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people's VOICE

Trillions for the ultra-rich?

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Photos by Ed Bil

Thousands rally against U.S. Steel in Hamilton

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Cuba's changes

"Nobody will be abandoned by the Cuban Revolution," promised the Cuban Consul-General at a recent event in Toronto to mark the 52nd anniversary of the island's historic revolution.

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Food, climate, crisis

Dramatic climate changes are one factor behind a serious global crisis of food production and distribution, and rising popular resistance can be expected.

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Norman Bethune

The annual Norman Bethune Dinner in Toronto on Feb. 26 will pay tribute to Canada's pioneer of universal health care, courageous anti-fascist, and inspiration to generations of revolutionaries.

Legislation threatens free bargaining for transit workers

By Liz Rowley

Mayor Rob Ford and the new right wing majority on Toronto City Council wasted no time at their first meeting in December, passing a motion calling on the province to enact essential services legislation that would eliminate the right to strike for public transit workers. The motion passed with only 17 of 45 members of Council voting against.

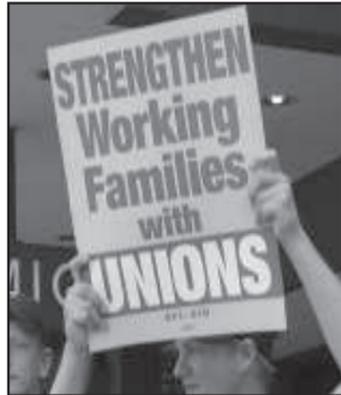
The argument made by Ford and his supporters is the standard one: the TTC handles a million riders a day who depend on the system to get them to work and school. These are essential trips for transit riders. Therefore the service should be declared essential, and strikes outlawed.

Many of the 17 argued valiantly, citing the facts that TTC strikes were very few and far between, and were not the cause of any significant disruptions in the last 20 years. The last transit walkout lasted a day and a half over a weekend before the provincial Liberals, with help from the Tories and the NDP, legislated the workers back.

Also, an essential services designation would not prevent work to rule action, and could include work stoppages on weekends and during off-hours, as occurs in Montreal where the union has lost the right to strike. Further, the cost of arbitrated settlements - such as for police, firefighters and EMS - is significantly higher for the employer over the cost of

negotiated settlements, including those negotiated during strikes.

Finally, the right to strike is protected under Canadian law, and the city would have a hard time making the case that transit workers are 'essential' in the same way as police, fire and EMS workers are deemed to be. A transit strike may be inconvenient, but it's not lethal. Removing the right to strike from



10,000 transit workers would shift the balance, leaving the majority of city employees without the right to strike - a historic, precedent-setting shift.

Local 113 President Kinnear of the Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) put his finger on it when he said the real crisis in transit is the failure of provincial and federal governments to fund the TTC - the third largest urban transit system in North America, and the one most reliant on the farebox and riders for funding. This chronic underfunding is well-known to transit riders, after a massive

publicity campaign by the previous City Council pointed to the huge shortfalls in funding, most of it promised and defaulted by successive governments.

The 10,000 members of Local 113 ATU, drivers, mechanics, ticket takers, cleaners and so forth, are being targeted to redirect public anger at the system's shortcomings. While attacking the workers and their union, Ford and his Executive went on to cut or reduce service on 67 bus routes, and ditched plans to hire 103 additional TTC staff in 2011, after promising throughout the fall election that there would be no cuts to services in Toronto. Ford also sacked the LRT expansion contained in the city's official transit plan which the province is funding, declaring "the war on the car is over". Bike lanes are also part of the war on cars, according to Ford, and are also under attack.

In early February, three bus drivers were summarily fired for texting or using a cellphone while driving. The union is responding through the collective agreement.

Through all of this, the provincial Liberals have made friendly noises, saying Premier Dalton McGuinty wants to work with the new Council in Toronto. Now the government has indicated that it is preparing legislation to make public transit an essential service. The Hudak Tories - endorsed by Mike Harris - have indicated support, while the NDP has yet to comment. A provincial election is just months away.

Lurch to the right

With back-to-back majorities under his belt, McGuinty is feeling the pressure from Hudak (an MPP in the Harris government in the 90s, married to Deb Hutton, a close adviser to the Harris government). The Tories are rising in the polls on the message of opposition to the Harmonized Sales Tax (HST), and tax relief for overloaded 'taxpayers'. Ironic, as the Tories and Liberals are colluding to deliver the HST - a value added tax - across Canada, and it's the Tories who are delivering another \$6 billion in federal corporate tax cuts this year.

The Tories' message of tax 'relief' is resonating as prices for food, fuel and housing soar, while mass unemployment, under-employment and insecurity flourish. Along with it comes the fear and anger that propelled Rob Ford to office, and the scapegoating of unionized public sector workers.

There is a very real danger that the essential services legislation will pass, and may go beyond Toronto to cover transit workers across the province. That would set the stage to remove the right to strike for transit workers all across Canada.

The current collective agreement between the city and Local 113 expires at the end of March. Ford and McGuinty are busy transforming that date into a strike deadline, to push through the no-strike law without public debate.

In an effort to slow things down and force the government to hold public hearings, Local 113's President promised there will be no strike this year. So far there has been no response from the government. A mass public outcry could sink the Bill, or at least slow it down.

In Toronto, about 60% of city employees would be designated essential if this legislation passes. Only Locals 79 and 416 - inside and outside city workers who hit the

bricks for a month in 2009 and were the target of a very ugly media campaign - would still have the right to strike. These 18,000 CUPE members (plus some who have been designated) may be the real target, the last public sector workers with the right to strike in Toronto. It seems likely that the demonization of city workers in the 2009 strike in Toronto, and the earlier four-month strike in Windsor, were intended to help create a public mood conducive to strike-breaking in Ontario.

Defend free collective bargaining

The Ontario Federation of Labour, under President Sid Ryan, has launched an energetic campaign to mobilize labour and its allies in defence of workers on strike or locked out by giant national and transnational corporations. Now is the time for labour and its allies to defend public sector workers, including Local 113 ATU on the front line in the struggle for free collective bargaining and the right to strike for all workers.

Strikes can be averted by employers - public and private - willing to sit down and negotiate an agreement. Strikes occur because employers are unwilling to negotiate, because they want cheaper labour or because they want to close up shop, or break the union.

The Communist Party is calling on the labour and democratic movements to oppose the essential services legislation while it's still being drawn up, to demand that it be withdrawn, and to make clear that this issue will cost the Liberals votes in a close election. The Communist Party calls instead for a Bill of Rights for Labour, to guarantee the unfettered right to free collective bargaining, including the right to strike, picket and organize, for all workers.

(Liz Rowley is the leader of the Communist Party-Ontario) ●

Ford moves to privatize garbage collection

TORONTO - Mayor Rob Ford announced Feb. 7 that the City will send out tenders to private companies to bid on garbage collection west of Yonge Street, including parks and other public areas. An estimated 300 jobs will disappear if City Council votes at its May meeting to proceed with

the plan. Deputy Mayor Doug Holyday says savings will come through paying much lower wages and benefits.

CUPE Local 416, representing Toronto outside workers, was informed by fax, and also invited to submit a bid. But Local 416 President Mark Ferguson said the

move was "a purely ideological attack on the public service."

"Asking us, the union, to bid along (with) private contractors, is an untenable position... We are not an employer, we do not have an ability to manage a workforce, we have no ability to purchase capital equipment," Ferguson said.

Instead the union will start canvassing residents, to explain what privatization would mean to the "super-service" currently delivered by public employees.

East York also split garbage collection in the '90s and contracted out half the Borough's collection. Residents and businesses complained about poor service until the Borough quietly restored collection to the public sector.

"We are doing this so we're not going to go through another 40-day garbage strike like we did last year," Mayor Ford said. "We're going to save millions of dollars, and we're going to reduce the size of government."

Contract provisions in the collective agreement make it impossible to contract out collection in the whole city. But that is the goal, and the list for contracting out includes labour-intensive jobs like cleaning police stations and cutting grass.

The city workers' current contract expires Dec. 31, but Mark Ferguson said, "I don't expect that we're going to be taking a strike in January. I think that there's a very real possibility that this administration will lock out its own employees."

Stay tuned. ●

The pillars of Egyptian freedom are the People

Thirty years of oppression and economic depression
The West tugged their strings on the puppet of suppression
Enslaving the people to starvation and mass deception
Blindfolding their will with ignorance and religious division
The right of freedom will shake the land
The ancient civilization will once again stand
My people, I ask you to stay united and strong.
Speak till your last breath, don't hold your tongue
The billion dollar project of deaf, dumb and blind
That bribed Mubarak to brainwash our mind
Shall fuel our uprising and liberation
Against foreign interests and determination
To keep the people numb with sedation
Taking advantage of our resources and nation
Making our lives fit their foreign policy
As if only their people deserve democracy
Egyptians, look out, your country is up for grabbers
Be sceptical of other puppets, tyrants and back-stabbers
Say no to extremists and traitors to our land
And those who secretly want us to fight Iran
Enough fraud, injustice and corruption
Enough foreign recipes for mass destruction
Enough to the media that lies and misinforms
Let's shout the truth and sound our own horns
My people, I ask you to stand united and strong
Fight for your rights, don't hold your tongue

(This abridged version of a spoken word tribute to the Egyptian people's struggle was written and performed by Hebaa Ragheb at a mass solidarity rally in Toronto on Feb. 5, 2011)

Niagara News Bulletin

By PV Niagara Bureau

* St. Catharines launched an advisory committee to establish **Canada's first Black History Museum**. Harriet Tubman was a St. Catharines resident and Niagara saw many mass liberations by protesters of runaway slaves who were going to be deported to the United States.

* The District School Board of Niagara will open a new high school targeting **students from low-income families**. An NDP MPP has denounced the program as "apartheid education" and asked the education minister to intervene. The President of the OSSTF (Ontario Secondary School Teachers Federation) local said his union's concerns about the school, such as that only 10% of the low-income family students will be enrolled, were not addressed by the school board. The ETFO (Elementary Teachers Federation of Ontario) local on the other hand supports the idea as "levelling the playing field." An alternative implemented in low-income districts in Toronto, Montreal, Halifax and other cities called Pathways to Education Canada focuses on low-income students in existing schools rather than concentrating low-income students into one school.

* The City of Welland is exploring **suing the Ontario health ministry** and LHIN (Local Health Integration Network) to stop cuts at the local hospital in favour of moving services to a new P3 (Public-Private-Partnership) hospital further away.

* Niagara-area protesters including Egyptian-Canadians, labour unionists, and human rights activists joined worldwide emergency **rallies in support of Egyptians** demonstrating to oust their government.

