

FEB. 1-14,  
2013  
VOL. 21  
#2  
\$1.50

# people's VOICE

**French troops  
enter Mali**

*See page 7*

Printed in Canada by union labour  
on recycled paper  118-44  
Publications Mail Agreement #40011632



Photo by Ed Bil

## **IDLE NO MORE**

***Speaking out for  
millions against  
the Harper Tory  
corporate agenda***

**- see page 6 -**

## **The Common Front: time to stand up and fight back in Ontario**

***- story on page 2 -***



Photo by Ed Bil

**3**

### **Who are the Métis?**

An important Federal Court ruling agrees that Métis and non-status aboriginals are Indians under the Canadian constitution. What does this decision mean for the future of 600,000 people across the country?

## **INSIDE**

**5**

### **What do the Reds say?**

The Communist Party of Canada will hold its 37th Convention in early April. What does the party have to say these days?

**12**

### **"Freedom" in Colombia?**

The Harper government is desperate to expand trade and economic links with Colombia. But does this South American country really offer democracy and human rights for its citizens?

# Bill 115 isn't gone - but Ontario government might be

By Liz Rowley, leader of the Communist Party (Ontario)

Ontario Education Minister Laurel Broten says that the government will repeal its vicious anti-labour Bill 115 on January 23 - just 2 days before the Liberal leadership convention and a massive OFL-Common Front demonstration. But this "is a meaningless gesture and shallow response to the chaos it has created in schools", says the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario (ETFO).

"The premier and education minister are deluding themselves

if they think the repeal of Bill 115 will promote goodwill and stability in the education sector and restore their popularity," said ETFO President Sam Hammond. "They used the bill and are now trying to make it disappear in the most crass of political acts. It's a sleight of hand that ETFO members and most Ontarians will see through."

Passed in early September with the support of the Tories, Bill 115 strips elected School Boards and unions in the education sector of their rights to free collective bargaining and the right to strike. The intent was to take \$1.6 billion in wages and benefits out of

collective agreements, to pay down the \$14 billion provincial deficit, while also off-setting the costs to implement provincially mandated full day kindergarten.

The unions have launched a Charter challenge, arguing that Bill 115 infringes on workers' rights to freedom of association. The challenge continues, despite the government's efforts to make the Bill "disappear".

The government also introduced a second Bill to extend the suspension of free collective bargaining and the right to strike right across the public sector. That Bill died when the Liberal minority government prorogued Parliament after the Tories refused to support it, demanding an election instead.

The NDP opposed both Bills, and voted against Bill 115, arguing that the same concessions could be achieved voluntarily.

Only the Communist Party opposes the Bills because they attack free collective bargaining, and force working people to shoulder the costs of an economic and political crisis caused by neo-liberal policies and unlimited corporate greed.

"It's the banks and the biggest corporations that caused the 2008 crisis, aided and abetted by Liberal and Conservative governments that helped them do it and then bailed them out afterwards. Workers didn't cause the crisis, and they shouldn't pay for it," says the CPC (Ontario).

On Jan. 3, the Minister of Education invoked Bill 115 and imposed 385 contracts on teachers, educational workers and school boards across the province. Despite months of threats and vilification, only 65 of 450 collective agreements had been accepted in gun-to-the-head negotiations. Protests escalated, with both elementary and secondary teachers planning a Day of Protest and work stoppage in mid-January. The government

took the unions to court, claiming the protests were an illegal strike under Bill 115, since contracts had been imposed and the right to strike eliminated. The court ruled for the government and the work-day protests were cancelled. But demonstrations continued, along with the decision not to carry out unpaid, voluntary extra-curricular activities.

Bill 115 is strongly opposed by the general public, which sees the Liberal actions as unnecessary and undemocratic threats to fundamental labour rights which are currently the law in Ontario.

Provincial Tory leader Tim Hudak has been campaigning for

campaign, Bill 115, and successor legislation affecting the broader public sector. This is "right to work" legislation, which the Canadian working class defeated in 1945-46.

If the Liberals and Tories - working alone, or together as proposed by outgoing Premier Dalton McGuinty - are able to make the attack on labour and democratic rights stick, Ontario will be on its way to the right-to-work jurisdictions in Michigan, Indiana, and 22 other U.S. states. Teachers, educational workers, and their unions are on the front line of this attack.

## Liberal convention and Common Front

The candidates for the Liberal leadership are all, save Gerard Kennedy, on the same page. Most were part of the Cabinet that imposed Bill 115 and the proposed successor legislation. Kennedy, who is not expected to win, has not been clear about his differences over the Bill.

Kennedy's absence from the Legislature may give him a way to dissociate from an extremely unpopular government. The two frontrunners - Pupatello and Wynn - are both campaigning to win public support for those disgraced anti-labour policies, fronted by a new leader.

It's too early to say whether the new Premier will try to save the government by aligning with the Tories (who want an election, not a coalition), or with the NDP (who support austerity, but not by legislation - today at any rate).

Either way, it's a slippery slope in which the corporations win, and working people lose. Already the Liberals are moving towards further privatization of public assets and resources, more user fees, and deeper cuts; while the Tories campaign to gut social assistance, cut the minimum wage,

see BILL 115, page 11



CP(Ontario) leader Liz Rowley

months to eliminate the Rand Formula, which is the basis for the closed shop (the union shop) across Canada. Eliminating the closed shop would reprise the open shop of the 1940s, when unions had little power and no rights, and workers were fired for joining or even supporting the union. This is the "choice" that Hudak says workers (read: corporations) need in the 21st century.

The Rand Formula, Hudak says, is an "old, out of date, law". In fact, the Rand Formula was achieved by the whole working class after victories in the historic 1945 Ford strike in Windsor, and the 1946 Steel strike in Hamilton.

That's what the Tories and their corporate bosses want to undo in Canada, and that's what workers in Ontario are smelling in Hudak's

An evening with Stephen Endicott on his new book:

## Raising the Workers' Flag: The Workers Unity League of Canada 1930-1936

Based on many sources, including files maintained by the RCMP's Security Service on leftists and radicals, and the archives of the Communist Party of Canada and those of the Communist International, veteran activist and acclaimed Marxist historian Stephen Endicott presents a gripping, indeed a memorable, account of one of the most militant of Canadian labour unions - The Workers Unity League of Canada.

Endicott - a highly entertaining and witty speaker - will talk about the origins and writing of "Raising the Workers' Flag" and the evening will include readings of short extracts, the singing of vintage labour songs, light refreshments, and a book signing by the author.

**All Welcome!**

**Thursday, Feb. 14, 7 pm,  
290 Danforth Ave., Toronto**

(GCDO Hall, west of Chester subway. Info: 416-469-2446)

**Organized by: People's Voice Forum Committee  
News for people, not for profits!**

## Turfing out the racists in Victoria

By Anti-Racist Action Victoria

Anti-racist organizers report they have won several skirmishes with a "conspiracy cult" linked to US patriot and militia organizations. Anti-Racist Action says members of a group called We Are Change Victoria (WAC) began sparring with social justice activists and the People's Assembly (Occupy Victoria) over a year ago.

WAC is part of a North American network loosely connected to US radio host Alex Jones, the Libertarian Party, the militia movement and patriot groups, according to the Southern Poverty Law Center. The group promotes conspiracy theories about 9/11, chemtrails, gun control, human rights law, climate-change denial, and Holocaust denial.

In Victoria, WAC members joined the Occupy movement soon after it began, but they split over angry disagreements about the camp's stance on social justice and indigenous rights. Later, WAC members disrupted meetings, denounced the movement, and launched an online harassment campaign targeting those they

considered camp organizers.

In October 2012, WAC announced that Doug Christie, Canada's best-known white supremacist, would address their rally on the BC Legislature lawn. Anti-Racist Action called for a counter-protest and blew the whistle on the event. Ultimately, Christie didn't show and some of the other speakers stayed away as well. Only about a dozen people attended the rally.

What was supposed to be WAC's proudest day became a lesson in failure. As volunteers set up the sound system for their rally, three angry WAC "free speech advocates" crossed the Legislature lawn to confront the counter-protestors picketing on the sidewalk 150 meters away. The shouting match that ensued drew the attention of nearby police officers. The WACKos told the officers to arrest the counter-protestors, but instead the wingnuts were sent scurrying back to the stage with their tails between their legs. The police moved off, and the counter-protestors spent the afternoon on the sidewalk handing flyers to passers-by and explaining why they were protesting WAC's

racism and sexism.

A month later, ARA confronted WAC at its hangout, a downtown diner where the group held well-advertised but poorly-attended weekly meetings. ARA called for a meetup at the same diner and dozens responded. They filled every table and the wingnuts were turfed out before they could get in the door.

Since then, WAC no longer advertises its events or meeting locations. Its only response to the controversy is a Youtube video featuring one-time Esquimalt city council candidate Josh Steffler blaming the conflict on "Bolsheviks" who are the "real racists."

More recently, members of WAC have been harassing a Victoria environmental activist in an effort to suppress photos of the October confrontation and take down her websites. As a result, one WACKo is facing a BC Supreme Court lawsuit for fraud, perjury, and copyright violations.

Anti-Racist Action meets every Sunday at 6:30 pm at QV restaurant, 1701 Government at Fisgard in downtown Victoria, Coast Salish territory. ●

## MAY DAY 2013 GREETING ADS

To mark May Day 2013, People's Voice will print greetings from a wide range of labour and people's organizations in our May 1-15 issue, which will be distributed at events across Canada. The deadline for camera-ready ads will be April 19; if PV is preparing the layout, the deadline is April 17. Please check with us about the format if your ad is being sent electronically.

Ad rates (based on 5 column page):

One column-inch.....	\$15
One column x 2 inches.....	\$25
One column x 3 inches.....	\$35
Two columns x 2 inches.....	\$45
Two columns x 3 inches.....	\$60
Two columns x 4 inches.....	\$75
Two columns x 5 inches.....	\$90
Three columns x 4 inches.....	\$110
Two columns x 7 inches.....	\$130
Three columns x 7 inches.....	\$180

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

# "At the core of the Métis decision, a simple clarification"

**Commentary by Clement Chartier, President of the Métis National Council, in response to the Federal Court ruling in the "Daniels" case. The ruling expands the legal rights of some 600,000 Métis and non-status Indians across Canada.**



*Metis national flags - the infinity symbol on a blue background - have been present at many Idle No More events, including this Jan. 5 rally at the Peace Bridge between Buffalo, NY, and Fort Erie, Ontario. Photo from Facebook by George Campana.*

Are Métis Indians?

This question intrigued me as a law student in the 1970s, especially after hearing the then-president of the Native Council of Canada, Tony Belcourt, assert that the federal government must acknowledge its responsibility for the Métis by virtue of s. 91(24) of the Constitution Act 1867, which provides that Ottawa has jurisdiction for "Indians and the lands reserved for the Indians".

In third year law, I wrote a paper, published in the Saskatchewan Law Review, 1978, concluding that yes, Métis are covered by the term "Indians" in 91(24).

The term "Indians" in the Constitution Act 1867 encompasses all Aboriginal peoples, not just the First Nations. In 1939, the Supreme Court of Canada ruled that Inuit fell within its meaning and the federal court last week ruled that it also

encompasses Métis and non-status Indians. It should also be noted that the Charlottetown Accord of 1992 included an amendment to 91(24) - agreed to by Ottawa, the provinces and Aboriginal peoples - that the term "Indians" included all "Aboriginal peoples" but that, unfortunately, did not materialize because the broader Accord was rejected in a national referendum.

Like the Inuit, the Métis are historically, culturally and politically distinct from Indians; that is recognized in the Constitution Act 1982, which

identifies the Indians, Inuit and Métis as the Aboriginal peoples in Canada. The Métis National Council represents the Métis people and nation in Canada, our historical homeland spanning the three prairie provinces and extending into a part of Ontario, B.C. and the Northwest Territories.

Originally the offspring of First Nations women and European fur traders, our ancestors evolved over generations, marrying amongst themselves, into a distinct people and nation. Our provisional governments under Louis Riel in Manitoba and Saskatchewan shaped the history of western Canada.

The Métis National Council adopted citizenship criteria in 2002 based on self-identification, historic Métis ancestry, and acceptance by the historic Métis Nation community. In the *Powley* decision in 2003, the Supreme Court of Canada ruled that Métis were a full-fledged rights-bearing people in our own right and established a test of objectively verifiable criteria for membership in a Métis rights-bearing community. That test was tied to ancestral connection to, and acceptance by, historical Métis communities, thereby virtually mirroring our own citizenship criteria. In the 2011 *Cunningham* case, the Supreme Court acknowledged that the Métis

emerged mainly in the Prairie provinces and recognized that the Métis Nation has the right to determine its own citizenship.

