in disputes with the farm owners.

Cotton field workers, especially

women and children, get very low wages, and put in long hours in harsh weather. Textile industry workers are deprived of all basic rights provided in the Industrial Relation Act and other labour laws. 90% of workers in the textile sector don't have the job papers necessary to form unions and engage in collective bargaining.

PAME blasts Coca Cola

PAME, the All-Workers Militant Front of Greece, has denounced the transnational Coca Cola for mass dismissals of workers in Patras, Athens and other cities.

Coca Cola is aiming to increase profitability, abolishing workers' rights. It wants to utilize all the laws that the PASOK social democratic government, and the previous New Democracy conservative government, have adopted to create a lower-wage, flexible workforce. Statements by the president of the Hellenic Federation of Enterprises also confirm that employers want low wages, and further attacks on collective agreements, working hours and social security rights. At the same time, Coca Cola has announced a profit of 417 million euros for the first nine months of 2010.

PAME says it will help to mobilize solidarity struggles against so-called "voluntary exit programs."

"Monopolies are our common enemy," says a statement from PAME, calling for the working class and its allies, especially self-employed people and poor farmers, to take the power from the monopolies and "become the masters of the huge wealth that they produce, which today is grabbed by the few, the capitalists."

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

Send me information on the Communist Party of Canada

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

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

Parti Communiste du Quebec (section du Parti communiste du Canada)
5359 Ave Du Parc, Suite "C"
Montreal, QC, H2V 4G9
Email: pcq@cpc-pcc.ca

B.C. Committee CPC
706 Clark Drive, Vancouver, BC, V5L 3J1
Tel: 604-254-9836 E-mail: cpbc@telus.net

Edmonton CPC
Box 68112, 70 Bonnie Doon PO
Edmonton, AB, T6C 4N6
Tel: 780-465-7893 Fax: 780-463-0209

Calgary CPC
Unit #1, 19 Radcliffe Close SE,
Calgary, AB, T2A 6B2 Tel: 403-248-6489

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

Ottawa CPC
Tel: 613-232-7108

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

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

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

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

Major gains by Greek Communists in civic votes

Special to PV

The Greek Communist Party (KKE) was the only party to score major advances in the first round of regional and municipal elections held on Nov. 7. Nationwide, the KKE-backed list took 10.85% of the votes, up from 7.54% in the 2009 parliamentary elections. The Communist votes rose by 75,000, to 589,000, despite a lower voter turnout in this campaign. The result is also a big increase over the 480,000 votes and 7.22% received by KKE-backed candidates in the 2006 local elections.

This election followed the merger of Greece's former 1300 municipalities into just 325, and the 52 counties to form 13 regions. The KKE warns that this "reform", approved by the social democratic parliamentary majority, "will lead to new and deep anti-people changes."

The KKE ran on the "People's Rally" list, because in Greece direct participation of parties in local elections is forbidden. People's Rally nominated thousands of candidates, including well-known leaders of the KKE, the All-Workers Militant Front (PAME), the All Farmers' Militant Rally (PASY), the Greek Antimonopoly Rally of the Self-employed (PASEBE), the Students' Struggle Front (MAS), the Women's Organization of Greece (OGE), the Greek Committee for International Detente and Peace (EEDYE), and other progressive movements.

These elections took on an intensely political character, after a period of large-scale working class struggles against the anti-people measures imposed by the social democratic government of PASOK, the European Union and the IMF. At the forefront of these struggles has been the class-oriented labour movement, PAME.

The People's Rally scored its highest regional total in the Northern Aegean (15.74%), followed by the Ionian Islands (15.30%), Attiki (14.43%), Thessaly (13.10%), Western Greece (11.14%), Central Greece (10.87%), Central Macedonia

(9.08%), Southern Aegean (9.04%), Western Macedonia (8.22%), Eastern Macedonia and Thrace (7.74%), Peloponnese (6.80%), Crete (6.93%).

The list elected 40 councillors to regional councils and over 500 municipal councillors.

Assessing the results, the KKE Central Committee noted that the gains reflect an increasing number of people who are interested in the alternative political proposals of the Communists. The CC thanked all first-time voters who backed the



lists supported by the KKE, rejecting the intimidation and provocations against independent lists by the ruling class.

"This important increase in votes gives us new responsibilities and duties," noted the CC statement. "We understand the necessity to meet the challenge of organizing the struggle and rallying the people and the workers, to express the discontent and appetite for struggle of wider popular masses which appreciate our role and contribution, while at the same time having their own views on various matters."

The statement says the vote "signals a new path for the rallying of wider popular forces against the policies which have led to a deterioration of the life of the people and contributed to the sharpening of the crisis... The anti-monopoly and anti-imperialist current has strengthened, the alternative proposal for a solution which has people's power as its goal has gained ground."