* New StatsCan figures show **Niagara's unemployment** is at almost 10%, tied with Windsor and Abbotsford, B.C. for the highest in major metropolitan census area. Although more Niagarans are working than earlier, many more are looking for work, which goes to show how unemployment data underestimates the true size of capitalism's damage. ●

G20 defendant Alex Hundert finally released

Special to PV

After three months in jail without trial, G20 defendant Alex Hundert was released from the Toronto West Detention Centre on January 24th. But Hundert's release came only after he signed a plea bargain with the Crown that he was guilty of being in breach of his "no protest condition" for being present during

one portion of a panel at Ryerson University. The plea bargain did not establish that speaking on a panel was equivalent to a public demonstration.

Hundert said, "I made this plea because I realised that I was doing no good to anyone as I sat in jail. There will be no justice in the courts because they exist to protect an unjust and hierarchical order. So I

took a deal that would allow me to get back into my community where I can continue to commit myself to issues of social and environmental justice."

Initially arrested in a violent pre-emptive house raid in June on "conspiracy" charges, Hundert was re-arrested after being accused of breaching his 'no public demonstration' bail condition for

speaking at panel discussions at Wilfrid Laurier and Ryerson University in September 2010. Plainclothes officers were present at both events.

Commented Nathalie Des Rosiers, General Counsel at the Canadian Civil Liberties Association, "It seems preposterous to think that public resources, policing and even

corrections resources have been spent to prevent someone from attending and speaking at a University seminar. The process was unfair and the charges were exaggerated: it ought not to have happened."

Numerous organizations have condemned the crackdown on dissent before and during the G20 summit, including the Canadian Association of University Teachers, Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations, Canadian Union of Postal Workers, BC Civil Liberties Association, and Canadian Union of Public Employees Ontario.

The Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations wrote, "This criminalization of legitimate dissent represents an assault on both Mr. Hundert's freedom of expression and the freedom

see HUNDERT, page 11

People's Voice Fund Drive - a question of ideology

In our next issue, the annual People's Voice Fund Drive for \$50,000 will begin. Our supporters across Canada are making plans for fundraising events, and donations are already trickling in. But first, we'd like to discuss why the working class press is critical in the "battle of ideas."

To paraphrase Karl Marx, the dominant ideology of any society is that of its ruling class. Here in Canada, we live, work, study, play, and consume, immersed in the ideas and values of those who own the huge corporations which control the economy.

This ideology is far from "objective" or "unbiased," despite the claims of the capitalist hierarchy

and their political supporters. It's an ideology rooted in the concept that private ownership of natural resources, banks, manufacturing, agriculture, etc., is the "natural" form of human society. This is hardly surprising: in every class-divided society, the owners of wealth present their domination as the normal way of organizing the economy. Under today's capitalism, this includes the idea that the "human imperative" is the individual struggle to achieve success, measured by the critical yardstick of bank accounts, real estate, share capital, mutual funds.

Those who fall short - the vast majority who sell their ability to work - are portrayed as failures, regardless

of their contributions to family and community, or to their own class. The locked-out steelworkers in Hamilton, for example, are accused of two supposed "crimes" - failing to become rich enough to retire through their own endeavours, and also being "greedy" for fighting to defend their pension plan from the attack by U.S. Steel.

The ruling class sees its control of the mass media as the most important weapon in the struggle over ideology. This control is usually obscured by claims that the media is "divided" between "liberals" and "conservatives."

On the surface, opposing viewpoints are often found in the corporate media, reflecting differences over social equality issues, for example. Occasionally, voices from the "left" break through, only to disappear. (So long, Rick Salutin, it was good to have you in the *Globe and Mail*.)

But even these rare voices of dissent are confined within the suffocating boundaries of the dominant ideology of private ownership. One will search in vain for a columnist or commentator who argues for socialized ownership of the capitalist economy, or for working class political power.

Nor is this a coincidence. Recently a reader sent us a help wanted ad, for the position of Editor-in-Chief/Deputy Publisher, "to drive innovation, engagement and revenue across Saskatchewan's leading media brands: The Saskatoon Star-Phoenix and Leader-Post (Regina)." The successful applicant will "be responsible for all content, quality of content, and product initiatives" and "work closely with the brands' respective advertising and marketing departments" etc.

This job description illustrates the complete grip of ruling class ideology on the mass media. The era when crusading editors hired reporters for their writing skills and knowledge of key issues is ancient history, to the extent that it ever existed. In the modern era, media outlets are "brands" operated by editors and publishers employed for their willingness to please the corporate master, hiring "journalists" churned out by post-secondary institutions which teach the same capitalist values.

Some "democratic media" activists argue that the Internet makes it possible for ordinary people and progressive movements to break the chains of capitalist information control. And there is some truth to this argument. A wider range of media outlets does encourage greater diversity of opinions and analysis.

But this alone does not challenge the basic problem of ruling class ideological domination.

People's Voice is vital for the working class movement, not because we are the only "alternative" source of news (we aren't), but because we use the facts to make the case for socialist ideology, for working class political power, for a world free from imperialism. When we ask for support, keep this in mind, and be as generous as possible! ●

THE ECONOMIC DIVIDE

The Big Obscenity: a trillion dollars a year to the richest 1%

By Paul Buchheit, faculty member in the School for New Learning at DePaul University in Chicago. This commentary appeared first at www.commondreams.org.

If you make less than \$114,000 a year (90% of us), you've been financially damaged by the flow of income to the richest 1% of Americans over the past 30 years. Based on Internal Revenue Service figures, if middle- and upper-middle class families had maintained the same share of American productivity that they held in 1980, they would be making an average of \$12,500 more per year.

If you make less than \$160,000 a year (95% of us), your household value has decreased, percentage-wise, over the last 25 years. According to noted researcher Edward Wolff, only the top 5% of American families increased their percentage of the country's total household net worth from 1983 to 2007.

U.S. GDP has quintupled since 1980, and we all contributed to that success. It's not unreasonable to say that upper-middle class families should have maintained the same size of their slice of pie. But if earnings since 1980 were based on this measure of productivity, the richest 1% of Americans would be making \$1 trillion less per year.

A trillion dollars a year. That's more than we spend on the entire military.

A trillion dollars a year. That's seven times more than the budget deficits of all 50 states combined. Many states have been forced to cut police forces and teachers to balance their budgets.

A trillion dollars a year. Yet Congress just voted to continue

the Bush tax cuts.

The richest 1% (\$400,000 or more) didn't work harder than the rest of us. They profited from stock market gains, shrewdly designed financial instruments, and tax cuts.

The very wealthy insist that all their income will stimulate the economy. But low-income earners spend a greater percentage of their overall income on consumption, while high-income earners save more. Middle-class America has been led to believe that the growth at the top will eventually produce more jobs. But many of us have college-educated sons and daughters who can't find suitable employment. Fortune Magazine reported that the 500 largest U.S. companies cut a record 821,000 jobs in 2009 while their collective profits increased to a record \$391 billion.

Even the upper class should be concerned about this. As inequality increases, the majority of Americans will consume less, leading to conditions not unlike the years before the Great Depression, when the working class was unable to buy the goods they produced. The rich, with extra money, speculate in risky investments. The majority of middle-class Americans, with little money, go deeper into debt. The result is an unstable economy for all of us.

Who are the people making up the richest 1%? Bankers, CEOs, upper management, university presidents, Congressmen. They live in their own world, supporting each other's needs. They can no longer relate to the needs of average Americans.

Taxing them is not "soaking the rich." The greatest redistribution of income in history has taken place over the last 30 years, and the victims are beginning to make a fuss about it. ●

People's Voice Builders

We continue our series of profiles of People's Voice volunteers with Nicolas Welsh, a member of the Ligue de la jeunesse communiste du Québec in Montreal. Nicolas hands out PV at his high school, and when he went out for the first time selling the paper at two Montréal Metro stations, he took in \$40 for two hours work. "Some people were mean to me, but many people took the paper," he said. "Some people gave me \$5 and one young woman said she wanted to join the Party." The Montréal bureau of People's Voice made about \$80 in January through street sales, despite cold weather. They also focus on the square by the statue of Norman Bethune, close to Concordia University.



MAY DAY 2011 GREETING ADS

To mark May Day 2011, 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 22; if PV is preparing the layout, the deadline is April 20. Please check with us about the format if your ad is being sent electronically.

Ad rates (based on 5 column page):

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EDITORIALS

Betrayal of Aboriginal women

Since about 1980, up to 3000 Indigenous women have gone missing or been murdered in Canada. Indigenous women and their allies are rallying across the country on February 14, a date which has come to symbolize the long struggle against racist, misogynist violence.

In recent years, a leading role in this movement has been played by the Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC) and their Sisters in Spirit campaign (SIS). Since 2004, this initiative has worked to raise awareness and to gather data about violence against Native women and girls in Canada. By last year, the annual Sisters in Spirit marches and vigils were organized in 86 communities.

Responding to public demands to end this violence, the Harper Tory government's 2010 budget, released last March, promised \$10 million to "address the issue of missing and murdered Native women." But then the government held up funding to SIS for eight months. Finally, in November 2010, the Tories announced that this money would not be used to fund SIS research. Instead it will be directed largely towards programs to enhance the power of police forces, operating without the critical tool of solid research and data collection. This betrayal is compounded by the historical antagonism of police forces towards Aboriginal communities; there are many cases of police violence against aboriginal women, such as Gladys Tolley, killed by the Surete du Quebec in 2001.

Aboriginal women refuse to be used for the political advantage of politicians who promise to take action, only to pull the rug out months later. Under the Harper Tories, there has been a consistent racist pattern of dismantling and de-funding programs essential to the safety and health of Aboriginal communities. When thousands of people across Canada take to the streets on Feb. 14, they will demand solutions, not more lies and broken promises.

Another secret sellout

Once again, the minority Conservative government - "elected" by barely more than one-third of voters - has reached a secretive deal which reinforces Canada's integration into the US imperialist empire. The "border security declaration" was signed by Stephen Harper and Barack Obama on Feb. 4 after six months of backroom negotiations involving big business, but not Parliament or the peoples of Canada. The deal includes sharing security information with the US Department of Homeland Security, but little to address the 'thickening' of the border which makes it difficult for ordinary people to travel freely.

Stephen Harper calls the deal "a declaration of our relations with the United States," stressing that Canada is the biggest supplier of energy to the United States, and that "any threat to the United States is a threat to Canada." His ominous words recall the origins of the post-WW2 drive to "continentalism". Imposed by stealth in the early days of the Cold War, the Abbott Plan implemented by the Liberal government of that time sold out any material basis for Canadian economic independence, in favour of the quick profits to be gained by turning Canada into a source of raw materials for U.S. corporations. The subsequent decades have witnessed a huge increase in foreign ownership, the devastating decline of the manufacturing sector, and "trade agreements" which lock into place Canada's role as supplier of energy to our southern neighbour. With this shift has come an ever-closer alignment of Canada's foreign policy with the dictates of Washington.