The Métis are distinct not only from Indians but also from people of mixed ancestry who cannot prove

an ancestral connection to our historical Métis communities. The *Daniels* decision should not be interpreted as meaning that the Métis are now culturally Indians. The court's ruling does not alter the fact and existence of the distinct culture and existence of the Métis Nation. It solely means, as with the Inuit who also remain distinctly Inuit, that it is the federal government which has the constitutional authority to engage with "all" Aboriginal peoples, even if both the Inuit and the Métis are excluded from the purview of the Indian Act.

Finally, s. 91(24) does not mean that the federal government has jurisdiction or power over the Métis Nation, rather, it simply means that the federal government has the jurisdictional mandate to deal with us on a nation-to-nation basis and to conclude a reconciliation of our rights, including our right to a land base and self-government. ●

## Broad or narrow interpretation?

The *Daniels* ruling (see above) by the Federal Court addresses the important question of who are the Métis. One group which welcomed the Court's relatively broad interpretation is the Métis Federation of BC (MFBC), which is not part of the Métis National Council.

The MFBC has been highly visible, taking part in the Idle No More movement and speaking out against the Enbridge Northern Gateway pipeline proposal.

As the group says in a news release, "This landmark court ruling by the Federal Court affirms the belief that the late Harry Daniels and the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples had; that Métis and Non-Status are Indians under the Constitution. With this historic ruling, this is a significant time in history for all Métis and Non-Status Indians. It is a culmination of a lifetime of work by Harry Daniels and his search for social

justice for Métis and Non-Status Indian people of Canada."

The MFBC notes that paragraphs 126-130 of the *Daniels* ruling references the previous *Powley* ruling by the Supreme Court of Canada, which outlined that a Métis is a person who has some ancestral family connection (not necessarily genetic); identifies as Métis; and is accepted by the Métis community or a local organization. The Federal Court goes on to elaborate that there are some Métis who are not members of particular organizations, but who participate in "Métis cultural events or activities which show objectively how that person identifies himself or herself subjectively as a Métis. As the further historical evidence will show, there was no 'one size/description fits all' when it comes to examining Métis on a national scale..."

As the MFBC points out, this means that "the Federal Court has applied a broad interpretation that Métis people eligible under section 91(24) also include a provision for self identification and group acceptance..."

This has significant relevance to Métis in British Columbia who for various reasons are not card-carrying members of that province's affiliate of the Métis National Council. The view of the MFBC is that no single organization can legally restrict the definition of Métis to its own membership. ●

## NIAGARA NEWS BULLETIN

*People's Voice Niagara Bureau*

\* **Idle No More actions** included a 300-person flash-mob Round Dance at the Pen Centre (largest local mall), a 200-person march at the Fort Erie-Buffalo border closing one lane, and a Niagara Falls march from the highway to the waterfalls, blocking the border and concluding with a Round Dance.

\* **The Haudenasee (Six Nations)** exercised treaty rights to hunt at Short Hills Provincial Park despite misinformation from Sun Media and others. One endorser of upholding treaty rights was the Niagara Animal Defense League, a prominent animal rights organization, who declared "The choice of being against or for the hunt is a false choice. The real choice is respecting and honouring these treaties or not."

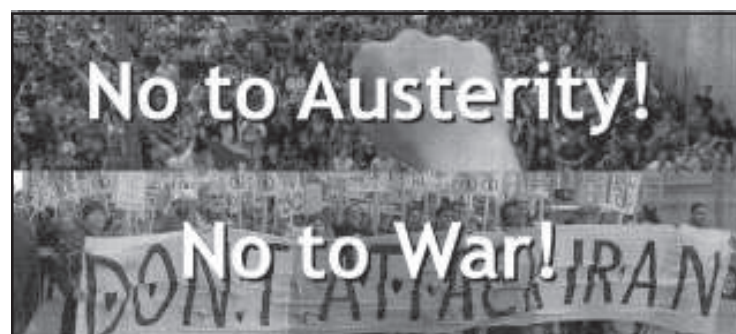
\* Protests by **whistleblowing workers** and the Niagara Animal Defense League over the working conditions and animal health at Marineland were vindicated by the until-recently secret seven orders by the Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals for changes at the waterpark. This comes after Marineland persisted in its \$1 million lawsuit against whistleblowers, and a release of internal e-mails from the Niagara Falls Mayor's Office showing officials squirming to defend their inaction by declaring themselves "animal lovers."

\* The **cities of Niagara Falls and Welland** overcame attempts to divide their people over where a new hospital would be located, and organized protests to save maternity and pediatric services from being moved to a P3 (public-private-partnership) hospital half an hour away by highway. The rally was denounced by the Ft. Erie mayor as a distraction from unity, although previously a rally by about 25% of his city's population protested similar cuts. Meanwhile the Niagara Health System announced \$13 million in new cuts, closing operating rooms for six weeks in three cities.

\* The Niagara Region Labour Council at the 11th hour reversed its decision to give an **Eric Blair social justice award** (named for a deceased Communist Party organizer) to a delegate for volunteering with an anti-abortion "maternity home" which exploits women by not providing them with information or referrals for their available choices, effectively removing their right to choose. The change was brought about by a protest letter from CUPE 4207 (Brock University graduate students and instructors) outlining the labour movement's policies, as well as mobilization by the Eric Blair club of the Communist Party.

\* The **Niagara Regional Government voted to waive fees for businesses** for two years just months after threatening to lay off six CUPE 1263 long-term health care workers who had won an arbitration award, claiming inability to pay. The fee waiver will be paid from reserves this year, and then by the public in 2014 to cover this year's dip.

\* 100 CEP Local 425G workers at Ft. Erie's Vertis Communications printing plant were **laid off without notice or severance** when the U.S.-owned company went bankrupt. The union is fighting the plant run-away. The local President told reporters "a company does not have the right to shut down without notice or compensation for the employees that have worked for them, many for most of their lives."



## Unity and the Fight for a People's Alternative!



**Miguel Figueroa**, leader of the Communist Party of Canada, is touring the country to speak with working people about the fight against austerity policies. He is presenting the Communist proposal for a People's Alternative to check corporate power and put people's needs before profit!

**Ottawa, ON**

Tues., Jan. 29, 7 pm - McNabb Community Centre, 180 Percy St. (at Gladstone), Community Room  
Info: Stuart Ryan, 613-232-7108

**Vancouver, BC**

Mon., March 4, 7 pm, at the CSE, 706 Clark Drive  
Info: Gabriel Au, 604-254-9836

**PRAIRIE DATES: To be announced next issue**

**News for people, not for profits!**



## EDITORIALS

### The Tory two-step strategy

Courageous and inspiring Idle No More mobilizations continue across Canada and in many other countries, proving that the racist, genocidal status quo will no longer be tolerated. In fact, indigenous peoples have growing support in their opposition to the Harper government's destructive agenda. Yet (with some honourable exceptions) the corporate media largely keeps recycling Tory lies and misinformation.

To those smug pundits who speculate about "divisions" among the First Nations, we say: look closer to home. Are Canadians "united" simply because our blatantly undemocratic electoral system gives complete political power to a party which receives only 39% of ballots cast on voting day? When you gloat about "financial irregularities" on reserves, we ask: why did the auditors sent by the Harperites to "investigate" Attawapiskat refuse to even look at many of the records kept by the band? When you repeat fairy tales about the "benefits" given to Aboriginal peoples, we wonder: were the treaties signed between First Nations and the colonizers just a fiction to open the door for history's greatest theft of lands, waters and resources?

The campaign of media distortion is part of the classic "Tory two-step." On the one hand, under enormous pressure to hold meaningful consultations about improving the living conditions of Aboriginal peoples, the Conservatives offered a brief symbolic meeting and threw out some vague promises. On the other hand, their racist spin machine is working overtime to smear Chief Teresa Spence and other First Nations activists. It's time to make Harper & Co. sit down and talk with Aboriginal peoples, nation to nation, on the basis of genuine respect and equality. Nothing less can be accepted.

### As the world burns

The rest of the planet watched nervously in early January as wildfires raged across Australia. Temperatures topped 50 degrees, forcing the country's Bureau of Meteorology to add a new colour - deep purple - to show areas that shattered all-time heat records. Climate scientists say the fires and the heat are unprecedented in scale and intensity. Even worse, this is the "new normal" of runaway climate change, and not just in the southern hemisphere. The Russian heatwave of 2010, which killed 50,000 and wiped out \$15 billion worth of crops, was part of the hottest European summer for 500 years. Such mega-heatwaves will become five to 10 times more likely over the next 40 years, scientists predict. Along with the heat will come more intense droughts, stronger hurricanes, more landslides, and higher tides. Why? Because heat-trapping carbon emissions mean more energy is being pumped into the atmosphere, increasing climate chaos.

Meanwhile, new research proves that contamination spread by tar sands extraction covers a much wider area than previously thought. Demolishing the idea that heightened levels of toxins could be "naturally occurring," scientists report that since large scale tar sands production began in 1978, deposits of carcinogenic hydrocarbons in Alberta lakes have increased 2.5 to 23 times.

The debate is over; the coffin is nailed shut, as one scientist commented. Yes, the extraction and consumption of fossil fuels is extremely profitable for transnational corporations. But the ultimate cost is prohibitive, even fatal. The time has come to shift the world's \$1 trillion in annual military spending towards investment in technologies to slash carbon emissions. Such a radical change will face enormous resistance by the military-industrial complex and Big Oil. In other words, capitalism itself has become incompatible with human survival; only socialism offers hope for the planet. That's the message from "deep purple" Australia.

## 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

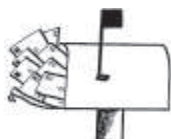
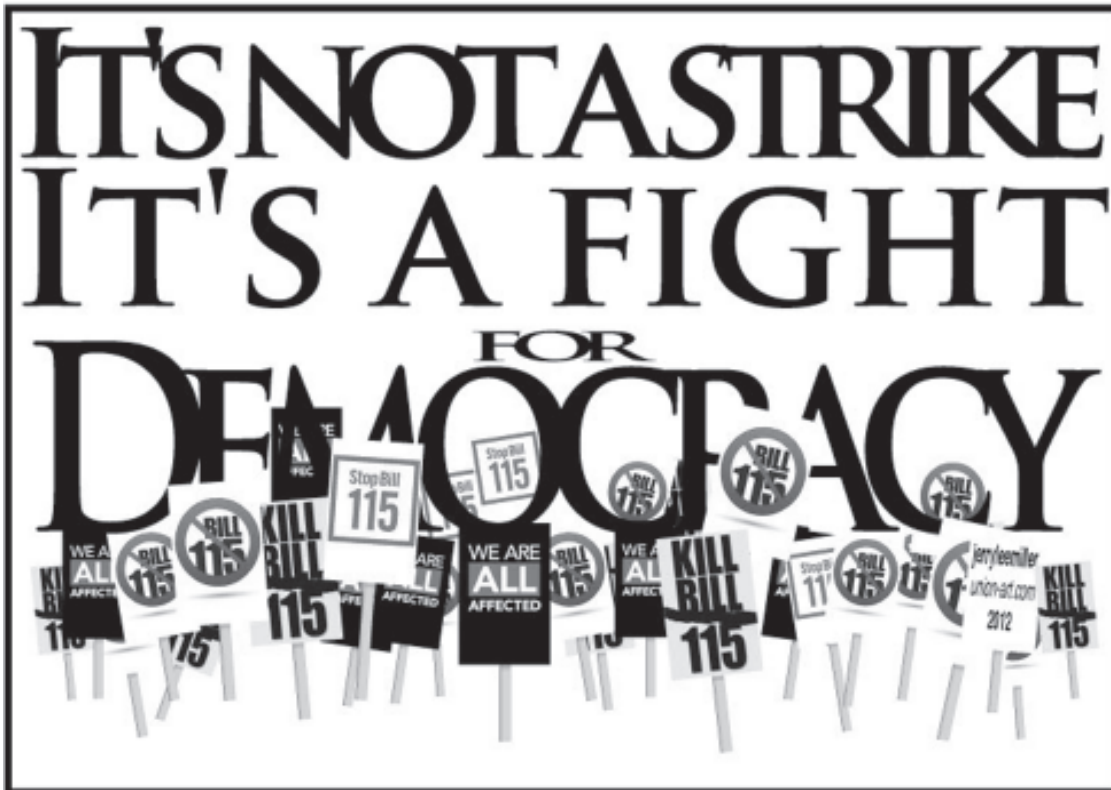
**Volunteers and contributors for this issue:**  
Dave Arland, Ed Bil, Johan Boyden, Wally Brooker,  
Darrell Rankin, Liz Rowley, Gurpreet Singh,  
Glen Truax, Saleh Waziruddin, and our mailers in  
Vancouver & Toronto.