Meanwhile, votes for the ruling

social democratic PASOK party fell dramatically, from 43.92% in last year's parliamentary election, to 34.67%, a loss of over 1 million votes.

The right-wing opposition New Democracy received 32.82%, about 1% less than in 2009.

The left opportunist SYN/SYRIZA current is undergoing an ideological-political crisis after collaborating in some areas with the PASOK. SYN/SYRIZA received 4.5%, down slightly from 4.6% last year, losing about 50,000 votes.

On the far right, the nationalist and anti-communist LAOS party received 4%, a decline of about 1.5% and 150,000 votes from its 2009 totals. The Ecologist party received 2.9%, a small percentage increase over 2009, but it lost 20,000 votes.

The KKE's biggest gains came in major urban centres, especially in working class neighbourhoods, and in areas where farmers and small businesses have intense problems. In these areas, "there are even better preconditions for the socio-political front of the working class in alliance with the self-employed and the small-medium farmers to be shaped and to acquire solid foundations."

Most notable were the increase in Attiki (14.4%, up from 10.2%), which includes the capital Athens, the industrial zones around the capital, and the working class seaport stronghold of Piraeus. Four million people live and work in the Attiki area.

The People's Rally list won 13.73% of the votes in Athens, and 14.79% in Piraeus. Other notable results included Patras (16.42%), Irakleio (12.13%), Volos (15.23%), Peristeri (12.52%), Kallithea (18.40%), Corfu (26.90%), Nikaia-Renti (18.30%), Lesvos (13.25%), Keratsini-Drapetsona (19.36%), Aigaleo (16.90%), and Ilion-Kamatero (20.16%).

In recent decades Greece has had a higher voter participation than many other countries. But in this campaign, the turnout was only 61%, compared to 71% in 2009. Voters lists have not been updated recently, but the KKE says that "a large part of the abstention, especially in Attica and in the municipality of Athens, reflects the people's indignation and the condemnation of the policies of PASOK and ND... It reflects positive developments, which are still in progress, towards the liberation of people from the bourgeois parties and the logic of the management of the crisis of the system."

However, the KKE also stresses that "abstention does not exert any pressure on the anti-people, anti-labour policies." On the contrary, it reduces the possibilities to reverse the negative correlation of forces based on the power of PASOK and ND.

Instead, the KKE "calls on the workers to take an active part in the struggle against the monopolies, against imperialism" and for a people's radical front against the dominant policies of the ruling class. ●



Rallies support Mumia Abu-Jamal

Federal appeals judges in Philadelphia debated on Nov. 9 whether to grant a new sentencing hearing for journalist Mumia Abu-Jamal, convicted in 1982 for the death of a police officer. The appeals court had already granted such a hearing on the grounds that the jury at Abu-Jamal's trial was not given proper death-penalty instructions. But earlier this year, the U.S. Supreme Court, rejecting a similar case in Ohio, ordered the 3rd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals to rethink its decision. Under Pennsylvania law, Abu-Jamal should have received a life sentence if a single juror found that mitigating circumstances outweighed the aggravating factors in the slaying of Officer Daniel Faulkner. Abu-Jamal and his supporters have maintained for nearly three decades that the original trial was completely unjust, tainted by a racist judge and a lynch-mob atmosphere. Despite skimpy and unreliable evidence, Abu-Jamal was given the death sentence. Solidarity rallies to support Abu-Jamal were held across North America in early November. People's Voice photo: demonstrator at the rally in Toronto, taken by Ed Bil.

Cuban Communist Party Congress in April 2011

HAVANA, Nov 8 - Cuban President Raul Castro announced that the Sixth Congress of the Communist Party of Cuba will be held in the second half of April 2011.

Raul spoke at a ceremony, attended by Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez, marking the 10th anniversary of the signing of the Cuba-Venezuela Comprehensive Cooperation Agreement.

The greatest event of the Cuban communists will be held on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the victory of Playa Giron (Bay of Pigs) and the proclamation of the socialist character of the Cuban revolution.

The Cuban president said the Congress will focus on the solutions to the economic problems, the updating of the Cuban socialist model, and will set the guidelines for the economic and social lives of the PCC and the Revolution. It will be a Congress of all the militants [party members], and all the people will participate in the main decisions of the Revolution, he said.

The proposed guidelines for the country's economic policy, to be discussed in the PCC Congress,

will be debated in seminars by the party cadres starting in the second fortnight of this month.

Raul added that starting Dec. 1 through Feb. 28, the project will be discussed in all the Party grassroots organizations and among the population and workers.

He stressed that the economic battle is today, more than ever, the main task and the centre of the ideological work of the cadres, because the system's preservation depends on it.

Cuba will give priority to its participation in the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America (ALBA), which requires short, medium and long-term economic collaboration and coordination to achieve its goals.