Just as frightening, Harper also warns that this declaration is "just a starting point". The implication is that even more dramatic assaults on Canadian sovereignty are on the way. This sellout deal must be blocked, and the Tories must be defeated when Canadians finally head to the polls.

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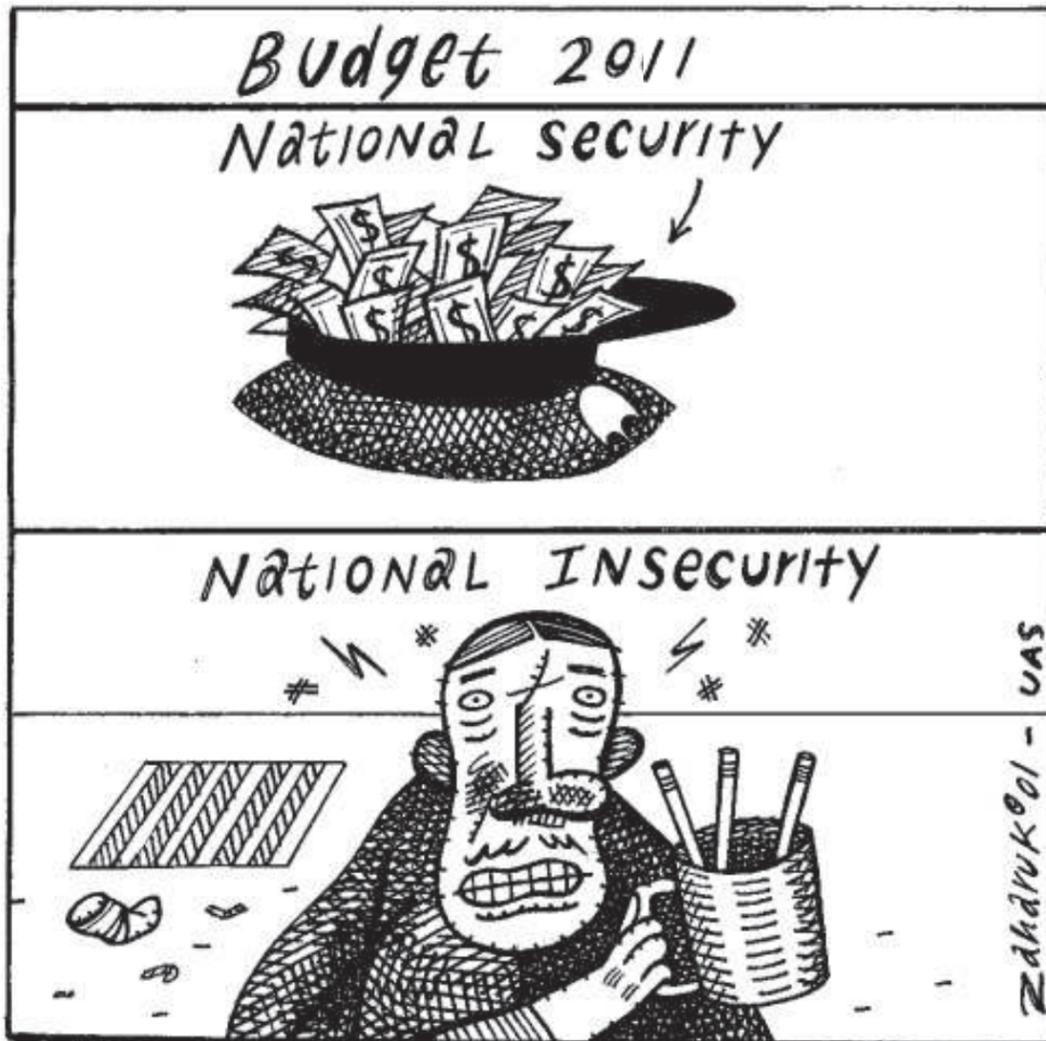
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SPEAKING FRANKLY

NATO occupation bogged down in failure

PV Commentary

Mounting civilian deaths in Afghanistan, and revelations about the dirty role of Canada's hired guns in the NATO-occupied country, have boosted the demand for immediate withdrawal of Canadian troops. Despite the Harper government's arbitrary decision to extend the Canadian mission by three more years - disguised as a re-configured "training" role - the majority of Canadians still favour an early end to the military involvement which began a decade ago. Since then, the mission has cost Canadian taxpayers an estimated \$20 billion, almost entirely for military purposes rather than building civilian infrastructure. Over 150 Canadian troops have been killed, and thousands of Afghans die under the occupation every year.

At least 2,421 civilians were killed last year, according to a new report released on Feb. 1 by the Kabul-based Afghan Rights Monitor. More than 3,270 civilians were also injured in "conflict-related security incidents."

The report blamed "armed opposition groups" for 63 percent of the civilian deaths, many caused by "improvised explosive devices", such as road bombs targeting occupation troops. U.S.-NATO forces account for another 21 percent of deaths, or nearly 500. The NATO forces, said the report, wrongly continue to label almost every war casualty as being a "suspected insurgent." A total of 499 U.S. troops and 212 other coalition members were killed in Afghanistan in 2010.

Meanwhile, a report from the U.S. Government Accountability Office showed that despite an increase in the size of the Afghan National Army (ANA), levels of violence are on a steady upward trajectory. The GAO found that as of September 2010, not a single ANA unit was considered as

capable of carrying out its mission independent of NATO assistance. Two-thirds were "effective with limited coalition support."

A Canadian Press report says that "Canada spent more than \$41 million on hired guns in Afghanistan over four years, much of it going to security companies slammed by the U.S. Senate for having warlords on the payroll. Both the Defence and Foreign Affairs departments have employed 11 security contractors in Kabul and Kandahar since 2006, but have kept quiet about the details."

Documents tabled in Parliament at the request of the NDP show Foreign Affairs paid nearly \$8 million to ArmorGroup Securities Ltd. This company was cited in a U.S. Senate investigation as relying on Afghan warlords who in 2007 were engaged in "murder, kidnapping, bribery and anti-coalition activities." The company provided security around the Canadian embassy in Kabul and guarded diplomats.

Canadian Press quotes defence researcher Dave Perry, who claims that such contractors, usually ex-soldiers, are a "fact of life in the age of all-volunteer armies." Perry's response simply confirms that Canada's overall military present in Afghanistan is larger than the government's claims.

Last fall, President Karzai ordered the estimated 40,000 armed security contractors to leave the country, but later backed down. Instead, his government has demanded that such firms register and begin paying taxes.

With a possible election looming, NDP leader Jack Layton has been critical of the plan to redeploy Canadian troops to build up Afghanistan's army. The move will end up training Taliban insurgents, Layton said recently, pledging to campaign for NATO troops to come home, and arguing that the entire military effort is destabilizing

Afghanistan. Instead, he called for an increase in diplomatic efforts and a "massive civilian deployment" of development aid. Layton's position marks a shift from the past three years, when he repeatedly emphasized the "courage and sacrifice" of Canadian Forces.

Michael Ignatieff's Liberals, who gave cover for Harper's troop extension, argue that it is impossible to achieve Layton's plan "in the midst of conflict without providing Afghans with the tools to protect their security and their democracy."

As the parliamentary parties point fingers, it is clear that the Canadian military mission has done nothing to make Afghanistan safer or more democratic, and the NATO mission cannot achieve its stated goals. Instead, the latest reports prove that the anti-war movement has been correct from the beginning. The invasion was a tragedy which has cost hundreds of billions of dollars and countless lives, and the imperialist occupation remains bogged down in utter failure. ●

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No one will be abandoned by Cuban Revolution

Excerpts from a Jan. 26 speech by Jorge Soberon, Consul-General of Cuba in Toronto. Soberon spoke at a celebration of the 52nd anniversary of the triumph of the Cuban Revolution, organized by the Latin American and Caribbean Solidarity Network and the Cuban Consulate.

The triumph and the existence of the Cuban Revolution, is also a triumph for Latin America and the Caribbean and of the friends of Cuba throughout the world.

Much has been the sacrifice of the Cuban people since it began its struggle more than 140 years ago, on October 10, 1868. Cuba has shown that, despite all obstacles, government of the humble, by the humble and for the humble is still possible. Cuba has nothing to hide and nothing to be ashamed of.

To those who relentlessly criticize the Cuban revolution, we say: The Cuban Revolution has never condoned or practised torture, disappearances or extrajudicial killings, secret prisons have never existed in the Cuban Revolution, nor has it used repression against the people. In Cuba the law has never been applied without a proper trial and Cuba has been an example of justice when it has been necessary to apply the more severe penalties.

Only because of the Cuban Revolution there are today more than a thousand doctors sent by Cuba in Haiti saving lives in that noble and brotherly people.

Only because of the Cuban Revolution 50,000 foreign students have graduated in Cuba since the triumph of the Revolution.

Only because of the Cuban Revolution, 45,000 Cuban doctors and technical workers have given their services in the more remote regions of the world.

Only because of the Cuban Revolution millions of compatriots in our region and in various parts of the world had been able to recover their vision or be literate with the help of Cuban doctors and collaborators.

Only because of the Cuban Revolution, Cuba helped other

sister nations to be free from colonial yoke, from apartheid and to and achieve independence.

Only because of the Cuban Revolution, the Cuban people has access to education and free medical care, employment opportunities for all, access to culture and sport, and has achieved high levels of human development.

Imperialism and neoliberal market rules have nothing to offer the people of Cuba, except slavery.

Only the joint work with sister nations, as the ALBA alliance, the free development of relations with the rest of the world's peoples and the ability to resist, fight and

develop in socialism, can ensure our people the welfare it wants and deserve.

Cuba faces the difficulties inherent of a developing country with limited resources and subjected to a strict sanctions regime and the hostile policy of the most powerful nation ever.

There have been many obstacles that our people have had to overcome and still face, but for more than 50 years we have been able to hold high the banner of socialism and social justice, just 90 miles from the United States.

The economic sanctions and political meddling of the United States in Cuban internal affairs is still valid today, causing severe human and economic damage. It must cease immediately without imposing any conditions to Cuba...

Cuba today is making strategic changes in its economy and society to build its socialism, not to destroy it. No one has ever been or will be abandoned to their fate by the Cuban Revolution. Cuba will not drop its social achievements, knowing that only with socialism it can guarantee its independence and sovereignty. Cuba will never renounce its disinterested cooperation with the

peoples of the world.

The younger generations are already assuming the continuity of the socialist revolution. The Revolution has been, is and will be the work of the youth. Young Cubans were the ones who fought for the freedom of other peoples of the world, young Cubans are the ones who collaborate today as doctors and technicians abroad and young people are our five heroes imprisoned in the United States...