**Editor:** Kimball Cariou **Business Manager:** Gabriel Au  
**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.



## Letters to the Editor

### In defence of Wallberg article

A letter to the editor ("Article gives wrong impression of the Iran regime", *People's Voice*, Dec. 1-31, 2012) complains that the article "Canada's toxic spill of anti-native racism" by Eric Walberg from November, about Canadian native activists getting a voice in OPEC, portrays Iran "in a very positive light and characterizes it as democratic." But the article doesn't anywhere call Iran democratic. Rather, the article exposes the imperialist double standard in calling Iran undemocratic while Harper

suppresses Native voices and the EU bans Iranian television, something very different from characterizing Iran as democratic.

Further, the letter-writer mischaracterizes "vilayet-e-faqih" (vice-regency of jurists) as being appointed by "fellow mullahs" and above parliament. In fact the Assembly of Experts is directly elected by the voters, and while there is a law specifying they have to be religious scholars, this is not in the Constitution and is being legally challenged. There is also a Guardian Council, which is above

parliament, but only half the members are appointed religious scholars, the rest are lawyers with secular specialties elected by parliament itself.

The letter-writer expresses concern about communists losing credibility, but surely credibility requires being accurate about facts? Inaccurate information does not serve the cause of international solidarity with the Iranian people. Rather, both international solidarity and our credibility are best served by countering imperialism's propaganda, as Eric Walberg has done.

The letter-writer suggests that Walberg and others have joined "that league of the enemy of my enemy is my friend" because they are bribed by Iran's public relations budget. Perhaps instead of speculating about Walberg's motives we should pay more careful attention to the suppressed information he is bringing us. This is why I hope you print more articles by Walberg and PressTV. Perhaps Walberg was right the first time, that Iran is not the enemy the demonization of war propaganda would have us believe.

S. Saleh Waziruddin,  
Niagara Falls, ON

### Fire Kevin O'Leary

Speaking at an anti-austerity campaign meeting in January, I was happy to hear spontaneous applause from the audience after announcing the launch of a new campaign to be led by the magazine of the Young Communist League, Rebel Youth.

"Fire Kevin O'Leary" is urging the CBC to dismiss this notorious venture capitalist "dragon." O'Leary appears almost daily as a business commentator and in various reality TV shows. O'Leary is abusing his position at the CBC to explicitly promote his own for-profit businesses. He is hijacking the public broadcaster with a socially destructive message of corporate greed, privatization, selfishness, and austerity.

As most *People's Voice* readers know, Kevin O'Leary is a multi-millionaire and owner of the asset management company O'Leary Funds. He has appeared with Amanda Lang on CBC's *The Lang and O'Leary Exchange* since 2009, and stars on the shows *Dragons Den* and its US counterpart, *Shark Tank* on ABC.

The CBC's administration likes to talk about how these shows are wildly popular. But I think they are really about catering to the Harper Tory government and its "slash-and-burn economic action plan". It is ironic that the CBC seems to have become a bastion of

right-wing commentators like Rex Murphy and Don Cherry. In this group, O'Leary stands out as a chief spokesperson for the vicious agenda of "money-over-everything" and "greed is good," which is being used as an ideological battering ram against young workers and all people in Canada.

Thus he is the face of the poverty-creators, the job-destroyers, the union-busters - basically, of the austerity agenda. I was not surprised to find that Google prompts the phrase "Kevin O'Leary is a jerk" when you type his name into the search engine.

O'Leary's nasty approach has got him into hot water more than once. Researching for the campaign, YCL Ontario organizer Drew Garvie found a series of cases where O'Leary called unions a "parasite" on business.

"Elect me as Prime Minister for 15 minutes," O'Leary says. "I will make unions illegal. Anybody who remains a union member will be thrown in jail." He adds that "Unions are sheer evil [...] Unions themselves are born out of evil. They must be destroyed with evil", and "no one could contain unions in hell. They were so evil they came out of hell and they came upon earth."

see O'LEARY, p. 11

## 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 "2013/02/01" on their label, for example, will have their subscriptions expire with this issue, February 1-14, 2013

**Don't miss a single copy - renew today!**

# Communists debate the crisis and the fightback

The 37th Convention of our Party takes place at a particularly complex and dangerous moment in the workers' and people's struggle. The systemic crisis of capitalism in Canada and internationally has continued to deepen over the past three years, reflected in ever-widening social disparity, intensified economic and social attacks against the people, fresh assaults on labour and democratic rights, the further degradation of the national and global environment, and increasing militarism, aggression and war.

The maturing structural contradictions of the global system of capitalism, which have been steadily gaining pace throughout the last century and particularly since the 1970s onwards, created conditions for the current global cyclical crisis - a crisis which erupted in 2007-08 and which continues today, making it one of capitalism's most acute cyclical crises in history. This crisis in turn has exacerbated all of the structural aspects of the general crisis of the capitalist system, resulting in greater instability, insecurity and intensified class struggle.

The austerity policies pursued by ruling circles in all of the leading imperialist states, including Canada, to resuscitate economic activity and profits on the backs of the working class and working people in general have failed miserably. The economies of the U.S., Europe and Japan - the "tripod" epicentre of this global

**The Communist Party of Canada's 37th Central Convention will be held April 5-7 in Toronto. Members of the CPC are currently discussing the Draft Political Resolution for the Convention. Over the next few issues, PV will reprint excerpts from the Resolution, starting with these introductory paragraphs. To download the document, or for more information, visit [www.communist-party.ca](http://www.communist-party.ca).**

crisis - remain stagnant or in absolute decline. The crisis and the intense, all-sided offensive launched by the ruling class in its wake are exacting a heavy economic, social, cultural, psychological and environmental cost on all humanity.

The main target of this anti-social offensive of Capital is the working class, especially its organised section, the trade union movement. It is also falls heavily on women, youth and students, indigenous peoples, pensioners and the elderly, peasants and small farmers, the extreme poor and marginalized sections of the people, and on all those reliant on the social functions and services of capitalist states - benefits that have been won through many decades of hard struggle.

This capitalist offensive is understandably creating an atmosphere of insecurity and desperation among wide sections of the working class and the people, but it is also giving rise to increased resistance and struggle against ruling classes and their governments around the world.

While this fightback is still predominantly defensive in character, it is growing almost everywhere around the world. Anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist sentiments are on the increase, and the size and capacity of forces consciously embracing the socialist alternative are continuing to grow,

albeit unevenly and still as a minority current in most countries.

The counter-offensive of labour and people's movements is also growing across Canada. The historic Québec student strike and social struggle which took place in the spring and summer of 2012, and the Canada-wide "Idle No More" protests of Aboriginal peoples and their supporters which began last December are particularly significant in this regard. These struggles, taken together with the determined struggle of teachers in Ontario and many other mobilizations in defence of labour, social and equality rights and in defence of our environment, signal a

qualitative change in the mood of the working class and its allies to fight back against the austerity agenda of Capital and its governments.

The challenge for our Party at this 37th Convention is to reach an objective assessment of the nature and trajectory of this capitalist offensive, to identify the class and social forces which are moving into action to resist and defeat this offensive, and to situate the Communist Party and its work so that it can best make its contribution to the building of a mass, united people's coalition, and to the building of a larger, stronger and more influential Party in the process. ●



Communist Party members and friends at the May Day 2012 march in Toronto. (Photo: Ed Bil)



## Marxist Theory

# Can we return to the "good old days" of Keynesian capitalism?

**Excerpt from Section 1 of the Draft Political Resolution, 37th Central Convention, Communist Party of Canada**

More than six years since its onset, the global economic crisis of capitalism continues to deepen. While periodic cyclical crises of (relative) over-production are standard fare at every stage of capitalist development, the current crisis has unique features: (1) it is also a crisis over-accumulation of capital, due to the very high degree of financialization of the capitalist economy and its internationalization; (2) it is truly global in scale, afflicting all three imperialist centres simultaneously and rapidly cascading to all other national and regional economies; and (3) it merges with and further aggravates other structural crises under capitalism, not least the food and environmental crises.

This helps to explain why this crisis is so acute and protracted, with no "sustainable" recovery in sight. In January, 2012 the World Bank was forced to revise its predictions for global growth to 2.5 percent, down from its June 2011 estimate of 3.6 percent, adding that the Euro area may actually contract 0.3 percent, compared with a previous estimate of a 1.8 percent gain.

By last October, the International Monetary Fund had reduced those forecasts even further, predicting a 15 percent

chance of recession in the United States in 2013, 25 percent in Japan and above 80 percent in the Euro zone. The languishing global economy and associated fears about state debt defaults and bankruptcies in Europe and the continuing fiscal crisis in the U.S. are putting downward pressure even on the robust Chinese economy and other relatively buoyant economies in parts of Asia and Latin America.

A number of European countries, especially Italy, Greece, Spain, Ireland and Portugal are mired in deep recession. The imposition of vicious austerity measures demanded by the IMF, the EU and the European Central Bank as the price for credit extensions to avoid sovereign debt default have further deteriorated social conditions, resulting in staggeringly high levels of unemployment, mass poverty and despair. Even the relatively stronger economies in Germany and France are now faltering. Claiming that emergency measures are necessary to preserve the EU and the integrity of the Euro currency, monopoly capital is using the Eurozone crisis to erase the last vestiges of the "social contract" and to further consolidate and centralize financial and political power in Brussels, in violation of the democratic rights of the peoples and the national sovereignty of its member-states.

Labour and mass democratic struggles across Europe in

response to the consequences of crisis and austerity policies have been unprecedented, marked by countless general strikes, mass demonstrations and factory occupations. Millions have come out into the streets of Greece,

**37th Central Convention  
April 5-7, 2013**



Spain, Portugal, France, Britain, Italy and elsewhere to demand jobs, decent wages and pensions, to defend labour rights, to insist on the restoration of health, education and other public services, and to denounce the austerity policies dictated by the EU at the behest on European bankers and monopolists.

On the other hand, the crisis conditions are also being used by the extreme right to whip up narrow nationalism, racism and xenophobia, and anti-communism. There has been an alarming growth of ultra-right and neo-fascist movements and parties in a number of European countries, fearfully reminiscent of the rise of fascism in the 1930s. Today, as in the past, the fascist movement is a dangerous ruling class tool used to weaken and divide the working class and popular forces, blunt class consciousness, and attack the left and revolutionary forces.

These conditions graphically

confirm the utter bankruptcy of the prevailing bourgeois economic "model" of neoliberalism to overcome the crisis. But this "failure" masks a more fundamental and insidious process underway. International finance capital is using the current crisis and its consequences as an opportunity to impose its own set of "reforms": to accelerate the erosion of the social rights of the people to accessible healthcare, education and other social programs and benefits; to fundamentally transform the capitalist state into an ever more efficient, repressive instrument to facilitate the further concentration and centralization of capital; and to weaken and undermine all social and class forces capable of mobilizing resistance to its agenda, in the first place the organized trade union movement and the Communist parties. The Portuguese comrades placed this process succinctly at their recent congress:

*"Imperialism's hegemonic rule is... destroying gains and rights that had been achieved by the struggle of workers and peoples throughout the 20th century. Its goal is to reinstate 19th-century levels of class exploitation and national oppression. Capitalism's exploitative, aggressive and predatory nature has been exposed further by the devastating consequences of the [current] overproduction crisis..." [from "Theses - Draft Political Resolution: 19th Congress of the*

*PCP, October 29, 2012]*

The austerity agenda is entirely consistent with and indeed flows from the neo-liberal economic formula of "free" trade (i.e., the unbridled mobility of capital within and beyond national boundaries), privatization, deregulation, and the systematic gutting of the social functions of the State - policies which have predominated for almost three decades. It would be quite wrong however to conclude that these economic policies are simply the product of "wrong thinking" or "poor political choices" by the capitalist elite and the governments they control. On the contrary, they are a result of how state-monopoly capitalism objectively functions today, and illustrate that capitalism itself is rapidly approaching its developmental limits...