The Cuban president said Cuba and Venezuela are moving toward an economic union under a new kind of relationship that will enable rationality in the joint projects and which is an important step towards true independence. This relationship has been strengthened in the last 10 years and will continue doing so, taking into account the strategic planning of both countries, he said. ●

What CETA really stands for

Council of Canadians/CALM

Canada and the European Union are negotiating a comprehensive free trade agreement (CETA) that for the first time has the provinces at the table.

Canadian corporations are looking for better access to the European market for agriculture and minerals without having to meet stricter EU standards. EU negotiators want Canadian services contracts, including public services, with an added aim of transferring the \$100 to \$200 billion our local governments spend annually on goods and services into corporate profits.

That includes water delivery services at the municipal level, where large European multinationals see dollar signs in privatizing Canada's mostly public systems. But the EU is also asking that Canada rewrite intellectual property and telecommunications rules while banning local preferences on public spending by cities, hospitals, school boards and other local public agencies. On balance, there is very little to gain from a deal with the EU and much to lose. ●

REDS ON THE WEB

www.communist-party.ca

www.peoplesvoice.ca

www.ycl-ljc.ca

www.solidnet.org



Could fascism ever happen in Canada?

SEEING REDS: The Red Scare of 1918-1919, Canada's First War on Terror, by Daniel Francis, Arsenal Pulp Press, 2010, 280 pages, ISBN 978-1-55152-373-6.

Review by **Kimball Cariou**

When the danger of fascism in Canada is discussed, some argue that we already live under fascism. It is true that "democracy" in our society is severely restricted by the power of big capital over politics and the media. But generations of struggle for working class rights and freedom of speech have achieved important gains, making Canada today very different from Hitler Germany or Pinochet's Chile.

More insidious is the claim that "fascism could never happen here." This concept encourages people to downplay the significance of attacks on freedom and democracy, or to ignore the possibility of an "open terrorist dictatorship" of the most reactionary sections of the ruling class.

Could it happen here? A new book by historian Daniel Francis warns that this threat could become reality, "regardless of our commitment to freedom of expression and the rule of law."

Francis has written books on topics ranging from the whaling industry, to coastal First Nations, to the origins of the sex trade in Vancouver.

In *Seeing Reds: The Red Scare of 1918-1919, Canada's First War on Terror*, Francis goes back to the First World War and the 1919 Winnipeg General Strike. His research points to

frightening parallels with the capitalist state's post-9/11 policies, especially the tendency in both eras to trample on civil rights as the primary response to a hyper-inflated "terrorist threat."

Francis presents a vivid picture of sharp class and political struggles across Canada during the early 20th century, from the perspectives of both the ruling class and the emerging movements for labour rights, peace and socialism. He shows how the ruthless greed of employers stimulated the rise of radical concepts in all parts of Canada. Among the "traditional" population from the British Isles, and the more recent (and supposedly dangerous!) immigrants from eastern Europe, trade unionism and socialist parties made rapid gains.

This advance was temporarily choked off by the First World War. Many workers knew that the war would slaughter millions for the enrichment of big capital. But others were sucked in by flag-waving propaganda, rallying to help save the British Empire from the ravages of "the Hun."

Four years of war shattered many illusions. The bloodbath in Europe was accompanied at home by massive war profiteering and a sharp decline in living standards. The October Revolution in Russia proved that workers and soldiers could overthrow the existing order and usher in working class power. When the troops began returning to Canada, a powerful upsurge in strikes and revolutionary sentiments was underway.

Not surprisingly, the pro-

business "Union" government of Conservative Robert Borden was terrified by the bubbling tide of working class anger which led up to the Winnipeg General Strike. The government threw its resources into a dirty propaganda campaign, police spies and provocateurs, deportations, violence, and mass censorship.

Politically, the attack assumed two main forms. One was the accusation that labour radicals had been "unpatriotic" for stirring up anti-war sentiments. Closely related was the charge that unrest was spread by "Bolsheviks" - a term which covered everything from the genuine item to the mildest of reformers. Fourteen labour and political organizations were banned, massive amounts of literature were seized, and letters were routinely intercepted by the police. Progressive Canadians were indeed the target of a fascist onslaught.

The details make for compelling reading. But even more thought-provoking is the author's conclusion: "If there is a lesson to be learned from the Red Scare, it is that it - or something like it - will almost certainly happen again... If history teaches us anything, it is that in Canada we will cross the line whenever it feels as if the country is threatened."

In other words, yes, it can happen here. It's up to us to make sure it doesn't. ●

(A public forum with author Daniel Francis and Michael Vonn of the BC Civil Liberties Association will be held in January. See our next issue for details.)