Imperialism is still dreaming and working to destroy the Cuban Revolution. They will never defeat the Cuban Revolution with their paid mercenaries. In Cuba we look forward with confidence, certain that the future belongs to those who do not stop fighting and work tirelessly for a better future.

That is our conviction on a day like today, when we appreciate the support of all our friends in Canada and around the world. Today we celebrate the victory of the humble, of justice and independence that is ultimately the Cuban Revolution.

Long live the peoples struggling for justice and independence! Long live the Latin America and the Caribbean of Bolivar and Marti! Long live the Cuban Revolution! ●



Jorge Soberon, Consul-General of Cuba in Toronto (Photo: Ed Bil)

A medical brigade of 1,200 Cubans, working in 40 centres across Haiti, have treated over 30,000 cholera patients since October. They are the largest foreign contingent, treating around 40% of all cholera patients. Since 1998, Cuba has trained 550 Haitian doctors at the Escuela Latinoamericana de Medicina. Another 400 are being trained at the school, which offers free education.



Marxist Theory Today

Behind the uprisings: a global food crisis is emerging

By Kimball Cariou

The uprisings shaking the Arab countries in recent weeks are not directed simply against dictatorial elites - they are largely a response to deepening poverty and the growing gap between rich and poor. In one sense, these revolts are a continuation of the huge general strikes which rolled across Europe during 2010. Tunisia's large trade union movement played a critical role in the successful struggle against the dictator Ben Ali, a signal that the working class will be the key element in wider global resistance to the neoliberal agenda imposed by big capital.

One of the sparks for the Arab revolts has been hunger and rising prices, which reflect the emergence of a serious world-wide food crisis. As angry demonstrators wave loaves of bread, fearful politicians take timid steps to respond, such as reversing their cuts to subsidies of vital foodstuffs.

In one of his recent "Reflections," Cuba's former president Fidel Castro located this crisis in a wider context: "The problems have suddenly increased as a result of phenomena which are being repeated on all continents: heat waves, forest fires, loss of harvests in Russia, with many victims; climate change in China, heavy rainfall or drought; progressive reduction of water reserves in the Himalayas which is threatening India, China, Pakistan and other countries; torrential rain

in Australia, which has flooded almost one million square kilometers; unseasonable and unprecedented cold in Europe... drought in Canada and unusual cold in this country and the United States..."

Fidel Castro warned that "production of wheat, soy beans, corn, rice and many other grains and legumes, which constitute the nutritional base of the world - the population of which (is) rapidly approaching the unprecedented figure of seven billion and where more than one billion are suffering hunger and malnutrition - is being seriously affected by climate change, creating an extremely grave problem worldwide."

He also points to a recent article by Lester R. Brown, published on the Organic Way website. Brown notes that the price of wheat is setting an all-time high, at a time when the world's population is growing by 80 million people each year, or 219,000 every day. While consumption of meat, milk, and eggs in fast-growing developing countries keeps growing, many are going hungry.

Meanwhile, the United States harvested 416 million tons of grain in 2009, of which 119 million tons went to ethanol distilleries to produce fuel for cars - enough to feed 350 million people for a year. Most of the huge global jump in grain production is due to expansion of ethanol distilleries in the United States.

In Europe, there is growing demand for plant-based diesel oil,



Jordanian holds up loaf of bread during Jan. 21 protest in Amman.

principally from rapeseed and palm oil. This is reducing the land available to produce food crops in Europe, and driving the clearing of rainforests in Indonesia and Malaysia for palm oil plantations.

At the same time, new constraints are emerging on the supply side. An estimated one third of the world's cropland is losing topsoil faster than new soil is forming through natural processes. Huge dust bowls are forming, one across northwest China, western Mongolia, and central Asia; the other in central Africa. Satellite images show a steady flow of dust storms carrying off millions of tons of precious topsoil.

Aquifer depletion is shrinking the amount of irrigated area in many regions, driven by the large-scale use of mechanical pumps to exploit

underground water. Today, half the world's people live in countries where water tables are falling. Irrigated area is shrinking across the Middle East; in Saudi Arabia, which was totally dependent on water aquifers, wheat production plummeted by two-thirds from 2007 to 2010.

The biggest water deficits are in India, where the World Bank reports that 175 million people are fed with grain produced by overpumping. In China, overpumping provides food for some 130 million people. In the United States, irrigated area is shrinking in key agricultural states such as California and Texas.

Rising temperatures will also make it more difficult to expand the world grain harvest. Crop ecologists warn that for each 1 degree Celsius rise above the

optimum during the growing season, a ten percent decline in grain yields will result.

The melting of glaciers in the Himalayas and on the Tibetan plateau will impact the major rivers of Asia during the dry season - the Indus, Ganges, Mekong, Yangtze, and Yellow rivers - and also the irrigation systems dependent on these rivers.

Brown warns that "the unrest of these past few weeks is just the beginning. It is no longer a conflict between heavily armed superpowers, but rather spreading food shortages and rising food prices - and the political turmoil this would lead to - that threatens our global future. Unless governments quickly redefine security and shift expenditures from military uses to investing in climate change mitigation, water efficiency, soil conservation, and population stabilization, the world will in all likelihood be facing a future with both more climate instability and food price volatility. If business as usual continues, food prices will only trend upward."

We have been warned. The world can no longer afford "business as usual", i.e. an imperialist system based on maximizing profits and wealth for a tiny corporate elite. The militant actions by the people of the Arab countries and the working class of Europe point the way to survival - a socialist economic system based on meeting the needs of the people and the environment. ●

The People vs. US. Steel

10,000 rally in Hamilton

Stop the abuse of workers, says Gerstenberger

Excerpts from the speech at the Jan. 29 "People vs. U.S. Steel" rally by 10,000 trade unionists and their allies in Hamilton, by Rolf Gerstenberger, President, USW Local 1005

Local 1005 sincerely appreciates everyone's presence here today. We consider this a historic gathering because it makes a historic statement that Canadian workers and people from all walks of life are determined to resolve the all-sided crisis, with economic crisis at the base, in favour of the people not the rich...

In the modern world people have rights by virtue of being human. All governments and those who employ humans must recognize those rights and guarantee them. Our rights at this time can be broadly expressed as public right. They include the right to a livelihood and security in retirement because we are the producers of all the wealth society depends on for its existence.

Our rights include the right to control the decisions that affect our lives, livelihoods, security and pensions, but this right to decide has been usurped by the rich and their governments....

Last December, we witnessed the most disgusting example of the politics of monopoly right trampling the politics of public right in the events surrounding the national meeting on pensions in Kananaskis, Alberta. The Harper government without warning reversed its pledge to strengthen the indexed defined benefits of the Canada Pension Plan and instead promoted yet another registered savings plan so loved by the private financial enterprises. That is a betrayal of the federal government's social responsibility to guarantee indexed defined-benefit pensions for all...

The assault on the security of all in retirement includes dark suggestions that the next target will be the defined-benefit pensions of municipal, provincial and federal public workers. The most pro-monopoly neoliberal forces have seized power in the federal government, many provinces and big cities such as Toronto. They are determined to privatize public services such as the Post Office and municipal, provincial and federal services. This attack includes the negation of the right to security in retirement for all and the very conception of a modern society that guarantees the rights of all, where public right is defended in opposition to monopoly right as a primary responsibility and duty of government.

The people's struggle versus U.S. Steel closely mirrors that of the people versus the global mining monopoly Vale. These global monopolies and others such as Xstrata pledged employment and production levels when they seized Stelco, Inco and Falconbridge and quickly broke those commitments. U.S. Steel specifically entered into a pension agreement with the Ontario government wherein it guaranteed steelworkers' indexed defined-benefit plans.

The global monopoly has already destroyed the agreement on employment and production levels, wrecked the pension plan at Lake Erie Works and now dictates the same for Local 1005. It must not pass and will not pass!

These monopolies are abusing and pushing Canadian workers too far. With this Day of Action, workers are warning all the global monopolies and the politicians who do their bidding that this abuse must end! Workers are the producers of all wealth and providers of all services.

We are the source of the wealth that the rich and monopolies so covet and enjoy. Workers warn them not to bite the hand that feeds them; this Canadian working class should not be underestimated...

We can defend our pensions, wages, livelihoods, security and way of life if we depend on our own efforts and the people, and break new ground in affirming our political rights as the producers of all wealth and the providers of all services. We are the backbone of the socialised economy. We must become the backbone of decision-making as well. ●



People's Voice photos from the Jan. 29 rally by Ed Bil



Solidarity with the revolution in Egypt!

Statement of the Central Executive Committee, Communist Party of Canada, Feb. 3, 2011

The massive popular and peaceful uprising against the dictatorial regime of Hosni Mubarak, which has captured the world's attention over the past ten days, continues to expand and deepen despite the desperate attempts of the Egyptian ruling class and its imperialist backers to douse the flames of revolution. After 30 long years of oppression, grinding poverty and corrupt rule, millions of working people have held unprecedented mobilizations day after day in the streets of cities and towns across Egypt, around the unifying demand that Mubarak and his government cronies and thugs must immediately resign, and that new genuinely fair and democratic elections be held.

Aroused by the inspiring "intifada of the poor" in nearby Tunisia which recently deposed the dictatorship of Zain Al-Abidin Bin Ali, the Egyptian masses are determined that "Mubarak must GO!" While the popular rallying cry is for an end to oppression and for real democratic rule, the underpinnings of the revolutionary upsurge are rooted in the social and economic grievances of the working class, which has endured high unemployment, rising food prices and impoverishment - further heightened during the recent global economic crisis - while the ruling class elite and their flunkies in the Mubarak regime accumulate the national wealth produced by their labour.

The transparent manoeuvres of Mubarak to cling to power have failed miserably to stem the tide. First, he announced a cosmetic cabinet shuffle, elevating Omar Suleiman to the vice-presidency. Suleiman, the former chief of Egypt's notorious intelligence

branch, is best known for his role as CIA point-man, organizing rendition flights and torture at the behest of Washington's so-called "war on terror". Later, the dictator pledged to serve out his term (until September 2011) before stepping down, hoping that a delay would allow him time to regroup his shattered forces. But the Egyptian people have rejected these false promises and "compromises" overwhelmingly. Finally, the regime has resorted to violence, unleashing thugs (mostly plainclothes cops and members of his discredited National Democratic party masquerading as "pro-Mubarak" supporters) to attack the peaceful and unarmed protests in Tahrir square in Cairo, in Alexandria, Suez and elsewhere. But the people have held firm against this counter-revolutionary violence, despite an escalating toll of death and injuries.

The role of the imperialist powers, including Canada, in this crisis has been two-faced and despicable. While Washington, London and Ottawa have been forced to publicly recognize the legitimate popular resentment against the hated regime, and to pose as defenders of "democracy" and the "right of peaceful dissent",

they are feverishly working behind the scenes to prop up their interests in the region. While Mubarak himself is expendable, U.S. imperialism and its allies worry that the burgeoning movement will develop into a full-fledged national democratic and anti-imperialist revolution, and may spread to other parts of the Arab world, threatening the reign of other client regimes and undermining US-Israeli hegemony in the region as a whole.