It is a harmful, reformist illusion to fantasize about a return to the "good old days" of Keynes and the capitalist "welfare state" and the social contract between labour and capital; modern international finance capitalism has all but shredded that possibility. While the fight against capitalist offensive and for meaningful advances and reforms under the present socio-economic system is both necessary and urgent, we must never lose sight of capitalism's true nature - exploitative, aggressive and predatory - and of the fundamental reality that the next rung on the ladder of human social development can be none other than socialism. ●

# Idle No More gives voice to millions of Canadians

**Statement of the Central Executive Committee, Communist Party of Canada, Jan. 15, 2013**

Less than two months since its first public actions, Idle No More has become the most widespread and significant movement for indigenous rights in recent decades. The Communist Party of Canada sends warm solidarity greetings to all Idle No More activists. By demanding the repeal of Bill C-45, C-38 and other Tory legislation, Idle No More gives voice to millions of Canadians who oppose the dangerous agenda of the Tory government.

Bringing tens of thousands of supporters out to hundreds of actions across the country, the Idle No More movement has already compelled Prime Minister Harper to meet with a number of First Nations chiefs. But following their usual strategy, the Tories are attempting to smear their opponents, and to recycle old broken promises to improve living conditions for First Nations reserves and urban indigenous people.

These desperate dirty tricks must be exposed and rejected. The real corrupt criminals in Canada are those who carry out the corporate agenda to drive down wages, gut social programs and pensions, attack labour and

democratic rights, and give the big monopolies unfettered rights to extract and export natural resources. The politicians who accuse Chief Theresa Spence and other First Nations leaders of

financial irregularities are hypocrites who transfer billions to the rich through tax cuts, forcing all working people to pay the costs of the economic crisis. The \$300 million promised by

PM Harper to provide safe drinking water to reserves is less than one percent of the amount his government proposes to waste on deadly fighter-bomber jets. Finally, while right-wing forces

talk about "divisions" among indigenous movements, Harper's Tories were backed by just one-quarter of all registered voters in the 2011 federal election, showing that they have no genuine political mandate for their reactionary policies.

We urge all the labour and democratic movements in Canada to help this courageous struggle become a rallying point for a broad, united campaign to turn back the racist, anti-people, anti-environment assault by the Tories and the corporations. Such unity must be based on support for the Idle No More demands to rescind omnibus Bill C-45 and the rest of Harper's reactionary legislation, and to respect the inherent land and treaty rights of the Aboriginal peoples on the basis of genuine equality among all the nations within the Canadian state.

This is not a time to base tactics and strategies of the fightback on hopes of electing a different federal government in 2015. Only a powerful, united, determined alliance of the broadest possible range of people's forces can make the Harper Tories back down. Idle No More has presented a truly historic opportunity to create such a united resistance - it is the collective responsibility of the labour and people's movements to grasp this opportunity and make it a reality. ●



Idle No More round dance at the intersection of Portage and Main in Winnipeg, Dec. 31, 2012

## "Profits of world's 100 wealthiest could end poverty four times over"

From Common Dreams, [www.commondreams.org](http://www.commondreams.org)

The profits of the world's one hundred most wealthy individuals last year would be enough to wipe out world poverty, says a new report. And not just once over, or twice over, but the vast amount of money that has flowed to the top of the world's financial food chain would be enough to eradicate the worst kind of poverty a full four times over.

Such an explosion in extreme wealth and income inequality represented by these numbers is

exacerbating and hindering the world's ability to tackle poverty, warns international aid group Oxfam International in a new analysis published ahead of the World Economic Forum which started in Davos on January 22.

According to the report (posted at [www.oxfam.org](http://www.oxfam.org)), "The cost of inequality: how wealth and income extremes hurt us all," the \$240 billion net income in 2012 of the richest 100 billionaires would be enough to eliminate extreme poverty four times over. In releasing the report, Oxfam is calling on world leaders to curb

today's income extremes and commit to bringing back inequality levels to at least those experienced in the early 1990s.

"Concentration of resources in the hands of the top one per cent depresses economic activity and makes life harder for everyone else - particularly those at the bottom of the economic ladder," said Jeremy Hobbs, Oxfam's executive director.

"We can no longer pretend that the creation of wealth for a few will inevitably benefit the many - too often the reverse is true," he said. "In a world where even basic resources such as land and water are

increasingly scarce, we cannot afford to concentrate assets in the hands of a few and leave the many to struggle over what's left. From tax havens to weak employment laws, the richest benefit from a global economic system which is rigged in their favour. It is time our leaders reformed the system so that it works in the interests of the whole of humanity rather than a global elite."

In addition, Barbara Stocking, Oxfam's chief executive, says the world's extremity of wealth inequality is "economically inefficient, politically corrosive, socially divisive and environmentally destructive".

Oxfam is calling for a "new global deal" which would stabilize the world's economic systems and bring equality back in way that would benefit all humanity.

"From tax havens to weak employment laws, the richest benefit from a global economic system which is rigged in their favour. It is time our leaders reformed the system so that it works in the interests of the whole of humanity rather than a global elite."

The group estimates that closing tax havens - which hold as much as \$32 trillion or a third of all global wealth - could yield an additional

\$189 billion in additional tax revenues. In addition to a tax haven crackdown, elements of the "global new deal" Oxfam envisions would include:

- \* a reversal of the trend towards more regressive forms of taxation;
- \* a global minimum corporation tax rate;
- \* measures to boost wages compared with returns available to capital;
- \* increased investment in free public services and safety nets.

According to *Al-Jazeera*, the group says that the world's richest one percent have seen their income increase by 60% in the last 20 years, with the latest world financial crisis only serving to hasten the process.

"We sometimes talk about the have-nots and the haves - well, we're talking about the 'have-lots'. [...] We're an anti-poverty agency. We focus on poverty, we work with the poorest people around the world. You don't normally hear us talking about wealth. But it's gotten so out of control between rich and poor that one of the obstacles to solving extreme poverty is now extreme wealth," Ben Phillips, a campaign director at Oxfam, told *Al Jazeera*. ●

Share of top 1% in selected years

	1970	1980	1990	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Australia	5.9	4.8	6.3	7.2	7.6	7.6	7.5	7.7	8.0	8.3	8.9	8.8
Belgium	..	7.0	6.3	7.0	6.7	7.3	7.2	7.6	7.5	7.7	..	..
Canada	9.0	8.1	9.2	12.4	12.3	12.0	11.9	12.3	12.7	13.3	13.3	..
Denmark	..	5.2	5.1	6.6	6.3	5.8	6.3	6.6	6.3	7.1	7.4	6.5
Finland	9.9	4.3	4.6	8.8	8.0	7.9	7.9	8.6	..	..	..	..
France	8.3	7.6	8.2	8.3	8.4	8.5	8.6	8.7	8.7	8.9	..	..
Germany	11.3	10.8	10.9	11.1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Ireland	..	6.7	6.6	10.3	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Italy	..	6.9	7.8	9.1	9.3	9.3	9.4	9.0	9.1	9.4	9.5	9.4
Japan	8.2	7.2	8.1	8.2	8.5	8.7	8.8	9.0	9.2	..	..	..
Netherlands	8.6	5.9	5.6	..	..	..	5.2	5.5	5.6	..	..	..
New Zealand	6.6	5.7	8.2	8.3	8.8	8.8	9.5	10.0	9.0	..	..	..
Norway	6.0	4.7	4.4	8.3	7.0	9.4	9.7	10.3	13.8	6.5	7.1	7.5
Portugal	..	4.3	7.2	9.1	9.7	9.0	9.1	9.6	9.8	..	..	..
Spain	..	7.5	8.4	8.8	8.8	8.5	8.6	8.6	8.8	..	..	..
Sweden	6.2	4.1	4.4	6.0	6.0	5.7	5.5	5.7	6.3	6.6	6.9	7.1
Switzerland	11.6	8.8	9.7	..	..	..	9.6	9.9	10.1	10.5	..	..
United Kingdom	7.1	..	9.8	12.7	12.7	12.3	12.1	12.9	14.3	..	..	..
United States	7.8	8.2	13.0	16.5	15.4	14.6	14.9	16.1	17.4	18.0	18.3	17.7

Chart shows the share of national income for the top 1% of earners. (Source: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, see [www.whatsonningbo.com/news-6004-uk-income-disparity-widen-grows-fastest-in-developed-world.html](http://www.whatsonningbo.com/news-6004-uk-income-disparity-widen-grows-fastest-in-developed-world.html))

### REDS ON THE WEB

- [www.comunist-party.ca](http://www.comunist-party.ca)
- [www.peoplesvoice.ca](http://www.peoplesvoice.ca)
- [www.ycl-ljc.ca](http://www.ycl-ljc.ca)
- [www.solidnet.org](http://www.solidnet.org)

# Libya all over again...

## Editorial from the Morning Star, UK

The situation in Mali is directly linked to the NATO mobilisation in 2011 to overthrow the Gaddafi regime in Libya. Deployment of NATO air forces in support of the anti-Gaddafi opposition turned the tide for the Benghazi-based National Transitional Council, but it didn't create national unity behind the new NATO-approved government.

Nor did it take account of regional forces, secular and Islamist, that had provided much of the Gaddafi regime's military backbone.

Africa's borders are porous, not least because the straight-line-obsessed European colonialists paid little attention to the interests or identities of local people when they carved up the continent in search of valuable resources.

Despite efforts by Washington, many of the colonial-era links between Britain, France and Africa's nominally independent states continue to hold sway.

French politics has been awash for decades with stories concerning diamonds, bags of cash and

boltholes in France for Paris-backed dictators from "Emperor" Bokassa of the Central African Republic to Zairean despot Mobutu Sese Seko, to say nothing



of their easily bought French counterparts Jacques Chirac and Nicolas Sarkozy.

When he took over as French president last year, Francois Hollande declared an end to "Francafrrique," telling Senegal's National Assembly in October that he wanted to "update the relationship between France and Africa."

Hollande promised a "respect" agenda in French-African links, explaining: "Respect means a crystal clear definition of France's military presence in Africa, which can continue only in a legal, transparent framework."

"Respect" has become just another word as the French president has authorised military strikes against targets in Mali said to be bases of Islamist forces bent on overthrowing the second interim government authorised by US-approved military junta leader Amadou Sanogo - the real power in Bamako - and imposing a theocracy.

NATO governments only have to hear the word "Islamist" to bring on an outbreak of hysteria - apart, that is, from Syria where a Qatar-funded international alliance of holy warriors is assessed as objectively pro-democratic.

Stomach-knotting declarations that Mali is just five hours from France are on a par with Blair government warnings about Iraqi missile strikes on Britain being just 45 minutes away.

And it has opened the way for colonial powers France, followed by Britain, to commit themselves to air strikes, troop deployment and provision of armaments.

The runaway opposition forces in Mali have no planes, but they are well-armed, having benefited from Gaddafi forces' conventional weaponry brought south after the Libyan dictator's murder. They

are also acclimatised to the Sahara desert conditions in northern Mali - a tract of land the size of Spain that they control.

The same cannot be said for French troops, potential west African states' units or even the Malian army whose major operations have rarely moved beyond removing its own government.

France would prefer to restrict its own operations to air support and is anxious for west African soldiers to replace its own, but

neither Paris nor London has made a cogent case for involvement in a local military dispute.

To portray an internal Malian dispute over separatism and the role of religion as a potential military threat to Europe indicates a loss of political equilibrium.

Mali's problems will not be improved at all by a NATO onslaught in support of one side or another. Politicians should drop the martial rhetoric. There is no case for European military interference in Mali. ●



French military boots on African soil yet again, this time in Mali.

## Canadian Peace Alliance: Stop the War On Mali

January 15, 2013 - The Government of Canada has recently announced that it is sending a CF-17 transport plane to northern Mali to add to the military buildup by the NATO powers in the area. The Canadian Peace Alliance is calling on the government to recall the plane and to cease any further contribution to the France-led mission.

One transport plane and a few Canadian "trainers" is just the thin edge of the wedge. There is a real fear of "mission creep" as witnessed in the Libyan situation. Canada's involvement as a junior partner to a NATO aggression in Africa could mushroom in the coming months and years. All this is being done without public or parliamentary debate. This unilateral support for war by the Harper government without consultation must stop.

The Tuareg people of Northern Mali have been waging a campaign for independence for decades, which has been a thorn in the side of both the Malian government and to those who wish to exploit the natural resources of the area.