People's Voice 2011 Calendar: "Working Class Heroes"



The 2011 People's Voice Calendar is now available. This year's theme is "Working Class Heroes", paying tribute to fourteen Canadian labour activists who played important roles in the struggle against the bosses and the capitalist state. The 14-month Calendar (January 2011-February 2012) includes a wide variety of memorable dates for the working class movements, from birthdays of prominent revolutionaries to the anniversaries of watershed struggles for peace, social justice, equality and socialism. The above photo from the Calendar shows demonstrators in Regina's Market Square during the On to Ottawa Trek of 1935.

For your copy, send \$5 plus \$3 to cover postage to People's Voice, 706 Clark Drive, Vancouver, BC, V5L 3J1. The Calendar is also on sale at the Ontario Bureau of People's Voice (290A Danforth Ave., Toronto, M4K 1N6) and our Manitoba Bureau (387 Selkirk Ave., Winnipeg, R2W 2M3). Rates for bulk orders are available on request.

British Columbia readers can pick up the Calendar at People's Co-op Books, 1391 Commercial Drive, Vancouver.



MUSIC NOTES

By **Wally Brooker**

NATO warlords take out Arcade Fire

A sold-out Nov. 18 concert in Lisbon by Montreal indie rock band Arcade Fire was cancelled on Nov. 2 by none other than NATO. The warlords claimed the band's venue was too close to the site of their 19-20 summit meeting and declared the concert a "security risk." Arcade Fire was taken by surprise, but promised to refund the 20,000 fans who had purchased tickets. President Obama and other leaders are converging on Lisbon to announce NATO's "New Strategic Concept" and Portuguese authorities are preparing to greet opponents of militarism with a massive show of force. In spite of the economic crisis and the impoverishment of millions of people at home and abroad, NATO's military spending and aggressive plans continue unabated. It's disappointing that Arcade Fire did not protest the cancellation of its gig.

Performers help launch Boat to Gaza

Musicians and dancers offered their artistry in support of the Canada Boat to Gaza campaign at an Oct. 29 fundraiser at Toronto's Beit Zatoun cultural centre. Performers included Egyptian-Canadian singer Maryem Tollar, Palestinian-Canadian dancer-vocalist Roula Said, Kathak dancer Joanna de Souza, singer-songwriter Andrea Koziol and downtempo electronic band LAL. The Toronto event was one of many fundraisers across Canada as organizers seek to raise \$300,000 to send a Canadian-registered ship as part of the international Free Gaza Flotilla. So far more than \$150,000 has been raised. Canada Boat to Gaza is a partner of the Free Gaza Movement. To make a donation visit <http://canadaboatgaza.org>.

Montreal Artists vs Apartheid XIV

Hundreds gathered at Montreal's Le Consulat bistro on Oct. 23 for the fourteenth edition of Artists Against Apartheid, celebrating BDS Conference Montreal, the Quebec-Canada conference on the growing boycott, divestment and sanctions movement against the government of Israel. More than 600 activists attended the landmark conference held that weekend. Artists Against Apartheid XIV featured contemporary artists such as the Cuban hip-hop ensemble Obsesion, Detroit rapper Invincible, members of Montreal's hip-hop collective Nomadic Massive and Iraqi-Montreal artist The Narcicyst. For a taste of this event check out Martijn Steinruken's video at <http://vimeo.com/16267864>. For an audio report visit <http://electronicintifada.net/v2/article11614.shtml>.

Where are Canada's anti-war musicians?

While polls show that 55% of Canadians oppose Canada's military operation in Afghanistan, prominent musicians seem reluctant to speak out against the war. Last year Bruce Cockburn, famous for his anti-war stance in previous conflicts, performed for the troops in Kandahar, defended Canada's military commitment, and jokingly accepted a symbolic rocket launcher. While some well-known musicians participated in the G20 protests last summer and many are involved in a variety of worthwhile causes, criticism of Canada's military seems to be taboo. It's a shame because it looks like there's been an orchestrated campaign to use musicians to prepare Canadians for the latest extension of the mission in Afghanistan. Witness "Standing Strong and True (For Tomorrow)," a slick propaganda video featuring country music artists, released on Remembrance Day and celebrated nationwide in newspapers owned by Postmedia, the successor company to Canwest led by National Post CEO Paul Godfrey.

Venezuela's revolution in music

British conductor Simon Rattle has called it "the most important phenomenon in music today." He's talking about El Sistema, Venezuela's publicly-funded music program that watches over 125 youth orchestras and the training programs which make them possible. Founded by visionary musician-educator Jose Antonio Abreu in 1975, the acclaimed program has thrived under the enthusiastic patronage of the Chavez government. It's estimated that 90% of the 330,000 children now playing music in the system are from poor backgrounds. In the words of Jose Antonio Abreu, "our ideal is a country in which art is within reach of every citizen so that we can no longer talk about art being the property of the elite, but the heritage of the people." El Sistema's flagship is the Simon Bolivar National Youth Orchestra, currently thrilling classical music lovers around the world. Find out more at www.fesnojiv.gov.ve/en.html.