The Communist Party of Canada expresses its wholehearted solidarity with the heroic revolutionary process unfolding in Egypt today, and urges all its members and supporters, and all democratic-minded and anti-imperialist Canadians to rally in support of the Egyptian people in demonstrations taking across Canada. We condemn the failure of the Harper government to publicly and sincerely condemn the Mubarak regime, and demand a complete reversal in Ottawa's foreign policy, to stand in favour of the struggling Egyptian people, beginning with the expulsion of the Egyptian ambassador to Canada in response to Mubarak's state-organized violence against his own people. ●



In solidarity with the struggling people of Tunisia and Egypt

South African Communist Party statement on the developments in Egypt and Tunisia, Feb. 2, 2011

The South African Communist Party (SACP) welcomes the political revolts and developments in Egypt and Tunisia and elsewhere, and strongly condemns the brutal responses by the collapsing regimes of dictators; in the case of Egypt we appreciate the restraint of the military force.

These developments increasingly point out the correctness of our party's shared strategic analysis with many of the forces in the Africa Left Networking Forum: "the crisis facing Africa, including Tunisia and Egypt, remains its deepening marginalisation and impoverishment within the global imperialist system, the failure over many decades of a variety of elite-based neo-colonial agendas on the one hand, and the degeneration and in several cases, the collapse of more radical national democratic revolutions led by former liberation movements on the other".

We observed that "at the heart of revitalising the African revolution (part of which is currently underway in Tunisia and Egypt) is the task of creating the conditions (i.e. the social, economic, democratic, and organisational space and capacity) for the key national democratic protagonists - the working class, the peasantry, the mass of urban and rural marginalized (many of them youth), together with patriotic middle strata in the state and civil society - to become the key motive

force of re-radicalisation, not just in theory but in practice".

It is imperative therefore as part of this ongoing class analysis, that we fully support the popular aspirations of the people of Tunisia and Egypt to seize power by mobilising progressive strata, students, youth, women, in alliance with working people against the reactionary dictatorial state, to support its complete revolutionary overthrow and the transformation process towards broad social, political and economic change.

Whilst much of the analysis of these developments is reductionist and not located in the long range, strategic class character of Tunisian and Egyptian societies, it is important to appreciate these developments as being uniquely shaped by objective historical factors in the generalised crisis of development over many years.

The origin of the Egyptian crisis - the absence of popular democracy and participation for instance - can be traced back decades ago, from right wing public policies in the social, political and economic domain, in which many of the sovereign political and economic functions were completely abandoned by the state to the service of bourgeois ideological forces backed by imperialism.

Our party also welcomes the massive strategic backlash suffered by the neo-liberal character of media reportage on these developments, in which opportunistic consensus by a promotional lining-up of capitalist oriented successors is forged from the back door.

These agendas must be

defeated by increasing the tempo of alternative reporting, which thus far has provided a much sober description, that what the people of Egypt and Tunisia are demanding, constitutes not a neo-liberal stabilisation, but a complete rupture with dictatorships, in which people insist on complete overhaul of the ruling capitalist class and its machinery.

We should remain alert to the mechanisation of imperialist forces to propel such revolts only to spill the victory, like they did in some of the areas in the former Soviet states which today yearn for the socialist system.

The SACP also notes that these revolutions are not immune from reversal and counter-revolutionary ambitions, in which they can be subverted and turned into sectoral mobilisation for reactionary ends. It is thus important that the revolutionary tasks of current social, political and economic mobilisation, goes far beyond tinkering with the superficial, but addresses the class character of the current states and its apparatus.

Central to these revolutions is the dismantling of the repressive machinery of the Tunisian and Egyptian state and forging a unifying strategic platform to address popular aspirations of the working people, by transforming political power, meeting peoples basic needs for quality jobs, food, shelter, to defend workers, women struggles and the rights of young people to education and decent jobs.

Our party will also join in solidarity demonstrations and continue the debate on the character of these revolutions. ●

"The revolution will continue until the demands of the masses are fulfilled"

Statement issued by the Communist Party of Egypt

The moment of truth is approaching. This is the decisive moment for the Egyptian popular forces for change; to topple the Mubarak regime. It seems that the imperialists, and their American masters in particular, are lifting their hands from him after the continuation of revolution everywhere in Egypt.

Today millions emerge to demand the departure of Mubarak. They will prevent all the conspiracies of the dictator and his gang of spies to thwart the revolution and overcome them.

The formation of a committee, which enjoys the confidence of the people and the demonstrators, is crucial to achieve the demands of the political, economic and social revolution, and we emphasise the basic demands presented by the national forces to the deputies of the people's parliament:

1. Dismissal of Mubarak and the formation of a presidential council for a transitional period of limited duration.
2. Forming a coalition government to administer the country during the transitional period.
3. To convene the election of a constituent assembly to draft a new constitution for the country based on the principle of the sovereignty of the nation and ensure the devolution of power within the framework of a democratic just civil state.
4. Prosecute those responsible for hundreds of deaths and injuries of revolutionary martyrs and victims of oppression as well as ensuring the prosecution of those responsible for plundering the wealth of the Egyptian people.
5. Long live the revolution of the Egyptian people!

February 1, 2011 - Cairo ●



GLOBAL CLASS STRUGGLE

Turkish police clash with workers

Police fired water cannon and tear gas to force back thousands of workers and students trying to march on parliament in the Turkish capital on Feb. 3 in a union-led demonstration against a draft labour law. The protesters responded by throwing stones at the police. Television news channels put the size of the protest at up to 10,000 people. The workers were protesting against new employment legislation, currently being debated by parliament, which will reduce workers' rights and allow employers to exploit unregulated labour.

The government claims the law is needed to create a more "flexible" labour model, but opposition deputies were supporting the protest. Opinion polls show Prime Minister Taayip Erdogan's Justice and Development Party (AK) leading, with parliamentary elections due in June.

The protesters converged on Istanbul from as far away as Izmir in the west and Diyarbakir in the southeast, aiming to form a human chain around parliament. Interior Minister Besir Atalay had warned that such a protest would not be allowed at the parliament.

Union members killed in Colombia

The brutal Jan. 10 murder of Colombian teacher trade unionist, Manuel Esteban Tejada, brings the death toll to 28 teacher unionists who have been killed in Colombia in the past year. Manuel Esteban Tejada was affiliated to the Colombian teachers' union, FECODE branch of Cordoba, ADEMACOR. He was a teacher at the Palma Soriana education centre.

A 2009 report by Education International (EI), the global federation of teachers' unions, shows that Cordoba, alongside Antioquia and Valle del Cauca, are the departments where the killing of teacher unionists is most prevalent.

Assassination remains a frequent form of political violence in Colombia. Teachers in the trade union movement represent a high proportion of the victims. It is estimated that 27 out of 46 trade unionists assassinated in 2010 were teachers. Of the 27 teacher unionists, seven have been members of ADEMACOR.

EI has joined FECODE to demand that Colombia's Minister of Education and Interior, the Procuraduria General, and the Vice President responsible for human rights break the cycle of impunity by investigating this crime and punishing those responsible with the full force of the law. EI also requests that robust measures be implemented to protect teachers and trade unionists.

EI General Secretary, Fred van Leeuwen, said: "It is the responsibility of governments and the international community to ensure that students, teachers, schools and universities are protected, that the perpetrators of attacks are punished and that education becomes a force for

peace. These attacks violate the most basic human rights for students and teachers - the right to life, and the right to education."

Public sector to protest in Algeria

Algerian opposition groups say they will probably go ahead with a planned protest march despite promises from the president to heed some of their demands and allow more political freedoms. President Abdelaziz Bouteflika, keen to stop uprisings in Egypt and Tunisia spreading to his energy-exporting state, said on Feb. 4 he would give the opposition air time on television and soon lift a 19-year-old state of emergency.

"I believe we will march as Bouteflika's new measures did not convince us," said Rachid Malawi, head of the independent union of



civil servants and one of the protest organisers. "I don't think this government is serious about implementing democracy in Algeria," he told Reuters.

A coalition of civil society groups, small trade unions and some opposition parties had been planning to hold a protest march in the capital on February 12 to demand a change of government and reforms including the lifting of emergency powers.

The protest is not backed by Algeria's main trade unions or the biggest opposition forces - the FFS party and Islamist parties which were banned in the early 1990s but still retain some influence.

Dockers' union fights privatisation

Members of the Costa Rican port workers' union SINTRAJAP have renewed their battle against the privatisation of the Caribbean coastal port of Limon, re-electing Ronaldo Blear as their general secretary. The poll took place under intense national and international scrutiny, and the result marks the latest step in a bitter battle for control of the union since the privatisation plans were announced.

The government set up a \$137 million redundancy fund to induce dockworkers to quit their jobs. But under Ronaldo Blear's leadership, SINTRAJAP rejected the offer and made its own proposals for modernisation. Then, a year ago, pro-privatisation rival Douglas Brenes took control of the union in a government-backed coup.

Last August, the Costa Rican courts reinstated the

democratically elected leaders following a legal appeal and a worldwide solidarity campaign coordinated by the International Transport Workers' Federation.

At a highly-charged general assembly meeting, Blear and his team were up for two-yearly re-election amid allegations of government-funded dirty tricks to discredit them. Workers queued in a hot sports stadium to cast their votes, re-electing Blear by 718 to 390.

Limon is Costa Rica's main cargo terminal, handling 10 million tonnes of imports and exports a year. One of the four big global operators, APM Terminals, which runs 50 container facilities in 34 countries, wants to develop it. But Ronaldo Blear drew applause when he called on members to fight to keep the port, which the union regards as key to the country's economic development, "in the hands of the people of Costa Rica".

Observing the vote, AFL-CIO Central American representative Stephen Wishart said: "It's very important to defend trade union autonomy not only in Costa Rica but in the region in general. If the government can get away with manipulating the union leadership, unions are no longer free and democratic institutions."

Cigarette workers demand wages

Hundreds of workers of a defunct cigarette company in Kudus, Central Java, staged a demonstration on Feb. 1, temporarily blocking a road and demanding their unpaid wages. Workers of Jambu Bol cigarette company, which closed in 2008, started their protest at 9 am, sitting in front of the factory. An hour later, the group moved to the middle of the road, but were soon dispersed by police.

The company, which once employed thousands of workers, stopped its activities because of financial difficulties. It left many workers in employment limbo, since the company had not officially laid them off.