The borders drawn up by the French colonialists were never appropriate to the needs of the primarily nomadic peoples of the deserts in the north.

More recently, the overthrow of the Libyan government by NATO (with direct Canadian military participation) has allowed for huge numbers of weapons to fall into the hands of local militias. The Mali situation is, therefore, yet another case of blow-back against Western interests.

The failure of the Libyan mission is one of the more recent causes of the current conflict in Mali. Sending Western troops to the region does nothing more than compound that folly and continue the cycle of perpetual war in the region. Canada should not participate.

The real reason for NATO's involvement is to secure strategic, resource rich areas of Africa for the West. Canadian gold mining operations have significant holdings in Northern Mali as do many other western nations. Canada's new interventionism, which includes the building of 3 military bases in

Tanzania, Senegal and Kenya, is therefore primarily about securing the area for further plunder. Canadian troops are already stationed in Niger ready to launch an invasion. We also urge the Canadian Government to withdraw all troops from the surrounding region. We also call on Canadians to demand of the Harper government that it withdraw from membership in NATO, which constantly drags us into every neo-colonial, military adventure of the western powers in the world.

Also of concern is the use of the "Islamist" threat to justify any intervention by the NATO powers. Islamophobia is a key tool in perpetuating these foreign advances. It is ironic that since the death of Osama Bin Laden, the US military boasts that Al-Qaeda is on the run and has no ability to wage its war. Meanwhile, any time there is a need for intervention, there is suddenly a new Al-Qaeda threat that comes out of the woodwork.

Canada must not participate in this process of unending war. Website: [www.acp-cpa.ca](http://www.acp-cpa.ca) ●

## International anti-war statements

### Geo-strategic goals, not humanitarianism

(The intervention) constitutes the continuation of the implementation of the imperialist plans for the geo-strategical control of broader areas of Africa, as we have seen it in 2011 with the bloody intervention and bombing of Libya. Their goal are the energy resources which are object of fierce rivalry between imperialist forces and centers, which however go hand in hand in the slaughter of the peoples under various pretexts each time.

World Peace Council, [www.wpc-in.org](http://www.wpc-in.org)

### Plunder and control of uranium mines

...After the genocide in Rwanda and the demolition of Libya, France continues to use the military bases it maintains in Africa in order to strengthen its role in the inter-imperialist competition and to serve the interests of its monopoly groups who are plundering the wealth-producing resources (gold, uranium etc.). (...) aiming for the protection of the French interests in the uranium mines found in Tuareg areas of the West-African Region, the inter-imperialist competition for the control of the wealth-producing resources of Mali and the placement of puppet-governments in the African countries serving the leading imperialist forces...

World Federation of Trade Unions, [www.wftucentral.org](http://www.wftucentral.org)

### No war for Areva and Total!

It did not take much for our country to start the onslaught of Mali. In the name of freedom and the fight against terrorism, the (French) government arises as the savior of Africa. This speech, appropriate for the clash of civilizations, is shameful. We've known this policy to justify intervention in Afghanistan, Iraq or Libya. With what results? Destabilization, violence and armed militias in those countries that are completely divided.

No war on behalf of (the companies) Areva and Total! We refuse to make a war on behalf of corporate interests. The war will only bring its share of desolation and not solve anything. Armed intervention is an opportunity to strengthen the positions of French multinationals in the region, Areva in Niger and Total West Africa, which operate without resources that local people benefit.

Communist Youth of France, [www.jeunes-communistes.org](http://www.jeunes-communistes.org)

### A task for the people, not imperialism

In our minds we still harbour fresh memories of French military invasion of Libya in 2011 as part of NATO, leading to a regime change; French military "residence" in Ivory Coast which was actively involved in regime change; and French military presence in the Central Africa Republic, to "protect" the so-called French interests but not to keep peace and as part not to prevent rebels from capturing that country.

This time around France is "fighting" rebels which seek to capture Bamako, the capital city in Mali. We see this as nothing but an agenda by France to defend its hegemony and advance its capitalist interests in the country and the region at large. (...) The people of Mali and the African Union must be the ones taking a leading role in solving the problems experienced in Mali and in Africa respectively, not imperialist countries and former colonisers such as France which in the first place are part of the root causes to these problems and their historical development.

Young Communist League of South Africa, [www.ycl.org.za](http://www.ycl.org.za)

### Teach the youth: imperialism is not invincible

Hollande's "socialist" government, in collaboration with all the imperialist mechanisms and governments, stain their hands once again with the blood of the peoples. We call the teachers' unions from all over the world to condemn the imperialist intervention and to express solidarity with the people of Mali. We call on them to strengthen their struggle for world peace, and for the overthrow of the imperialists. We call upon the teachers to teach the young generation that: Imperialism is not invincible! The working class has the power to overthrow it.

World Federation of Teachers Unions, <http://fise-wftu.org>



# GLOBAL CLASS STRUGGLE

## Fiji union leader to defy decree

The General Secretary of Fiji's labour movement, Felix Anthony, says he is prepared to go to jail rather than obey a new law which prohibits trade unionists from being members of political parties. Fiji's sixteen existing political parties have been given 28 days to meet new criteria and re-register. Under the new rules, parties will need 5,000 members; until now, the number has been 128.

Speaking to Radio Australia, Felix Anthony said "If that means putting me offside with the law, then so be it. But clearly, we cannot accept our political rights being denied... If it means that we go to jail, we go to jail, but we cannot accept this decree as it stands. It does not conform with international standards as was promised prior to this decree coming out, and it violates all human rights conventions. Even talk of returning to true democracy makes absolutely no sense with such a decree in place that actually denies the people of this country the right to fully participate in the political processes."

Regarding the labour movement's options, Anthony said that all avenues would be explored, including the formation of a new party. Over 400 delegates met recently to begin this process, agreeing that the new party would be truly democratic and inclusive, with both trade unionists and others joining.

## Union elections changes in Guangzhou

Chairpersons of trade unions at local companies in Guangzhou, capital of China's Guangdong province, will be directly elected by workers this year, according to a senior trade union official from the southern metropolis. Zhao Xiaosui, chairperson of the Guangzhou Federation of Trade Unions, said a pilot project will be tested at eight to 10 companies to try the new system.

Guangzhou has a large number of foreign-owned companies, joint ventures and private firms, and is expected to become the country's first city to have elected trade union officials, said Zhao, who is also deputy director of Guangzhou's top legislative body. The chairpersons of trade unions at local companies are usually appointed by government departments.

More than 85 percent of the companies in Guangzhou have established trade unions, which usually play a major role in advocating for the interests of their members.

## Ireland's unequal labour market

Starting salaries for teachers in Ireland are 25-30 per cent lower than three to four years ago, and trainee nurses are being offered just 85 euros a day under proposed new two-year contracts, lower than

rates for those hired in the past. These are just two examples of an increasingly unequal labour market in Ireland, where there is a proliferation of unpaid internships in the private sector, and few good job opportunities.

Some economists talk of a generational wages gap emerging. Others cite a growing polarisation between a highly educated upper class and an unskilled, and less well-connected, lower class.

"This is the first generation since



the second World War that will not earn more than their parents," says Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU) economist Paul Sweeney. "What we are seeing in Ireland is a considerable row-back on earnings and the key driver is the share of national income going to labour."

Provisional figures show 65 per cent of national income went to employees in 1990. Sweeney says "this is now down to 50 per cent" - a much lower figure than the global average of 62 per cent.

The owners of capital - people who own shares - are getting more and more of the national income, says Sweeney, adding that within the labour market, "professional employees are doing quite well but the middle is being hollowed out and the lowest paid are being screwed." This is mirroring trends in the US, he adds, where "college-educated people" in sectors like technology, medicine and law are pulling ahead in a two-tier workforce.

The Nevin Institute, an ICTU-backed think-tank, reports that income distribution in Ireland is "highly skewed", with 62 per cent of households having a gross income below the average. Adjusted for tax, it reported 31 per cent of households had a disposable income of less than 500 euros per week, or 26,000 euros a year, while the top 10 per cent had a disposable income of more than 88,000 euros a year.

Unions are getting particular flak over the pay reductions for new entrants in the public sector. But Sweeney says the two-tier workplace started in the private sector in the 1980s with the Bank of Ireland, a trend which has now become widely practised.

## Street Cleaners Union to strike

The Street Cleaners Union in Yemen has announced that the government's refusal to meet with them has forced the union to escalate its actions by declaring a general strike. The President of the Union, Mohammed Marzouki,

told the media that demands include regularization of temporary workers to permanent status, payment of full benefits, better working conditions and increased pay. He apologized to residents of the capital, Sanaa, for the ill-effects such a strike will have on their lives and the city, explaining the government had left the union with no other alternative.

Street cleaners have called on the Yemen government to answer their plight for better social conditions ever since 2011 uprising. When the transitional government took office in February 2012, Prime Minister Mohammed Salem Basindwa promised workers their situation would be carefully looked at and all wrongs righted. But despite a series of protests and job actions, the Union is back where it started, on the picket line.

Similar actions have been taken by Yemen Central Bank workers, who walked off the job on Jan. 12. Observers believe that this year could see the birth of a wider labour action movement in Yemen, one of the many after-shocks of 2011 revolution.

## Auto layoffs loom in France

Last summer, PSA Peugeot Citroen announced that it would close its Aulnay plant near Paris and slash 8,000 jobs in a cost-cutting effort to minimize its losses, which were US\$990 million in the first half of 2012.

On Jan. 16, 300 of its workers belonging to the CGT, one of France's more radical unions, went on strike at the Aulnay plant. The workers account for just 10 percent of the factory's 3,000 employees, but they were able to "paralyze" the facility since most of them worked on production. The strike came one day before Peugeot and the unions met again to discuss how many employees will be laid off and what deal they will receive.

"Employees at PSA Aulnay refuse to accept being laid off without anything", said the CGT. "The false negotiations begun in November give absolutely nothing at all, the management is refusing to address the demands of the employees. The striking workers demand that the management restart the negotiations from the beginning."

France's other major car company, Renault, has announced that it will reduce its French workforce by 7,500 people in the next three years, by offering early retirement packages and not replacing departing workers.

## Scheme to sell off Postal Service

According to a report in the NH Labor News, Pitney Bowes is promoting a plan to privatize every part of the U.S. Postal Service except mail delivery. This idea was brought up years ago by the Libertarian Cato Institute but was quickly dismissed at the time.

Pitney Bowes is proposing that the entire postal service would become a series of private companies that would process and

transport the mail to US Postal Service Letter Carriers, who would still deliver it. The plan would eliminate hundreds of thousands of well-paid jobs and replace them with low wage employees, except for the unionised front line letter carriers.

Since the USPS has a high level of public confidence, it would be politically difficult to privatize the entire service, as Mitt Romney wanted to do. Instead, the Pitney Bowes scheme would keep the public face of the USPS while reducing most employees who process the mail to "Walmart" level pay and working conditions. The plan would also jeopardize the Postal Service's reputation for keeping people's mail private, safe and secure.

In last year's election campaign, Pitney Bowes contributed the maximum \$17,500 contribution to one candidate - Congressman Darryl Issa, R-Calif., who also received \$17,500 from UPS. Issa's extremist views on dismantling the Postal Service are well known. His Government Oversight Committee has blocked any postal reform legislation other than his own union-busting HR 2309. Another major recipient of thousands of dollars from Pitney Bowes and UPS is California Republican Dennis Ross, co-sponsor of HR 2309.

A "study" on the issue being prepared for Pitney Bowes claims that private companies "can fulfill other tasks in the postal network and do so at a lower cost and with greater efficiency and innovation and without political and regulatory interference."

In reality, the U.S. Postal Service has the least expensive rates in the industrial world, despite a congressional mandate to make

annual \$5.5 billion payments into a retirement benefits fund for future employees.

The CEO of Pitney Bowes made \$9,230,798 last year.

## Electrolux sacks Thai workers

On January 11, Electrolux Thailand management called a meeting of all its workers and announced a two-month bonus, but refused to discuss demands for fair wage increases and permanent employment for agency workers. Instead the managers forcibly removed the union president, Phaiwan Metha, throwing him onto the street and dismissing him. When the gathered workers learnt of the dismissal they continued to sit on the floor and demanded his reinstatement and return.

Management then called security and police and surrounded the workers, preventing them from leaving for eight hours, including a pregnant woman in her sixth month who tried to leave. At 5pm the workers were released, one by one by the security guards. The workers returned to work on Jan. 14 to find written dismissal notice for 127 workers.