Common Thread's singer-activists

For more than 12 years members of Toronto's Common Threads Community Chorus have attended rallies, marches, picket lines, celebrations, meetings and conferences to teach songs and encourage community singing. Now they're getting a little more proactive. In October the choir announced that they have several trained song leaders and many more choir members eager to bring their music to the people. Readers in the Toronto area who know of events that would lend themselves to Common Thread's musical vision should contact its Sing-along Committee at bob.biderman@sympatico.ca. Common Thread's initiative seems like a great way of fostering popular music culture across this land. For info visit www.commonthreadchorus.ca.



17th World Festival of Youth & Students

Let's defeat imperialism, for a world of peace, solidarity and social transformation!

South Africa
December 13 - 21

PV Youth Bureau

Over 118 countries will be represented at the 17th World Festival of Youth and Students, with 76 preparatory committees already confirming participation in the largest gathering of anti-imperialist youth in the world, organizers said in November.

As People's Voice has reported, the Festival will be held in South Africa, making it the first of these historic gatherings to be held in sub-Saharan Africa. The meeting is a phenomenal expression of solidarity, peace and the progressive spirit of the youth and student movement internationally.

Organizers have announced that the Pretoria's University of South Africa (UNISA), will serve as venue for the majority of activities such as seminars, lectures, workshops, solidarity meetings, the Friendship Fair and the Anti-Imperialist Court, among others.

A few events will also be held in Johannesburg around "Soccer City, (close to the community formerly known as Soweto) and Constitution Hill in downtown Johannesburg.

"The two cities are next to each other, like Hamilton and Toronto," Canadian Festival co-chair Johan Boyden told PV. "Or you could say it is like holding the festival mainly at SFU with some special events on certain days in Abbotsford."

The Canadian delegation will be between 40 and 50 people. "It is a major financial challenge to send

youth to the festival this year," Boyden said, "but we are doing a final financial push and hoping to send at least this amount."

The delegation includes representatives from the Canadian Federation of Students, women's and peace organizations, young workers in seven trade unions, as well as representatives from the Quebec youth movement and several aboriginal youth activists. The delegation will also include members of the Young Communist League of Canada.

The Festival will take a stand against war, development models that damage the environment, unemployment, hunger, limited access to education and health and other problems that affect mankind. It will also demand freedom for the five Cuban antiterrorists imprisoned in the United States for more than 12 years and will support the fight for the independence of Palestine and Western Sahara.

Some of the delegations that have confirmed their attendance are from Venezuela, Brazil, Angola, Namibia, Mozambique, Algeria, Syria, Russia, Spain, Portugal, Vietnam and Korea.

The Festival has not been without controversy, however.

Earlier in November the Democratic Alliance, (a center-right political party tracing its roots as an opposition party in the white-only Apartheid parliament) withdrew from the national organizing committee of South Africa.

The Party singled out the participation of youth from Zimbabwe and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, calling it a young totalitarian's conference. Among over 100 events, one is entitled "Tribune against Nuclear Bombs, Agent Orange and for solidarity with Korea." The right-wing racist Freedom Front Plus Party has also condemned the festival for costing over \$4 million CND.

"The money we've been given is actually very little," the chair of the South Africa committee told newspapers in response. "We are talking about a big festival here, if you can look at how much was put by the government into the soccer World Cup".

Mobilizations for the festival are now entering their last stage and showing the truly global character of the event. The National Preparatory Committee of Bangladesh, for example, took the streets in mid-December to defend public control of the natural resources of the country, such as gas and oil, under attack by globalization.

"I think this is going to be an amazing life-changing experience for the Canadian delegation and all the youth involved. But not just a cool experience, a moment of powerful inspiration deeply connected with our own struggles back at home," Boyden told People's Voice. "As the slogan of the festival says, we will defeat Imperialism, for a world of peace, solidarity and social transformation!" •

Real solutions, demands Communist Party candidate

A message From Frank Komarniski, Communist Party candidate in the Nov. 29 by-election for Winnipeg North.

The Communist Party is campaigning for good-paying jobs and access to education. We are demanding Canada get out of the terrible war in Afghanistan, right now.

I think Manitoba can stop being a low-wage, racist backwater. The North End of Winnipeg can stop being a backwater of this backwater. The Communist Party has real solutions for the real problems, not the same old policies that got us here in the first place.

Communists have always fought for a better society in Canada. But today, much of what we helped win is in danger because of the growing economic crisis, government cuts, privatization of health care and water, and the growing harm of climate change.