Since then, the company had paid the workers "premium money" and "waiting money" only once. The "premium money" or wage was calculated depending on their working period, while the "waiting money" amounted to 160,000 Indonesian rupiahs (about \$17.50 Can.) per month. The workers said the company still owed them unpaid wages and "waiting money" and demanded these payments be made.

"Listen to demands of the people"

Meeting on January 26, the executive bureau of the Tunisian General Trade Union (UGTT) discussed the current situation in the country, including acts of vandalism and looting against some union offices.

The meeting condemned such vandalism, which "remind trade unionists, activists and workers of the events of January 26, 1978," when a general strike was brutally repressed by the army. "These practices will only strengthen the

resistance of the unions and their willingness to fight," said the labour leadership, thanking all those who have defended the trade union movement in its struggle for "a government that serves the revolution, a government that breaks completely with the old regime, works with transparency and credibility to build a better future, based on strengthening public and private freedoms, democracy and human rights."

The UGTT called on the President of the Republic to "listen carefully to the demands of the people, and urged an ongoing workers' struggle for freedom, justice, democracy and human rights. The mass revolt in Tunisia which drove Ben Ali from power has also changed the balance of power between bosses and workers. At Coca-Cola's Tunisian bottler SFBT, unions have seized the opportunity to negotiate an end to agency work and roll back the abusive use of precarious employment contracts.

The Coca-Cola workers took part in all the demonstrations against the dictatorship, while organizing the company's casual workers to demand a solution to their appalling situation. The casuals have been working for a labour agency where collective agreements do not apply, and social security payments are not made. They are on temporary contracts which are renewed each year, effectively prohibited from joining the union.

Under Tunisian law, every worker employed for more than four years must be directly employed on a permanent contract; the union demanded that these workers be permanently employed by Coca-Cola, not with the agency. For those with less than four years seniority, the union demanded that they be employed on temporary contracts

directly with SFBT, not the agency. With the new situation, the casual workers went on strike, first for a week at Meghrine, one of the 10 Coca-Cola bottling plants in the country. The permanent workers joined the strike, and management was finally compelled to retreat. This victory has been followed by successes at several other bottling plants, and the struggle continues to gain momentum.

New Egyptian labour body

On Jan. 30, representatives of the Egyptian labour movement, made up of the independent trade unions of workers in real estate tax collection, the retirees, the technical health professionals and representatives of the important industrial areas in Egypt (Helwan, Mahalla al-Kubra, Ramadan city, Sadat City), and workers from the various industrial and economic sectors such as: garment & textiles, metals industry, pharmaceuticals, chemical industry, government employees, iron and steel, automotive, etc., held a news conference in Tahrir Square to announce the organization of the new Federation of Egyptian Trade Unions.

The Federation will form committees in all factories and enterprises to protect and defend them, and to coordinate general strikes. The independent labour movement is at the heart and soul of the Egyptian revolution, as seen through thousands of strikes, sit-ins and protests held by Egyptian workers in the past several years. These courageous struggles have been conducted despite constant attempts by the Mubarak government and its "official" trade unions to repress militant labour action by Egyptian workers.

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

Send me information on the Communist Party of Canada

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

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Danger: McCarthyism ahead in Israel

Responding to the Israeli Knesset's decision to set up a committee to probe into the funding sources of human rights movements, a wide coalition of organizations, movements and parties held an emergency march on January 15, in Tel Aviv. Over 20,000 Jews and Arabs marched together, declaring their determination to be "a free people in a democratic state." The following commentary was written before the march, by Dov Khenin, Member of the Knesset for Hadash (Democratic Front for Peace and Equality), and member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of Israel.

The creation of parliamentary committees for the investigation of political activities is associated with the name of the Republican

Senator for Wisconsin, Joseph McCarthy, who was active in the US in the darkest days of the Cold War...

Senator McCarthy was placed at the head of the Sub-Committee of Investigation. The House Committee for Un-American Activities worked in parallel. The two committees published a list of hostile organizations to be investigated. Among these was the American Lawyers' Guild - charged with anti-Americanism for including black lawyers in its ranks.

Since it is very difficult to set limits to political investigations, the committee extended its activities from organizations to people in film and entertainment. Thus individuals such as Charlie Chaplin, Berthold Brecht, Leonard Bernstein, Arthur Miller, Orson Welles, Paul Robeson and

Pete Seeger, and many more, were investigated or ordered to testify.

The witch-hunt against progressives gripped the Congress for three years, causing great human misery and social damage. American society managed to get over the trauma and its heavy social and historical price. We should learn from this experience. We must not go down this road and create a parliamentary investigation committee.

Knesset Chairman Reuven Rivlin has also declared his opposition to a parliamentary investigative committee. On January 4 he said to the Knesset plenum: "Politicians do not interrogate politicians on their allegiance and their ability to perform democracy. A parliamentary investigative committee can look into matters



"Investigate me, too" says placard among 20,000 demonstrating in Tel Aviv on Jan. 15 (Photo: Tal Cohen)

that are not related to politics, [but] this is a tribunal of politicians on politicians, this is majoritization".

The promoters of the committee claim that they are interested in investigating the finances of left-wing NGOs. But why investigate, if all donations are already being reported to the Registrar of Associations? Whoever knows of unreported donations should lodge a complaint with the police.

But this committee is not being created in order to discover the truth and prosecute crimes, for the Knesset is not an organ equipped to do so. This committee has been formed in order to fight acts that are legal. This is how McCarthyism works.

McCarthyism aims at intimidating people involved in legal acts from exercising their

democratic rights. This is McCarthyism, and this is what the Likud and Israel Beitenu are suggesting: a lethal injection for democracy.

The promoters of the committee charge human rights organizations with "de-legitimizing the State of Israel". But they are in fact the ones who are de-legitimizing Israel. The committee they intend to create in the Knesset will become infamous worldwide, where it will be said - and rightly so - that such things should not be done.

The representatives of the CPI and DFPE in the Knesset have more than once warned of the slippery slope which leads away from democracy. Today, with the formation of this McCarthyist investigative committee, we have moved from slipping into freefall. ●

Wikileaks accused Bradley Manning in extreme isolation

With files from Firedoglake.com

Bradley Manning spent his 23rd birthday completely isolated, just as he has every day for six months in his cell at the Quantico Marine Base in Virginia. Manning is the US Army Private accused of leaking classified documents to Wikileaks. Since July, he has been held in cruel and inhumane conditions, with severe restrictions placed on basic activities like sleep and exercise. While he has not been convicted of any crime, his physical and mental health are suffering, according to those who have seen him in prison.

Supporters have launched a campaign to urge humane treatment while Manning awaits trial. To date they have gathered over 50,000 signatures on a letter urging the Commanding Officer of Quantico to lift the heavy detention restrictions. A new brig commander is going over Manning's file, and a decision about possible changes in the conditions of his detention may be coming. (To sign the letter and get further information, visit www.firedoglake.com.)

While Manning is held in "maximum custody," the military's most severe detention policy, he is also under a "Prevention of Injury" (POI) order that adds additional restrictions. While POI orders typically last a week or two, Manning has been held under a POI order for the entirety of his detention.

Manning stays in his cell for 23 hours a day. Guards check on him every five minutes, and he must respond each time. He is not allowed to sleep between 5 am and 8 pm. Substantive exercise is not allowed beyond walking, potentially in chains.

Communication with other

people in the brig is banned, and he cannot write to people outside beyond the few a list approved by the brig commander; any unapproved letters he receives are destroyed. He has not been allowed to read newspapers or watch international news during TV time.

Comfortable sleep is impossible; he must surrender his clothes each night, has only a heavy "suicide blanket" akin to an x-ray vest, and guards must be able to see his face at all times.

On the Jan. 29-30 weekend, Manning's friend David House had his first opportunity to visit in over a month. Bradley was brought in, as usual, in chains. His MAX custody classification means that the entire facility is on lockdown whenever he leaves his cell, and he must be accompanied by two guards at all times. During his conversations, the guards listen closely, and shift around frequently to call attention to their presence.

David House reported that his friend was beginning to exhibit symptoms of prolonged isolation, including emotional withdrawal and impaired cognitive function. Bradley seemed slow to respond when they spoke, and could not process information as quickly as he normally did.

However, Bradley became excited and engaged when House mentioned the uprisings in Tunisia and Egypt. He was specifically interested in the role that online social networks had played in facilitating the uprising of technologically sophisticated youth in both Tunisia and Egypt.

Bill Keller of the *New York Times* recently wrote that the "WikiLeaks cables in which American diplomats recount the extravagant corruption of Tunisia's rulers helped fuel a popular uprising that

has overthrown the government."

The US government has not charged Manning with leaking cables to WikiLeaks, nor has Manning admitted to doing so. Military officials recently told NBC that investigators have been unable to make any direct connection between Manning and Julian Assange.

On Jan. 9, Manning's lawyer, Iraq veteran Lt. Col. David Coombs, filed a demand for a speedy trial. ●

"It is possible to resist and to win!", says WFDY

Statement by the World Federation of Democratic Youth (WFDY)

Recent weeks have witnessed important developments in several countries in the Middle East, mainly in Tunisia, Egypt and Lebanon. Those developments reflect the great will and capability of the peoples of those countries in their struggles for full independence, freedom and economic and social transformation.

The first was Tunisia, where people down into the streets against the oppressive regime of the former president Ben Ali who controlled Tunisia by brute force for 24 years. The people achieved their demand in ousting Ben Ali who ran away to Saudi Arabia. A new government was formed, but the people still reject it and ask for deeper reforms. In this context WFDY supports the youth and people of Tunisia in their demands for reforming the constitution on democratic basis, and the legalization of the opposition political parties, as well as their demands in suing the symbols of the former regime and forcing them out of political life completely and to give back the fortunes they stole from the Tunisian people.

In Lebanon, the former government fell after the resignation of eleven ministers. This led to the ousting of the US-supported government and presented a shock

for the imperialist forces trying to manipulate Lebanon. In this context, WFDY supports the rights of the Lebanese people in selecting their own government without foreign interventions. We also support the struggles of the Lebanese youth through the demonstrations that they organized for their economic rights against the high taxation on essential food products and also on fuel.

Egypt today witnesses one of the most important times in its recent history, where hundreds of thousands of people are demonstrating everyday against the regime. Heroically overcoming the wave of repression that initially they were the target of, they are demanding the resignation of President Mubarak who has ruled Egypt for 30 years, and also the resignation of the symbols of his corrupt regime. WFDY supports the demands of the Egyptian youth in reforming the system through constitutional amendments and reforms, and also

in their demands for higher wages and less taxes.

Egypt is a main political, economic and military force in the region that lies in the hands of US and Israeli intelligence. Any real change will constitute a huge blow for the imperialist forces in the region.

WFDY supports progressive reforms in Egypt and in the region and calls the youth in the Middle East to unify their efforts and struggles through common actions for a better future full of democratic rights and economic and social transformations. WFDY fully adopts the demand for the immediate resignation of President Mubarak as a sign of tyranny, oppression and loyalty to imperialism in the region.