The union at the plant was formed in 2010, at which time it managed to negotiate a collective agreement that is due for renewal this year. The products of the Electrolux plant include washing machines, refrigerators and other electrical appliances for European and Asian markets. The dismissed workers are now fighting the management's union busting tactics and have submitted their grievances to the Parliament's Labour Commission.

Many items in our "Global Class Struggle" column are from the Labour Start website, [www.labourstart.org](http://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](http://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](mailto:pcq@cpc-pcc.ca) Tél: 438-338-8890

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

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

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

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

**Ottawa CPC**  
Tel: 613-232-7108

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

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

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

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



# The Guardian vs. the conventional wisdom on Venezuela

By Alex Main, CEPR  
(Centre for Economic Policy  
and Research, [www.cepr.net](http://www.cepr.net),  
Jan. 17, 2013

Earlier this month my colleague Dan Beeton noted that the major media, after incorrectly predicting a close race in Venezuela's presidential elections, had quickly reverted to the familiar "gloom and doom" predictions for Venezuela's economic future. Additionally, many recent opinion and news pieces have echoed the Venezuelan opposition's view that the decision to postpone Chavez's inauguration was legally questionable. On January 8th, a *Chicago Tribune* editorial neatly summarized the prevailing wisdom: "Venezuela after Chavez

will likely be plagued by political turmoil and economic struggle."

Just as it appeared that the current conventional wisdom on Venezuela had spread and hardened irreversibly throughout the major media, on Jan. 14 the UK daily *The Guardian* published an editorial entitled "Venezuela, defying predictions - again." The piece deftly takes on a few commonly held views found in much of the media coverage of Venezuela.

The postponement of Chavez's inauguration "is not a coup," the *Guardian* states. In fact, "the constitution allows for a president-elect to be sworn in by the supreme court, and the postponement has now been endorsed by the court itself." It's worth noting that head

of the Organization of American States José Miguel Insulza, the government of Brazil and a number of other regional governments have also publicly agreed with this assessment.

Few U.S. media reported on the international acceptance of the decision to postpone Chavez's swearing-in, instead preferring to focus on the views of members of the Venezuelan opposition, some of which lack consistency. For instance, opposition leader Henrique Capriles called on the Supreme Court to rule on the constitutionality of the postponement, only to later reject the Court's determination that the move was constitutional.

The *Guardian* editorial also points out that the frequent predictions that rivals within the pro-government coalition "would

begin falling out have not materialized" and that dire warnings about a mismanaged economy, with soaring inflation, crumbling infrastructure and currency control problems, also need examining with care. After all, the Venezuelan economy has grown for nine successive quarters, has a relatively low debt burden, and the fall in inflation indicates a government with the ability to control inflation while maintaining growth. Oh, and Venezuela is sitting on the world's largest oil reserve.

The editorial provides a link to CEPR's September report on the Venezuelan economy showing that the economic data doesn't support the negative scenarios found in media coverage of Venezuela. In fact, as the report explains, even in the unlikely event of a temporary crash in oil prices, it's very doubtful

that Venezuela will face serious balance of payment constraints. To date, the report's analysis and conclusions remain uncontested, yet Venezuela pundits continue to claim that the Venezuelan economy is on the verge of collapse and that a major fiscal readjustment is inevitable. Though Venezuela's leadership would do well to address kinks in the country's currency control regime, there is no compelling reason for making drastic cutbacks in government spending, despite the contentions of so many pundits and journalists who write about Venezuela.

It is worth noting that this is probably the first time in at least a decade that the editorial board of a major Western newspaper has challenged the "conventional wisdom" on Venezuela. Hopefully it will not be the last. ●



## Garment workers demand safe workplaces

In the wake of the terrible fire which killed 117 workers last November 24 at the Tazreen Fashion factory, labour activists in Bangladesh continue to mobilize for change.

On January 14, a street procession in Dhaka demanded safe workplaces and trade union rights in the garment industry. Hundreds of workers, mostly women, took part in the protest organized by National Garment Workers Federation (NGWF). Carrying placards and banners, the workers marched from the National Press Club, by the High Court and Topkhana Road, to Paltan Crossing.

Speakers at the rally said that 55 serious factory fires have taken place in the Bangladesh garment sector since 1990. In these fires, 566 garment workers were killed, while several thousands were injured, some of them permanently. Another 64 workers were killed in the Spectrum Garments factory collapse in 2005. But proper health and safety standards have still not been enforced.

A "Memorandum of Understanding on Health & Safety" was prepared two years ago at a workshop, organized jointly by the employers and trade unions, and attended by representatives of the government and buyers. At the workshop, it was decided that all sourcing companies would sign the MOU. But most buyers have not yet signed the document, according to the NGWF. ●



### The Fifth of the Month to Free the Five

Join in the worldwide action to Free the Cuban Five on the 5th day of each month! Write to President Obama and demand that he Free the Cuban Five:

E-mail: [president@whitehouse.gov](mailto:president@whitehouse.gov)

On the web: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/contact>

Phone 1-202-456-1111

Fax 1-202-456-2461

Telegram: President Barack Obama, The White House,  
1600 Pennsylvania Ave. NW, Washington, DC 2500, USA

For more information, see <http://thecuban5.org> or  
[www.canadiannetworkoncuba.ca](http://www.canadiannetworkoncuba.ca)

## Remembering an unsung Dalit hero

By Gurpreet Singh

As secularist and progressive groups celebrate the Ghadar Party centenary this year, those organizing the events need to highlight the role played by many unsung heroes of the freedom struggle. Among them was Mangu Ram Muggowal, a prominent Dalit icon of Punjab. He was a part of the Ghadar party launched in the U.S. on Nov. 1, 1913 and believed in an armed struggle against the British occupation of India.

The contributions by individual participants of historical struggles are sometimes overshadowed by the role played by a few dominant leaders. But the followers of Muggowal believe that his role in the Ghadar movement may have been deliberately ignored because of caste prejudice. While this allegation is debatable, Muggowal's role should be acknowledged by events to mark 100 years of the Ghadar Party in Vancouver and elsewhere. Incidentally, his descendants live in Greater Vancouver area.

Born in Punjab in 1886, Muggowal immigrated to the U.S. for economic reasons. He became involved in the freedom struggle following a realization of racism

and discrimination in the foreign land.

The members of the Ghadar Party believed that their sufferings were the result of slavery back home and resolved to fight against imperialism. A person like Muggowal endured double discrimination for being a person of colour and a Dalit. Born in a so-called low-caste "untouchable" family, he faced segregation at school and suffered physical abuse for defying the caste laws. Thankfully, the Ghadar Party believed in secularism and kept religion and politics apart, yet he faced such prejudice even in the U.S.

Muggowal not only worked for the Ghadar newsletter, but also



Mangu Ram Muggowal

went to Java to help in collecting and sending arms to India. He escaped a death sentence at the hands of the British allies. Thinking he had died, his family remarried his widow to his brother.

On coming back to India he was disillusioned by the continued oppression of the Dalits, who were considered untouchables by orthodox Hindus and Sikhs. He was partly upset with the popular leaders of the freedom struggle who failed to address the issue of casteism. He resigned from the Ghadar Party in order to mobilize Dalits, and eventually launched the Aadi Dharam movement in Punjab. He believed that without bringing social revolution first, it was impossible to bring real freedom in India.

The Ghadar Party also assured him full support in his struggle against caste oppression. Since his movement was in conflict with the interest of the freedom struggle, his cause was not dear to the popular leadership. Rather, Muggowal was branded as a tool of the British Empire that was playing a divide and rule game to prolong its rule in India. Whereas the British Empire was happy to

see DALIT, p. 11

## "Isolate the activity of the fascists" urges KKE

The murder of a 27-year-old Pakistani immigrant in the Petralona area of Athens has been widely condemned as another crime by ultra-right supporters in the Greek capital. During the first nine months of 2012, human rights groups report that 70 racist attacks took place in Athens, mostly at night and carried out by more than one aggressor.

On Jan. 17, the victim was riding a bicycle in Trion Ierarchion Street, when he was assaulted by two Greeks with stiletto knives. The assailants tried to escape, but residents of the neighbourhood informed the police and provided details of their motorbike, which was later found in the Syntagma area.

After being arrested, the two men, aged 29 and 25, claimed that their victim had blocked the road with his bicycle. They confessed

that after an argument they attacked and killed him. The younger of the accused has been connected by the police to previous robberies.

The Attica organization of the Greek Communist Party immediately issued a statement denouncing the savage murder by the two fascists:

"This incident is not the first, it is to be added to a macabre list of racist attacks which for some time have been going on in Athens' neighbourhoods. The government has serious responsibilities regarding the fostering of racism, and the blaming of immigrants for the problem of unemployment and the wretched living conditions in many areas of the centre of Athens.

"The 'law and order' operation called 'Xenios Zeus' provided cover for and fostered the toleration of the criminal activity of the fascist racist gangs. The

state repression and the racist attacks are inter-connected and support each other.

"We call on the working class, the people, the youth, in a mass way to denounce and isolate the activity of the fascists in the neighbourhoods. They must not tolerate the fascist attack squads which today murder immigrants and tomorrow the struggling people."

According to the police, 50 election leaflets of the neo-nazi Golden Dawn party were found at the house of the 25-year-old. Three stiletto knives, an air gun, two clubs, two army issue bullets, a knuckle duster and metal pellets were confiscated at the houses of the two arrested men.

The KKE held an emergency public rally to condemn the anti-immigrant violence perpetrated by the Golden Dawn fascists. ●



## Skyfall: entertainment, not enlightenment

**SKYFALL**, directed by Sam Mendes, cast including Albert Finney, Berenice Marlohe, Daniel Craig, Helen McCrory, Javier Bardem, Judi Dench, Naomie Harris, Ola Rapace, Ralph Fiennes, 143 minutes

Review by Glen Truax

Yes, I watched *Skyfall*. No, I didn't pay for it.

The Bond film series that appears to be bulletproof, a franchise that has been running strong for decades (despite the glitch caused by Timothy Dalton in the eighties), continues to draw in boatloads of money at the box office. Every trope remains in place: gambling, oceans of alcohol consumption, beautiful women who show up only to get killed 20 minutes later - the template set by Connery back in the halcyon days of the sixties.

This doesn't mean that *Skyfall* is terrible. It's slick, it's easy to forget that the film is over two hours long. There's very little in the way of padding; in every other Bond film, there are at least 30 minutes of flab, and that doesn't seem to be the case here. There are few moments of wasted screen time.

It's still a little hard to take *Skyfall* at face value however. It's difficult to forget the ludicrous opening ceremonies of the London 2012 Olympics, in which Daniel Craig personally parachutes his way into the thick of things. (It's also hard to believe that the director of *28 Days Later* and *Trainspotting* directed the opening sequence, but that's another matter.) Also, viewers know in their hearts that life will eventually return to a state of grace, with James and Company alive and well to do battle with "evil" in the next episode, so



Daniel Craig, Berenice Marlohe, and Javier Bardem star in *Skyfall*: wait until it comes to cable.

emotional stakes are rather low.

What's more important is the subtext in every James Bond film, where villainy is always cast in a very zeitgeist-y way. Whatever happens to be grabbing headlines during the course of shooting the film can be expected to rear its ugly head in the finished product. In *Skyfall*, the bogeyman is the grim spectre of WikiLeaks, which the film takes pains to explain entirely evil (along with Julian Assange and the Anonymous internet collective). These entities exist to blow the cover of good, hard-working spooks all over the world, seemingly without any purpose other than petty warfare with power structures. This is

completely unambiguous - raving on agents is evil, pure and simple, with Javier Bardem stepping up to the plate as the face of pesky civilians who actually want transparency.

There are certainly worse ways to while away an afternoon. Anti-WikiLeaks undertone aside, the film delivers relentless action, with little CGI or noticeable electronic gimmickry getting in the way of a good punch up. It's pure entertainment, not enlightenment, and the cast is uniformly strong. The viewer may want to wait until it comes to cable however - dropping 15 dollars minimum on a suspect action flick seems a little steep. ●

## Another Vancouver cultural landmark in danger

By Kimball Cariou

Yet another cultural landmark may be on the ropes in Vancouver. This time, the Waldorf Hotel is on the "redevelopment" chopping block, but public opinion is strongly against demolition. Hundreds of

people rallied on Jan. 13, urging city council to find a way to save the building.