Young people are denied their future by the loss of nearly 10,000 manufacturing jobs in Manitoba in the last two years.

Young people are denied an education by tuition hikes in Manitoba and by the Harper government's racist underfunding of post-secondary education for Aboriginal students.

I don't want young people to inherit a planet destroyed by climate change. Backed by the

Harper government, the giant energy corporations are recklessly promoting uncontrolled energy consumption for the selfish goal of increasing their bloated profits.

The Communist Party is demanding that the government nationalize the energy companies, that they become public property. We are demanding caps on carbon emissions.

The other major parties have no solution. The Manitoba government supports a system that failed in Europe (cap and trade). It will be a failure like the Kyoto treaty.

Canada is a wealthy country. Yet millions of nearly-retired Canadians owe the banks billions of dollars; their homes are almost entirely mortgaged. People who



Frank Komarniski

have worked all their life will retire to food banks and total poverty. The Communist Party will nationalize the banks and cancel the debts because housing is a right. We will increase public pensions above the poverty line.

Turning to the war in Afghanistan, which imposes death and destruction on the people of that country. We have no business being there. How is it that we are building schools, roads and water systems there, when we don't have the same for Aboriginal peoples in Canada? George Bush should be tried as a war criminal, and so should the Canadian politicians that put our troops in Afghanistan.

Liberal and Conservative governments have used the war against terror to trample on civil rights in Canada. Last summer more than 1,000 mainly young people were arrested for peacefully demonstrating at the G8 summit in Toronto. This must stop.

The people of Afghanistan have every right to resist the occupation of their country, just as the Aboriginal peoples of Canada have every right to fight politically and however they can for full national self-determination, a right all nations have in international law.

The Communists have a dream, where all nations in Canada are equal and develop in a voluntary partnership. Canada must stop being a prison house of nations where only the

What's Left

Surrey, BC

Indo Canadian Workers' Association will release its 2011 calendar in partnership with Radio India, dedicated to Comrade Darshan Singh Canadian, shot dead by terrorists in Punjab in 1986. The unveiling ceremony of the calendar will be 1-5pm, Sunday, Dec. 19, Strawberry Hill Public Library, 7399-122 St.

Burnaby, BC

Evening of Labour Songs, a tribute to Rod Doran & Gary Campbell. Sat., Dec. 11, 6:30 pm, dinner & program to follow, \$15/person; \$20/solidarity price. Seating limited at 5435 Kincaid St. Call for reservations: Anna 604-294-6775. Auspices Burnaby Club.

Vancouver, BC

Support John Graham, fundraising dinner and anti-uranium mining presentation, 6-10 pm, Fri., Nov. 26, Centre for Socialist Education, 706 Clark Drive. Sliding scale \$10-15, proceeds to legal defense and family expenses.

People's Assembly on Climate Justice, Tue., Dec. 7, 7 pm, at SFU Harbour Center, 555 W. Hastings, followed by Mass Direct Action for Climate Justice, Sat., Dec. 11, 12 noon, starting at Waterfront Skytrain Station (Howe Street exit).

Winter Solstice Celebration, 1-4 pm, Thur., Dec. 16, at the Centre for Socialist Education, 706 Clark Drive.

"**Seeing Reds**," public forum on past and present state repression in Canada, with author Daniel Francis (see review on page 10), and Michael Vonn of the B.C. Civil Liberties

Association, Wed., Jan. 19, 7:30 pm, SFU Harbour Centre, 555 W. Hastings. Sponsored by People's Voice and People's Co-op Bookstore, ph. 604-255-2041 for more info.

Winnipeg, MB

Why is there poverty? conference, Sun., Dec. 5. To help plan or register, contact Four Directions Committee at 792-3371 or fourdirectionswalk@mts.net.

Marxism course, classes begin early next year. Pre-register with the Communist Party, 586-7824 or cpc-mb@mts.net.

Toronto, ON

Youth Festival fundraiser, Sat., Nov. 27, 6:30 pm, Greek Hall, 290 Danforth (Chester subway). Support the Canadian delegation to 17th World Festival of Youth and Students in South Africa. Delicious food, good company, cash bar, live music!

People's Assembly on Climate Justice, Sat., Dec. 4, 9:30 am, Sidney South Hall, 100 St. George St., SS2118. Sponsored by Council of Canadians, Greenpeace, OPIRG-Toronto and others, for info call 647-869-6496.

Annual Jose Marti Dinner and Dance, Jan. 29, 2011, 7 pm, Bloor Street United, 300 Bloor St. West. Advance prepaid tickets \$30, or \$40 at the Door. Sponsored by Canadian-Cuban Friendship Association Toronto.

Montreal, QC

Palestinians And Jews United, vigil against the occupation, every Friday at noon, Sainte-Catherine and Union (near Metro McGill).