Finally, WFDY considers that these struggles are a proof and an inspiration for all the young people of the world that, even under the harshest conditions and the most brutal repression, it is possible to resist and to win! ●

Vancouver forum on Wikileaks

StopWar, Vancouver's broad-based anti-war coalition, is organizing a panel forum on "Wars, Lies and Wikileaks," featuring Gail Davidson from Lawyers Against War, Micheal Vonn of the BC Civil Liberties Association, and StopWar activist Ian Beeching. The event takes place at 7 pm, Thursday, Feb. 17, in Room 1800, SFU Harbour Centre, 515 West Hastings St.

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www.comunist-party.ca

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www.ycl-ljc.ca

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CPC-PCC
90Norman Bethune: a
legendary Canadian

We continue our series of articles honouring the 90th anniversary of the Communist Party of Canada with the story of Norman Bethune.

The most legendary Canadian communist is undoubtedly Norman Bethune: brilliant medical pioneer, early campaigner for universal health care, writer, and passionate anti-fascist. His colourful life has been the subject of countless books, articles, plays and films, and he was immortalized in a famous essay by Mao Zedong.

To this day, Bethune's personality is relentlessly analyzed by some who downplay his revolutionary essence. A recent biography by former governor-general Adrienne Clarkson, for example, tries to explain Norman Bethune's political outlook as a reflection of his religious family origins, not a logical response to the horrors of capitalist war and injustice.

Born in Gravenhurst, Ontario on March 3, 1890, Bethune was one of three children of a Presbyterian minister. He graduated from Owen Sound Collegiate, and enrolled in medicine at the University of Toronto in 1909. His studies were interrupted in 1911, when he became a labourer-teacher with Frontier College, holding literacy classes for immigrant mine labourers in northern Ontario.

Like many of his generation, Bethune volunteered when World War One broke out, only to witness the horror of imperialist slaughter on the battlefields of Europe. As a stretcher-bearer in France, he was wounded by shrapnel, and returned home to complete his medical degree. In 1917 he joined the Royal Navy as a Surgeon-Lieutenant at the Chatham Hospital in England. After the war, he became a specialist at The Hospital for Sick Children in London, and then furthered his qualifications at the Royal College of Surgeons in Edinburgh.

He married heiress Frances Penny in 1923, and the couple eventually moved to Detroit, where he began private practice and a part-time job as a medical instructor. Contracting tuberculosis due to overwork and close contact with the sick, Bethune sought treatment at the Trudeau Sanatorium in Saranac Lake, New York. There he researched a controversial new treatment, which involved artificially collapsing the tubercular lung, allowing it to rest and heal. The operation was a success, and he made a full recovery. But the experience helped to confirm his radical views on disease and medicine under capitalism.

In 1929 Bethune joined the thoracic surgical pioneer, Dr. Edward William Archibald, at the Royal Victoria Hospital in Montreal. From 1929 to 1936 he perfected his skills, developed or modified more than a dozen new surgical tools, and published 14 articles describing his innovations in thoracic technique.

At the same time, he became deeply involved with social and economic issues, providing free medical care for the poor, and art classes for children. He formed the Montreal Group for the Security of



Bethune's statue in Montreal

People's Health, and in 1935 he visited the Soviet Union to observe the socialist system of free public health care. During that same year, he joined the Communist Party of Canada.

When the Spanish Civil War began in 1936, he accepted an invitation to head the Canadian Medical Unit in Madrid, linked with the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion of Canadian anti-fascist fighters. Faced with sudden battlefield deaths caused by loss of blood, Bethune conceived the idea of on-site transfusions, and developed the world's first mobile blood-transfusion unit. He returned to Canada in June 1937, embarking on a cross-country tour to raise money and volunteers for the struggle for democracy in Spain.

As the global fascist threat deepened, Bethune travelled in 1938 to China, to join the Communists led by Mao Zedong fighting the Japanese invaders. He immediately began to organize medical services for the military front and the region. He performed emergency operations on war casualties, and established training for doctors, nurses and orderlies, treating wounded Japanese prisoners as well as Chinese.

In the summer of 1939 Bethune was appointed Medical Advisor to the Jin-Zha-Ji (Shanxi-Chahar-Hebei) Border Region Military

District, liberated by the Communist Party of China's Eighth Route Army. A few months later, Bethune cut his finger while operating on a soldier. Probably due to his weakened state, he contracted blood poisoning, and died on Nov. 12, 1939.

Bethune received international recognition when Chairman Mao Zedong of the People's Republic of China published his essay "In Memory of Norman Bethune", which documented the final months of the doctor's life. The essay became required reading in China's schools. Statues dedicated to Bethune's honour have been erected throughout China, and he is buried in the Revolutionary Martyrs' Cemetery, Shijiazhuang, Hebei Province.

There have been many other forms of official recognition. Bethune College at York University, and Dr. Norman Bethune Collegiate Institute in Scarborough, Ontario, are named after him. In 1976, the manse in Gravenhurst where he was born was restored as Bethune Memorial House, a National Historic Site. In 1998, Bethune was inducted into the Canadian Medical Hall of Fame, and his statue stands in a public square near Montreal's Guy-Concordia Metro station. In 2006, Spain opened the Walk of Canadians in Malaga, paying tribute to Bethune and his colleagues who helped the population of that city during the Spanish Civil War.

Bethune was the subject of a 1964 National Film Board documentary, directed by Donald Brittain. Donald Sutherland played Bethune in two films, including *Bethune: The Making of a Hero* (1990), based on the 1952 biography *The Scalpel, The Sword*, by Ted Allan and Sydney Gordon. In 2004, he was voted the 26th Greatest Canadian by CBC viewers.

Towering over those who would trivialize his life, Norman Bethune is recognized around the world as a revolutionary martyr, whose courage and dedication to the goals of socialism have inspired generations in the struggle for a better world. ●



Cuban and Angolan troops fought apartheid together.

Remembering the
massacre of Cassinga

By Stephen Von Sychowski

Cuba is known around the world for its feats of international solidarity. Today it is a sort of medical super-power, sending doctors across the globe to help those in need. But during the struggle against colonialism and apartheid in Africa, Cuba played one of the most prominent roles of any non-African country on the side of freedom and national liberation.

Unfortunately it is not common knowledge that while the United States backed racist South Africa, Cuba sent tens of thousands of volunteers, as well as tanks, artillery, and other military hardware to aid the liberation armies.

The best known battle is that of Cuito Cuanavale, where 95,000 Cubans joined with Angolan troops and Namibian SWAPO guerrillas to smash a 1987-88 offensive against independent Angola by the South African Defense Force (SADF) and their US-backed UNITA allies.

But 33 years ago, in a lesser-known altercation, Cuba helped to stop a brutal massacre of men, women, and children by the South African Defense Force in the southern Angolan town of Cassinga.

Cassinga was the site of a refugee camp, established by the Namibian South West African People's Organization (SWAPO). On May 4, 1978, it came under airborne attack and bombing from South African planes. Paratroopers quickly overran the surprised SWAPO troops, leaving hundreds of civilian refugees defenseless.

The Cubans were stationed nearby at Techamutete. When news of the attack reached them, they immediately set off to engage the aggressors. When the South Africans intercepted news of the Cuban advance, they evacuated some of their forces, leaving the rest to finish their "mopping up" operations, and search for intelligence.

The Cubans arrived, and a battle ensued. 150 Cuban soldiers lost their lives, giving Cassinga the unfortunate distinction of the highest casualty rate of any battle during Cuba's military involvement in Angola. But what the Cubans

discovered after the fighting subsided was even more horrifying.

The South Africans fled in disarray, leaving behind 40 prisoners of war whom they had intended to kidnap for interrogation and almost certain torture and death. Cassinga was largely destroyed. The massacre and the battle which followed lasted only nine hours, but left 624 dead and 611 wounded. Among the dead were 167 women, and 298 teenagers and children.

The leader of SWAPO, Sam Nujoma, addressed the United

Nations Security Council on May 6.

He condemned the invasion of Angolan territory, and the

massacre of Namibian refugees. The Council passed Resolution 428, which condemned apartheid and its occupation of Southwestern Africa, while commending Angola's support for the Namibian people.

The SADF later claimed that Cassinga had been a SWAPO military base, not a refugee camp. While there was a military presence, it was primarily civilians who were present and who were ultimately massacred. The government of Namibia established a day of remembrance, Cassinga Day, marked every May 4th.

But Cuba's involvement in Cassinga did not end with the South African retreat. Cuba welcomed survivors, mostly women and children, to its country for recovery and medical treatment. Many stayed and were enrolled in schools where they received the education they were denied back home. Some eventually graduated from Cuban Universities. One, Grace Uushona, even went on to become the Namibian Ambassador to Cuba.

Today Cuba is under a renewed propaganda assault, led by North American and European imperialist governments. Media stories which depict US-paid "dissidents" as freedom fighters, while painting Cuba as a dark, repressive, and anti-democratic country are the norm. But these distortions can't hide the fact that it was Cuba, not imperialism, which stood with the people of Africa during their struggle for independence. Cuba, not imperialism, stands with the oppressed people of the world today. ●

how we
see it...Norman
Bethune
Day
Dinner

Celebrate the pioneer of Canada's Medicare system! Door prize: one week all-inclusive trip for two to Cuba.

Sat., February 26, 7 pm
290 Danforth Avenue
Toronto

Tickets \$5. Media sponsor
People's Voice.
Call 416-460-2446 for
tickets and information.



The King's Speech worth seeing

Film review from The Guardian, newspaper of the Communist Party of Australia

The film's title refers not only to King George VI's (Colin Firth) manner of speech, particularly his appalling stutter, but also to his crucial speech at the beginning of World War II.

Until recently, the King's Australian speech therapist Lionel Logue (Geoffrey Rush) was virtually unknown. The King managed well enough among family and friends, but in moments of stress, or when asked to read written material or make a public speech, his disability overcame him.

The film depicts the excruciating attempt by the Prince (as he then was) to address a huge audience at the opening of the new Wembley Stadium in 1925. By the 1920s the Royal Family found themselves forced to use public address systems to address the masses. As one of them stated resentfully: "Previously, we only had to stand on a balcony and wave". The ability to make public speeches thus became part of the Royals' job description, but the prince was largely excused, in order to avoid a repeat of the Wembley fiasco.

Speech therapy was then in its infancy, and there were no established procedures or formal qualifications. Logue started developing his own methods after he began treating Australian soldiers who had returned from the First World War with severe speech impediments.

In the film, George V dies, and after hearing of Logue's professional success, the Prince's wife (Helena Bonham Carter) later the Queen

Mother, visits his dingy rooms in Harley Street, introducing herself as "Mrs Johnson". She is astonished that he insists on treatment for her husband at his rooms.