With its retro "Polynesian tiki bar" motif, the Waldorf is near the Vancouver waterfront and the Maritime Labour Centre. It was once a favourite pub for trade unionists and political activists to lift a brew and debate issues and strategies. A few years ago, it was reinvented, to showcase a wide range of music acts and theatrical events. In the summers, Vancouver's increasing variety of food carts set up on Sundays, drawing huge crowds.

But suddenly in early January, news broke that the Waldorf property has been sold to a major condo developer, the Solterra Group. While the company has no immediate plans to tear down the hotel, everyone fears the worst.

Since Mayor Gregor Robertson's Vision Vancouver party is supported by many artists and cultural activists, the heat was quickly turned up on city hall. Council moved to protect the building for a temporary period, but Vision says it has few long-term legal options.

In a news release, the Coalition of Progressive Electors (COPE) said it believes that Robertson's plan does not address systemic problems facing the arts community and renters.

"Vision Vancouver has indicated their willingness to use the City's land-use powers to protect the Waldorf, which is good news," former COPE Councillor

see WALDORF, p. 11



## MUSIC NOTES

By Wally Brooker

### Musicians mobilize for Idle No More

Canadian pop star Nellie Furtado's salute at a New Year's Eve concert in Niagara Falls was a highly-visible celebrity endorsement of Idle No More. Musicians had been supportive since at least Dec. 21, when the "Canadian Artists Statement of Solidarity with Idle No More" was published on Facebook. 150 artists initially signed on, including singer-songwriter Sarah Harmer, Gordon Downie (Tragically Hip), Greg Keelor & Jim Cuddy (Blue Rodeo) and Steven Page (Barenaked Ladies). The statement calls on Steven Harper to meet with First Nations peoples "in the intended spirit of the original treaties, as sovereign nations." The artists were following a vanguard of First Nations musicians with little access to the industry's star making machinery. Take for example the outstanding indigenous musician Derek Miller, who appeared at a Jan. 5 benefit for Chief Spence at Ottawa club Zaphod Beeblebrox. His song "7 Lifetimes (for Chief Spence)" is the opening track on the album *Idle No More: Songs for Life Vol 1*. Download it for free at <http://rpm.fm/>.

### Folk Alliance to meet in Toronto

Several thousand folk musicians and related industry types will gather at Toronto's Delta Chelsea Hotel Feb. 20-24 for the 25th annual International Folk Alliance conference ([www.folkalliance.org](http://www.folkalliance.org)). The Memphis-based IFA is a non-profit educational organization. Its annual meeting is an important showcase for everyone involved in North American folk music, whether they are performers, educators, club owners, radio hosts or record companies. In addition to more than 50 workshops, panels and exhibitions, there will be a wide variety of showcase concerts and open mic stages. A "Canadian Spectacular" on Feb. 20 will be open to the general public, with shows on seven stages. Visiting artists will appear at Hugh's Room during the week. Incidentally, the same hotel is the site of the free Winterfolk Blues and Roots Festival (Feb. 14-17). For info: [www.winterfolk.com](http://www.winterfolk.com).

### Paraguay's "Recycled Orchestra"

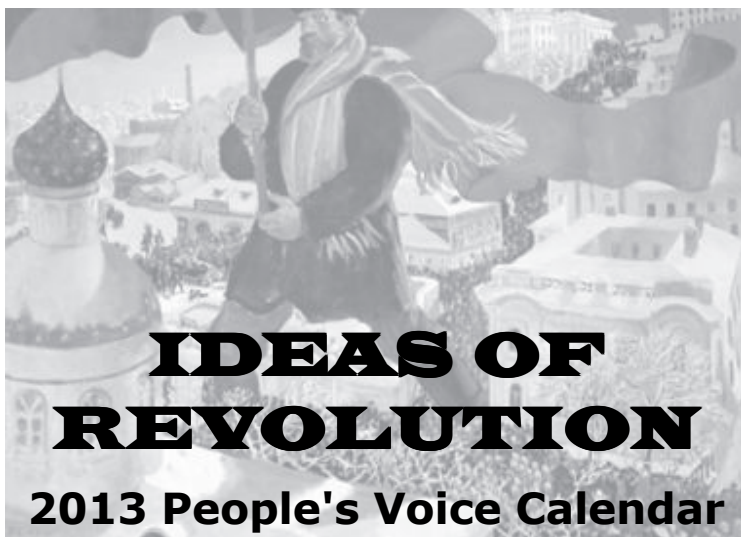
Cateura, Paraguay is a town of 25,000 built on a landfill. Several years ago social worker Favio Chavez wanted to introduce music to local indigenous children in this poor region where kids have few opportunities. With a lack of funds, he decided to make instruments from objects found in the landfill (e.g. barrels, forks, bowls, water pipes, and bottle caps). The instruments were made by Nicolas Gomez, a resourceful local trash picker. Today the 20-member "Recycled Orchestra," conducted by Luis Szaron, makes beauty out of garbage as it performs traditional Paraguayan music as well as Beethoven, Mozart, Bach, Mancini and the Beatles. They've performed in Brazil, Panama and Columbia. Recently they travelled to Phoenix, Arizona for a performance at the Musical Instrument Museum. A documentary film "Landfill Harmonic" (produced and directed by Alejandra Amarilla Nash and Juliana Penaranda) will be released later this year. View the trailer at YouTube or Vimeo.

### Cubana All-Stars: "A Dream Come True"

One of the most acclaimed Latin recordings of 2012 is a fiery salsa album by the Cubana All-Stars called "A Dream Come True." Recorded in Havana under the auspices of the Musicalia festival and the Ministry of Culture, the album unites outstanding local musicians with long-time Cuban expatriates from New York, Miami, Mexico, Spain and Puerto Rico. Returning legends include vocalists Issac Delgado and Justo Betancourt (Puerto Rico) and trumpeter Alfredo "Chocolate" Armenteros (New York City). Their musical hosts include guitarist-singer Eliades Ochoa (Buena Vista Social Club) and pianist-composer Adalberto Alvarez (Son 14). The Cubana All Stars have been called "the most significant Cuban orchestra to form in the last decade," and their record company calls the album their "debut," suggesting that this may be more than a one-time project. Ochoa no doubt speaks for many when he says the album is "a dream come true for all Cubans." Best online deal: [www.elwatusi.com](http://www.elwatusi.com)

### Jayne Cortez: 1934-2012

African-American jazz poet and activist Jayne Cortez died in New York on Dec. 28. Her visceral and surrealist verse linked African oral traditions with blues, avant-garde jazz, and political protest (she was a lifelong opponent of racism, misogyny and the capitalist system). Although she published acclaimed volumes of print poetry, Cortez is best remembered for her work with jazz musicians. Her collaborations with artists like bassist Richard Davis and her son, drummer Denardo Coleman (in her band The Firespitters) are essential to understanding the evolution of jazz poetry from its beginnings in the Harlem Renaissance to its links with contemporary rap and hip-hop. As a young woman Cortez was active with the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, registering black voters in Mississippi. Later she became a key figure in the influential Black Arts Movement founded by poet Amiri Baraka. She was also a co-founder of the Organization of Women Artists of Africa. Check out Jayne Cortez performing the brilliant "If the Drum is a Woman" on YouTube.



The People's Voice Calendar for 2013 - "Ideas of Revolution" - is now on sale. Dedicated to the struggles of the international working class for peace, liberation, equality and socialism, this year's calendar features quotations by a wide range of revolutionaries, artists, and writers, such as Nelson Mandela, Rosa Luxemburg, Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, V.I. Lenin, Tim Buck, Soong Ching Ling, Germaine Greer, Evo Morales, Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, Claudia Jones, Fidel Castro, Jose Saramago, and Frida Kahlo. The 14-month calendar (Jan. 2013-Feb. 2014) also includes notable dates from the history of the people's movements, and statutory holidays and celebrations for the year.

"Ideas of Revolution" can be ordered by mail for \$10 in Canada, or \$15 in the United States (price includes mailing costs). Send a cheque to People's Voice, 706 Clark Drive, Vancouver, BC, V5L 3J1. For information on bulk orders of five or more calendars, contact our Vancouver Editorial Office: [pvoice@telus.net](mailto:pvoice@telus.net), tel. 604-255-2041.

Residents of Ontario can order directly from the Ontario Bureau of People's Voice, 290A Danforth Ave., Toronto, M4K 1N6, ph. 416-469-2446. The Calendar will be on sale at our Manitoba Bureau (387 Selkirk Ave., Winnipeg), and our Quebec Bureau (5359 Ave. du Parc, Montreal).

## First Nations: the long shadow of assimilation

By Trish Hennessy, National Office of the Canadian Centre For Policy Alternatives (CCPA), January 3, 2013. Hennessy's Index is a monthly listing of numbers about Canada and its place in the world. Visit: <http://policyalternatives.ca/index> for sources on the following numbers.

**150,000** - Number of Aboriginal children who were taken from their families and forced into residential schools as part of Canada's assimilation policy from the 1870s onward. In 2008, the government apologized to Aboriginal peoples "for failing them so profoundly."

**70 cents** - Amount Aboriginal peoples earned for every dollar non-Aboriginals earned in 2006. At this rate, the income gap between Aboriginal peoples and the rest of Canadians won't disappear for another 63 years, unless Canada adopts a new approach.

**1 in 4** - Number of children within First Nations families who live in poverty in Canada, much higher than the 1 in 10 children in non-Aboriginal

families who live in poverty.

**444** - Number of recommendations to improve the lives of Canada's First Nations people within the landmark Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples report, now 16 years old.

**\$7.5 billion** - Estimated annual cost of doing nothing to resolve First Nations employment and social problems in Canada (in 1996 alone)

**5-7** - Number of Aboriginal youth suicides for every non-Aboriginal Canadian youth. Suicide rates among Inuit youth are among the highest in the world, 11 times the national average.

**600** - Number of unresolved cases of missing and/or murdered Aboriginal women in Canada.

**120** - Number of Aboriginal communities with a drinking water advisory, as of October 31, 2011. Of the more than 500,000 First Nations people who live on Canada's reserves, thousands live without indoor plumbing.

**Nearly half** - Number of houses on Canadian reserves in need of major repair. The federal auditor general says Aboriginal housing is subject to overcrowding and requires more federal funding to

keep up with the growing Aboriginal population.

**\$169-\$189 million** - Estimated federal government underfunding of capital expenditures on reserves annually. The Assembly of First Nations (AFN) says 40 new schools, at a cost of \$12.5 million each, and 85,000 housing units would have to be built to meet current needs.

**C-45** - The federal omnibus bill that sparked a movement in Canada called Idle No More, which points to eight legislative bills that violate treaties. Amnesty International says changes to the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, the Fisheries Act, the Navigable Waters Act, and the proposed Safe Drinking Water for First Nations Act have profound implications for the rights of Indigenous peoples as set out in treaties, affirmed in the constitution, and protected by international human rights standards.

**35.1** - Section of Canada's constitution that commits the Prime Minister and First Ministers to meet with Aboriginal peoples before changing federal responsibilities that affect First Nations. ●

## Bill 115 isn't really gone...

continued from page 2

eliminate the closed shop, and privatize nuclear power plants.

In early December the Common Front of labour and its community and social allies, met in a one day conference. Participants reviewed the Common Front's first year of existence, and planned for the Jan. 26 Liberal Convention protest. They also discussed subsequent actions for a people's agenda of good jobs, higher wages and incomes, affordable housing, quality education and healthcare, strong social programs, strong civil, democratic, labour and social rights, Aboriginal rights, and environmental protections.

Those present understood they would have to fight. It was clear from those involved in the anti-poverty movement and the

occupation of the offices of the Social Services Minister, that a broad and united movement taking mass action was essential to win. What was largely missing, however, were representatives from labour, though members of the OFL Executive were prominent and supportive throughout the proceedings.

### Escalating province-wide action needed

If ever the labour movement needed friends and allies, it is now. This is the time for the Common Front and the bulk of the trade

union movement to come together to roll back and defeat this anti-people agenda. Surrounded by right-wing governments at every level, and a corporate offensive that aims to eliminate the trade union movement itself, there's no other way.

Labour must throw its weight behind the Common Front and start mapping out a forward agenda of mass escalating struggle that will gain the support of all those threatened by austerity and corporate greed.