People's Voice deadlines:

JANUARY 1-15 issue: Thursday, Dec. 9

JANUARY 16-31 issue: Thursday, Jan. 6

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

corporate elite in Canada's English-speaking nation have control.

The low wages caused by racism and national inequality create a super-profit gravy train for these elite, a huge problem in Manitoba.

We live in a society where people live in constant fear of losing their job, where families are on the edge of losing their homes, where children are afraid every month when there is no food, where young people can't start a family, and where all these fears are doubled for Aboriginal people, people of colour and women and youth and people with disabilities.

There is too much fear in the North End of Winnipeg. The Communist Party has a plan to end these fears, and for everyone to have a good-paying job and an education.

No single political party can change society. No party can claim credit for establishing medicare or unemployment insurance. Accomplishments like medicare were made

by thousands and millions of working people, in trade unions and in their faith organizations, in student groups and women's organizations. We need to build up those historic struggles once again, to turn society around.

We can create good-paying jobs, we can create a society that takes care of children and educates our youth. We can end poverty and social inequality. We can get Canada out of Afghanistan and we can solve the problem of inequality among the nations in Canada.

Read the Communist Party's policies and see why they are the only realistic solution to the injustice of our present society. They are the most advanced ideas in this election, but we need them today. Their time has come.

A vote for the Communist Party is a vote for real change. It is a vote for the future, a vote against war, a vote to put people before profit, a vote for jobs and education. It is a vote to end fear and to create a far better society. •

Afghanistan war: the crucible for reorienting Canadian foreign policy

By **Dave McKee, President, Canadian Peace Congress**

Operation Apollo, Operation Athena, Operation Archer, Operation Accius, Operation Altair ... since Canada first entered the war on Afghanistan in 2001 the list of extensions, renewals and "spin-offs" has gone on and on and on. Originally scheduled to end in 2003, Canada's involvement in this imperialist aggression threatens to continue until 2014 if Prime Minister Stephen Harper gets his way.

Afghanistan has been the central preoccupation of Canadian foreign policy over the past decade. It has also been a main focus of peace movement activity. Mobilizations against the war in Afghanistan have not been nearly as spectacular as those against the invasion of Iraq in 2003. The build up was slower, and it took more time to locate a basis of unity upon which to build mobilizations.

But, for the entire decade, opinion polls have repeatedly shown that a majority of Canadians disagree with the war. Despite massive spending on huge PR campaigns to "sell" the war to the public, and the constant ideological bombardment from the government, the military and its allied industries, and the corporate media, Canadians remain opposed to this war.

Yet successive Canadian governments (both Liberal and Conservative) have pursued a policy of war. Clearly, the state has an interest in the Afghanistan war that surpasses (and diminishes) the electoral concerns of any individual party or government. Examining and understanding this interest is key to strengthening both the anti-war effort and the broader movement for peace and progress.

The advanced sections of the peace movements have long understood that the war in Afghanistan was never a localized conflict. From the get-go, it was part of a regional campaign that includes the war against Iraq and Israel's role in the Middle East.

To overly simplify the situation, the war in Afghanistan was a key component in the drive by the United States (and its Canadian and British allies) to recolonize a huge, resource-rich area of the world. While this view is quite correct, it is obviously a truncated assessment of a much more complicated issue.

A related way of looking at things is to view the war in Afghanistan as the crucible in which a new direction in Canadian

"Successive Canadian governments (both Liberal and Conservative) have pursued a policy of war. Clearly, the state has an interest in the Afghanistan war that surpasses (and diminishes) the electoral concerns of any individual party or government."

foreign policy is being tested and clarified. There are a number of elements to this policy shift:

- * a deliberate and dramatic shift away from UN-oriented multilateralism toward an "ad-hoc" multilateralism. (There are many problems with the United Nations, but to replace it with makeshift "coalitions of the willing" is nothing short of gangster politics on a global scale);

- * a heightened emphasis on NATO and identifying a new role for that military alliance;

- * a definite move away from "traditional peacekeeping" (again, there are plenty of problems with this role and these missions, but Canada is certainly not moving toward an improved model);
- * a more aggressive posture in foreign policy, with greater emphasis on military action, sanctions, terror lists, etc., instead of development, diplomacy, cooperation, and peace;

- * a more brash statement of Canadian economic interests as key to foreign policy developments.

These changes are deeply at play in Canada's involvement in Afghanistan. Perhaps the clearest example is the Canada First Defence Strategy (CFDS), the Harper

government's blueprint for defence and foreign policy. The following excerpts from a 2008 Canadian Peace Congress statement on CFDS provide a sense of the scope of the reorientation in Canadian foreign policy, how tightly related it is to the war in Afghanistan, and the profound implications it has for domestic policy:

"CFDS is the manifesto of the most aggressive circles of Canadian finance capital seeking with a bigger military budget to strengthen its influence at the round tables in Washington and Brussels.