Occupy, the Quebec student movement, and Idle No More all show the way forward. ●

## Fire Kevin O'Leary....

continued from page 4

These remarks, which could have come out of the mouth of a fascist dictator, prompted several complaints. The National Union of Public and Government Employees wrote that "Trade unionists are beaten and murdered in many countries around the world, simply because they believe in workers acting collectively to improve workplace conditions such as pay, hours of work, health and safety, and job security. [...] Mr. O'Leary's wilful promotion of contempt and hatred towards

unions reflects a viewpoint that has often ended in violence perpetrated against union members and leaders."

The CBC Ombudsperson, however, refused to intervene.

More of O'Leary's remarks are in the new issue of Rebel Youth. The campaign will also demand full restoration of government funding to the CBC. In its early stages, the campaign so far features an online petition and some publicity information, with plans to take it to the streets as well.

Johan Boyden, General Secretary, Young Communist League

## Waldorf....

continued from p. 10

Ellen Woodsworth stated. "But (the Mayor) is not seeking to address the underlying problems of speculation, displacement, and the ongoing loss of cultural spaces in the city."

Woodsworth pointed to the impending eviction of the non-profit W2 Community Media Arts Society from city-owned space in the Woodward's complex. "The city has not chosen to stand up for the Pantages Theatre, the Ridge Theatre, Red Gate, creative industries displaced at 955 East Hastings, or over 200 units of social housing at Little Mountain," added Woodsworth.

COPE argues that the City does have the authority to utilize progressive land-use controls to restrict speculation and the demolition of culturally significant, historic, and affordable spaces. ●

## Dalit hero...

continued from p. 9

give concessions to the Dalits, leaders like Muggowal felt deceived by the mainstream nationalist leaders. Despite such differences, it goes to the credit of Muggowal that he did not support a religion based partition of India in 1947.

Even after freedom, Dalits continue to suffer caste based discrimination. Untouchability is still practised in many parts of India in accordance with orthodox principles of Hinduism, despite India being a secular country. Thousands of Dalits are forced to indulge in manual scavenging for a livelihood, in spite of claims of development and progress. Mangu Ram's legacy therefore should be kept alive to stop oppression against Dalits. Let Muggowal be remembered both as a Ghadar and a Dalit activist. ●

## What's Left

### Vancouver, BC

**La Trova Nuestra**, Fridays, Jan. 25 and Feb. 22, 8 pm, monthly pena with Latin American performers, \$10, refreshments available, at the CSE, 706 Clark Drive.

**Left Film Night**, Sunday, Jan. 27, 7 pm, Centre for Socialist Education, 706 Clark Drive. Screening of "Petropolis", documentary on the impact of tar sands projects in northern Alberta. Free, donations welcome. Call 604-2455-2041 for info on Feb. 24 film.

**The General's Son**, speaking tour with Miko Peled, author and peace activist from a prominent Israeli Zionist family, Thursday, Feb. 7, 7 pm, Vancouver Public Library, sponsored by Canada-Palestine Support Network (Canpalnet) Independent Jewish Voices, and others.

### Winnipeg, MB

**Marxism Course**, contact Communist Party of Canada Manitoba Committee to join up. 586-7824 or [cpc-mb@changetheworldmb.ca](mailto:cpc-mb@changetheworldmb.ca)

### Ottawa, ON

**The General's Son**, speaking tour with Miko Peled, author and peace activist from a prominent Israeli Zionist family, Tues., Feb. 26, 7:30 pm, St. Paul's Univ. Auditorium, tickets \$10 [events@nccar.ca](mailto:events@nccar.ca).

### People's Voice 2013 Fund Drive starts March 1st!

Watch for details in our next issue.

### Toronto, ON

**Protest at Ontario Liberal Convention**, Sat., Jan. 26, 1 pm, rally at Allan Gardens (Jarvis & Carleton), followed by march to Maple Leaf Gardens.

**Raising the Workers' Flag**, People's Voice forum with Stephen Endicott, author of new book on the Workers Unity League, 7 pm, Thur., Feb. 14, GCDO Hall, 290 Danforth (near Chester subway). For info, see page 2 or ph. 416-469-2446.

### St. Catharines, ON

**Giant Two-Row March** of solidarity between Haudenosaunee (Six Nations) and settlers, Sat., Feb. 2, 11 am, downtown St. Catharines. Mark 400th Anniversary of the Gushwenta ("Two Row Wampum Belt"). On Facebook: [www.facebook.com/events/536505619701012](http://www.facebook.com/events/536505619701012).

### Montreal, QC

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

### NO TO AUSTERITY & WAR SPEAKING TOUR

**No to Austerity, No to War!** Speaking tour with Miguel Figueroa, leader of the Communist Party of Canada, see ad on page 3. Upcoming dates include OTTAWA, Tues., Jan. 29, 7 pm, McNabb Community Centre, 180 Percy St. (at Gladstone), 613-232-7108; VANCOUVER, Monday, March 4, 7 pm, Centre for Socialist Education, 706 Clark Drive, 604-254-9836 for info. Look for details of speaking tour in other western Canada locations in our next issue, or ph. 416-469-2446.

## People's Voice deadlines

February 15-28 issue: Thursday, Jan. 31

March 1-15 issue: Thursday, Feb. 14

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



## La Trova Nuestra

Friday, Feb. 22, 8:00 pm

"La Peña Nuestra"

Centre For Socialist Education, Vancouver

706 Clark Drive (Clark and Georgia st)

\$10 Entry

About Vancouver's "La Trova Nuestra"

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



Information from the Alliance for Global Justice website, <http://afgj.org>.

The complex struggle for social justice and democratic freedoms in Colombia continues on several fronts. On one level, a difficult set of negotiations between the government and the FARC insurgents has begun, with the goal of ending the nearly five-decade civil conflict. People's Voice will carry further reports on this important process.

Meanwhile, the Colombian state has not abandoned its policy of repression against many movements and individuals who carry on heroic efforts to achieve human rights, such as political prisoner David Ravelo.

Ravelo is a member of Colombia's Regional Human Rights Corporation and was honoured by the Catholic Diocese of Barrancabermeja for his defense of human rights. He was recently convicted to 18 years in prison for what is widely regarded as a sham trial by human rights organizations.

The North American Committee to Free David Ravelo is canvassing for signatures on the following letter to the Colombian authorities. (For more information,

# Justice for Colombian political prisoner David Ravelo!

visit the website above, or email [freedavidavelo@gmail.com](mailto:freedavidavelo@gmail.com) or [atwhit@roadrunner.com](mailto:atwhit@roadrunner.com).)

"This letter concerns David Ravelo, who was arrested on Sept. 14, 2010. He is presently wrongly held by your government at La Picota Prison in Bogota. It was announced on Dec. 11, 2012 that he had been convicted of "aggravated homicide" and sentenced to 18 years in prison.

"The pretext for David Ravelo's arrest and conviction is the allegation he participated in the murder in 1991 of David Nunez Cala, Secretary of Public Works in Barrancabermeja. That charge is false. David Ravelo is innocent. He must be released from prison. Both Mr. Ravelo's family and his colleagues at the CREDHOS human rights organization in Barrancabermeja have long been subjected to death threats. The Colombian government must guarantee their safety.

"Your government's purpose in inflicting a long prison sentence on David Ravelo, we suspect, was to silence a recognized defender of human rights. David Ravelo was instrumental in publicizing abuses and violence in Barrancabermeja at the hands of murderous paramilitary criminals.

"Conduct of Mr. Ravelo's trial was scandalous. The case against him rested on accusations from two jailed paramilitary murderers

who, by testifying, gained reductions in their sentences. Witness Orlando Noguera testified that the accusers tried to bribe him to corroborate their story. Over 30 witnesses prepared to defend David Ravelo were

prevented from testifying at his trial. (See sidebar article for further details.)

"...The world is watching. United Nations human rights specialists and the Inter-American Commission of Human Rights

have come to David Ravelo's defense. In December, 2012, British parliamentarians denounced his trial and conviction. We join these international human rights advocates. We call for justice to be done, now." ●

## Who is David Ravelo?



In Barrancabermeja, his home city, David Ravelo is recognized as a leader in the struggle for human rights. He has led several high-visibility human rights groups and served as a municipal and departmental official. He is a member of the Executive Committee of the Colombian Communist Party and in 2008 was honoured by the Catholic Diocese of Barrancabermeja for 35 years of human rights work. His efforts were crucial to building popular awareness of participation by paramilitaries and government troops in violent crimes and human rights abuses. In response to pressure he helped generate, the government prosecuted and convicted several of them.

On Sept. 14, 2010, David Ravelo was arrested. On Dec. 11, 2012, more than two years later, he was convicted of "aggravated homicide" in the case of a Barrancabermeja city official murdered in 1991. Ravelo's conviction rested on the testimony of two jailed paramilitaries whose crimes Ravelo had publicized. In return for their testimony, the witnesses gained reduced sentences. One, Mario Jaimes Mejia - alias "El Panadero," had

his sentence reduced from 40 to no more than eight years.

At Ravelo's trial, more than 30 defense witnesses were prevented from testifying. In November 2012, it came to light that the prosecutor in Ravelo's case, William Pacheco Granados, had been removed from his police lieutenant's post in 1992 because he had participated in the forced disappearance of one individual. Under Colombian law, such criminal behaviour precludes him from serving as a public official, such as, for example, public prosecutor. David Ravelo's case is being appealed.

David Ravelo has faced political persecution for more than two decades. He was imprisoned in 1993-1995 on charges later shown to be false. Beginning in the late 1990s, paramilitaries took control of Barrancabermeja. Since then, he and his family members, particularly his son David Ravelo Gutierrez, have regularly experienced death threats.

International support for David Ravelo is growing. British Parliamentarians in 2010 denounced his imprisonment and in December 2012, his conviction.

In March 2011, United Nations rapporteurs on judicial processes and on victimization of human rights defenders denounced "criminalization of David Ravelo." On Dec. 5, 2012 the Inter-American Commission of Human Rights condemned repression against human rights defenders in Colombia including Mr. Ravelo. In early December 2012, 13 European human rights groups issued a critique of Ravelo's conviction, and two weeks later 21 other human rights, labour, and lawyers' groups from Europe and the United States denounced his conviction in a letter to the Colombian Attorney General.

Also during that month, 30 British and Irish parliamentarians, lawyers, and labour leaders released yet another condemnatory statement.

Colombia's prison population has increased by 30 percent during the current presidency of Juan Manuel Santos. David Ravelo is one of 10,000 political prisoners. Recent reports highlight abysmal

prison conditions: foul sanitary facilities, limited availability of potable water, inadequate medical services, and overcrowding. Many political prisoners serve two to three years without charges and are then released.

Prisons in Colombia are part of a repressive apparatus that includes the army (with almost half a million troops), resurgent paramilitaries, intelligence services, and police. War on leftist insurgents, labelled terrorists, propels harassment and round-ups of unionists, journalists, teachers, indigenous peoples, Afro-Colombians, and leftists. They are part of Colombia's political opposition, yet are often cast as allies of the guerrillas, even as "terrorists."

The internal state of siege is largely directed at clearing rural areas for exploitation of natural resources and industrial-scale agriculture, projects funded by foreign investment. Humanitarian disaster is palpable: rural poverty exceeds 60 percent, 30 percent of children are chronically malnourished, five million Colombians are displaced from their land, and hundreds of thousands have been murdered or "disappeared" over 40 years. Colombia's income inequality in 2009 was the greatest in Latin America.

The U.S. government, leery of leftward drift in Latin America, regards Colombia as its chief regional ally. With its Plan Colombia initiated in 2001, the U.S. government increased backing for the military that has been ongoing for half a century. The U.S. has supplied over \$8 billion to expand the Colombian army, police, and prisons. Some falls into paramilitary hands. U.S. troops and military contractors, armed with sophisticated intelligence technology, join national forces in anti-insurgent operations. The U.S. government controls seven Colombian air bases.

The time now is crucial. The Patriotic March, a new and peaceful popular mobilization, is growing in size and vigor. Violent attacks aimed at repression have begun. And negotiations are underway between the Colombian government and FARC insurgents. The U.S. government's position is highly uncertain.

Members of the North American Committee travelled to Colombia recently to express solidarity with Ravelo. In Barrancabermeja, a nine-person delegation met with Ravelo's family and co-workers, as well as farmers in a remote area afflicted by armed violence, political activists, and lawyers. Two delegation members visited David Ravelo in La Picota prison in Bogota. ●



Prisoner in the maximum security section of La Picota peers through the window of his cell during a tour by journalists.

## 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

02/13