"The CFDS flaunts military power as the essential ingredient of Canadian diplomacy in international affairs. CFDS promotes the growth, modernization and combat readiness of the Canadian

military and its interoperability with US military forces for one main reason, to commit Canada to current and future US-NATO wars, interventions and occupations as the first principle of Canadian government foreign policy. CFDS boasts of the experience gained by Canadian forces in Afghanistan as a 'military that can operate far from home on a sustained basis'. According to Prime Minister Harper the ability to wage war is the path that will return Canada to the international stage as a 'credible and influential country.'

"CFDS elevates commitments to NATO, NORAD, NORTHCOM, the Security and Prosperity Partnership (SPP) and the Civil Assistance Plan, the latter permitting US troops on Canadian soil in the event of a 'civil emergency', above all other Canadian international obligations and treaties. As such CFDS actually weakens Canadian sovereignty by subordinating Canadian defense policy to the global military strategy of the US and NATO.

"Fear-mongering about alleged threats to Canadian security is the method used by the Conservative government to justify massive transfers of public finances, without Parliamentary approval, to foreign and domestic defence

contractors to stimulate a speculative expansion of the economy. This is what is meant by the 'military partnership with Canadian industry'.

"CFDS is profoundly undemocratic and was implemented without seeking Parliamentary approval and commits \$492 billion over 20 years on top of the \$5.3 billion already allocated in 2006, approaching 2.2% of GDP, all to guarantee the profits of defence contractors and investors. The Canadian government policy of the rapid militarization of the economy is the only job creation project the Government has to offer youth, the unemployed and the underemployed. CFDS cannot be implemented without sacrificing the needs of public health care, pensions, childcare, seniors' needs, low cost housing and the peaceful development of the country."

To understand why the state is so committed to this sweeping reorientation of Canadian foreign

is an old and extremely influential advocacy group, whose membership is made up of over 50 military organizations. It is large, well-funded and well-connected. Part of its funding comes from the Department of National Defence, so when CDA speaks, DND listens.

The 1999 symposium was focused on changing strategic assessment within the context of massive geopolitical shifts. Specifically, the symposium identified the following strategic issues:

- * the pressing need for reorientation in Canadian foreign policy (military and economic) in light of the collapse of the USSR;
- * the rise of China as a political and economic world power, a rise characterized as "the most serious challenge to Western interests in the Pacific";

- * the importance of retaining and developing NATO as a counter-balance to changing geopolitics that challenge Western interests;

Harper spends 5 Billion Dollars for new armoured cars.



Guess how much for child care.

policy, it is useful to review events of the past two decades.

In the early 1990s, Canada experienced a huge economic recession, exacerbated by "free trade." The comprehensive restructuring of the Canadian economy meant that some entire sectors were decimated, while some new sectors of Canadian capital emerged and grew. Globalization in general (related to huge developments in technology) was on the rise, sparking extensive discourse about how to reorient in order to identify and exploit new global opportunities.

But the central development at this time was the sudden, unexpected collapse of the USSR and massive geopolitical changes which followed. Huge areas of the world were now "opened up" to Western capitalism (whose members were fighting amongst themselves for key positions - for a slice of the pie). At the same time, the end of the Cold War meant the sudden loss of NATO's raison d'être. NATO embarked on a long search for a new identity and role, taking it to the war on Yugoslavia (which, at least immediately, was a disaster in terms of consolidating Western states around a new role for the alliance).

A key moment in the "post-Soviet" era policy debates is represented by the 1999 Symposium of the Conference of Defence Associations. The CDA

- * the destabilization of the central Asian states as a strategic and economic opportunity, and specific opportunities for Canada in the vast energy reserves of the central Asian region;

- * the necessity for Canada to integrate military and economic issues within foreign policy discussions, in order to exert global influence and reap economic benefit;

- * the government of Iraq - characterized as a "rogue state" - as a barrier to securing Western interests in the central Asian region.

Virtually every one of these concerns have assumed a central place in Canadian foreign policy over the past ten years, and every one has been addressed to significant extents in the arena of the war on Afghanistan.

The Canadian state uses the war to justify, implement, test and clarify new foreign policy directions whose scope range far beyond that one country. For this reason, the stakes are critically high for a government that seeks to extend the war. By the same token, when the peace and anti-war movements confront the war in Afghanistan, we are engaged in a much more profound struggle, one that ultimately has a decisive role in determining our country's role in the world. Mobilization against the war must continue - it is the war that must end, now. ●

NEWS FOR PEOPLE, NOT FOR PROFITS!

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

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

people's
VOICE

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

Name _____

Address _____

Postal Code _____

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

10/19