When the Prince reluctantly attends, Logue explains that no one is actually born with a speech defect, and that they usually begin at age four or five, in abusive

environments. He proceeds to demonstrate that the Prince is physically able to make a speech by giving him a text, placing headphones on his ears and playing

Beethoven's fifth at full blast, while recording the recital. The Prince interprets this as quackery and storms out after a few minutes - but not before Logue gives him the recording disc. Later, the Prince plays the recording, and in an exquisite scene for the first time he and his wife hear his voice impeccably reciting a passage from Shakespeare.

Translating the recording victory in normal conditions is another thing altogether. The therapy includes sessions in which the Prince has to swear like a trooper or sing, when he begins to stutter. The therapy continues for years, but finally ceases after the Prince and Logue have a row in Hyde Park. The Prince is consumed with worry about social unrest and the rise of fascist Germany, and by the affair between his brother King Edward and American divorcee Wallis Simpson.

When Edward insists on marrying Mrs. Simpson he finds to his horror that he must abdicate, after which his brother will become king. The speech therapy resumes with a vengeance.

In fact, the coronation is

relatively straightforward, because George has little more to do than say "Yes" when asked whether he will accept the crown. However, the ultimate test soon appears, when it becomes apparent that Britain must go to war with Germany, and that this will require a national address by the King.

Logue helps to organise the King's speech, which is broadcast by the BBC. Logue attends the broadcast, coaching and encouraging the King. After a few terrifying pauses the King gathers confidence, and finally slips the bonds of his terrible disability.

The King's Speech illustrates the terrible burden imposed by the loss or partial loss of fluent speech, which most of us take for granted. The film is also historically significant. Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain had favoured avoiding war with Germany at all costs, in the hope that Germany would attack the Soviet Union, and that both nations would fight to the point of collapse, allowing other Western nations to walk in and take them over. The non-aggression pact with Germany changed that, however. Germany attacked France to grab its industrial capacity. Britain was forced to declare war because of its defence treaty with France.

As a result, Chamberlain's declaration of war was not at all a resounding call to arms. Lord Beaverbrook's argument that Britain should reach an agreement with Germany, in effect capitulate, had only narrowly been defeated in the cabinet after a titanic battle with Churchill. However, Churchill was not yet Prime Minister, and it was possible that even at that stage (the start of the "phony war") Beaverbrook's defeatist line might have won the day, and the outcome

What's Left

Vancouver, BC

20th Annual Women's Memorial March, honour missing and murdered women, Monday, Feb. 14, gather 12 noon at Carnegie Centre, Main & Hastings. For info on related events during early February, visit <http://womensmemorial-march.wordpress.com> or call Marlene, 604-665-3005.

Wars, Lies and Wikileaks, Thur., Feb. 17, 7 pm, public forum with Gail Davidson (Lawyers Against War) and Geoff Olsen (Vancouver Courier), Ian Beeching (StopWar), Room 1800, SFU Harbor Centre (515 W. Hastings), organized by StopWar, Vancouver's anti-war coalition.

COPE Winter Gala, Sat., Feb. 26, 7-11 pm, Coalition of Progressive Electors masquerade ball at Museum of Vancouver, 1100 Chestnut St. Hosted by comedian Charles Demers, west coast food, special musical performance and more. Tickets \$70 (student/youth \$40, low-income tickets also available), info or tickets by email cope@cope.bc.ca or 604-255-0400.

Left Film Night, "GARBAGE DREAMS," Oscar-nominated documentary on Cairo's garbage recycling community, Sun., Feb. 27, 7 pm, Centre for Socialist Education, 706 Clark

of the war would have been very different.

The film is not without faults. Jewish organisations have criticised it as being particularly soft on the King, who is said to have hindered the exit of Jewish people from pre-war Germany. However, it was Edward, not George, who openly admired Hitler and fascism, and who is said to have given German diplomats information that resulted in Germany attacking France through its weakest point, the Ardennes Forest.

The acting by Colin Firth as the King and Geoffrey Rush as Logue is terrific. *The King's Speech* is well worth seeing. ●

Drive. Admission free, donations welcome, call 604-255-2041 for details. Sunday, March 27: annual Left Film Night pasta dinner for People's Voice Drive, 6-7 pm before the film.

Winnipeg, MB

Marxism course, classes begin early 2011. Pre-register with the Communist Party, 586-7824 or cpc-mb@mts.net.

Four Directions Walk "Why is there poverty?" conference, Sat, Feb. 19, 12-4:30 pm, St. Matthews Maryland Church, 641 St. Matthews. Info or to register 792-3371.

Toronto, ON

Why we need the Canadian Boat To Gaza, 7 pm, Sat., Feb. 12, with Jeff Halper (Israeli Ctee. Against House Demolitions), \$10, Bloor Street United, 300 Bloor W, canadaboatgaza.org

Israel and Palestine: past, present, future, lecture by Norman Finkelstein, Wed., Feb. 16, 7:30 pm, tickets \$15 (students \$10), Price Family Cinema, York U, 4700 Keele St. ticketweb.ca.

Norman Bethune Day Dinner, Sat., Feb. 26, 7 pm, 290 Danforth Ave., tickets \$5. Media sponsor People's Voice. Door prize; one-week all-inclusive trip for two to Cuba. Call 416-460-2446 for tickets.

Global Crisis, Fiscal Restraint and Public-Private Partnerships, 2011 Clarke Memorial Lecture with John Loxley. 7 pm, Thursday, March 10, Ryerson University, Oakham Lounge, 2nd floor, 63 Gould St. Co-sponsored by Ryerson CUPE Locals 233, 1281, 3904, Ontario Council of Hospital Unions/CUPE. Info: Bryan Evans at 416-979-5000 x4199.

Montreal, QC

Palestinians And Jews United, boycott/disinvestment/sanctions picket, every Saturday, 1-3 pm, outside Le marcheur, at Duluth & St. Denis.

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



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

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

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

Hundert released...

continued from page 3

of our universities to foster debate and discussion on issues of public importance. Academic freedom - the ability to engage in controversial or challenging dialogue without fear of reprisal - is a cherished value of Ontario's universities. Such freedom cannot exist when subjected to state surveillance or arbitrary exercise of state power."

David Bleakney, National Union Representative for CUPW, stated, "This travesty is about much more than just Alex however. It is about

a legal and political order that promotes the erosion of rights, freedoms, and justice."

The bail condition forbidding participation in public demonstrations is the subject of a constitutional challenge put forward by G20 defendant Jaggi Singh. Out of over 1000 people who were arrested during the G20, only a handful of charges remain. Many arrestees were never charged, and hundreds more have their charges dropped as the abuses perpetrated by the police gain wider public attention. ●

People's Voice deadlines:

MARCH 1-15 issue: Thursday, Feb. 17

MARCH 16-31 issue: Thursday, March 3

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



Youth Festival: a lesson in peace and solidarity

Last December, the 17th World Festival of Youth and Students took place in South Africa. 15,000 youth from over 120 countries came together for conferences, sports, music, and politics under the slogan of "Let's defeat imperialism: for peace, solidarity and social transformation!". The previous issue of People's Voice reported on the Festival and social transformation in Africa. Here, Johan Boyden looks at peace and solidarity, and the experience of the All-Canada delegation.

Forty delegates

Technically, we were one person under the number forty. But forty sounds better than thirty-nine. The delegates came from a wide range of backgrounds: students and young workers, trade unionists and experienced activists, people fairly new to left politics, from 17 to just over 30. They came from across the country, Vancouver, Edmonton, Winnipeg, Ontario, Halifax and a National Quebec committee.

For some, this was their first-time working closely with Quebec youth activists, in an environment where every group meeting slowed down for translation. A few delegates had lived on the street. Several were unemployed, or carrying heavy student debts. Some had fundraised for six months to get their plane ticket. For all but one, it was our first time in Africa. These are some of our stories.

Biased to the working class

Pat is from Toronto. He was sent to the Festival from his local, CUPE416. I remember Pat's steward at the first meeting of the Toronto festival committee.

"We want Pat to bring back all the experience of the youths in South Africa, and bring it back here to the youth committee," he said. "All the internationalism." Local 416 represents 'outside' city workers. Some collect the city's garbage. Pat works in parking. They are the 'bad boys' in the media for going on strike a few years ago. Now with right-wing Mayor Rob Ford, the union is under attack again.

I called up Pat last month. One of his highlights of the Festival actually occurred the day after the closing ceremony. Several trade union delegates met with a representative of the Congress of South African Trade Unions, COSATU. They talked for hours about solidarity, the labour movement in South Africa, the situation in their countries. The next day, the comrade from COSATU (in South Africa,

everyone in the movement is a comrade) took them on a tour of Gauteng Province, scene of major strikes in the past year.

"I missed that tour because I had to fly out," Pat tells me. He talks instead about a slogan of one of the public sector unions. He plans to mention it in his report-back to the Toronto and York Region Labour Council: "making the public sector biased towards the working class."

"I like that one," he says.

Solidarity & internationalism

What is internationalism? Is it visits, friendship, exchange of ideas, like the strategy and tactics of the working class? Is it expressions of support for peoples of other countries? Perhaps symbolic support, like a picket outside the Colombian consulate. Or direct action, like dock workers refusing to unload Israeli ships during "operation cast lead" and the 2008 war on Gaza (In a bilateral, we told members of the Palestinian delegation about the Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions campaign in Canada. "This is very good" they said).

Is globalization internationalism? Is it Coca-cola, Mickey-mouse, Disneyland in Japan, the hard boots of NATO troops marching into Afghani villages?

The question came up at the Festival, at a discussion where I simply listened. I was reminded of that discussion the other day. Two friends were munching down dinner at our home. We tend to think of globalization as exclusively negative - the violent cancer of capitalist imperialism. At the table, there was debate. "But what about globalization is positive?" "Well, would you say we should get rid of the internet?" another said.

Of course, globalization is more than the paradox of the internet. As I write today, all internet service providers in Egypt are shut down. Within globalization are contradictions, just like within capitalism itself, the system which

brings working people together to produce, yet whisks away the result into the private pockets of the capitalist class.

The octopus-style expansion of world markets, driven by profits, creates a new and diverse force in the world, the working class on a global level. So we might re-write the slogan that inspired Pat. We might say: "Making the public sector biased towards the vast majority of the world, the people on the side of justice, peace and progress, and the future."

But that would defeat the purpose of slogans, to concisely place a fiery idea.

Unscripted friendship

Capital, Marx said, is born "dripping from head to foot, from every pore, with blood and dirt." So too is globalization inseparable from imperialist war. What about this question: can we create the conditions for peace? A cynic might deny any hope. Most folks focus on step one: defeating imperialism, the economic basis of war. But even if we can do that, can we find friendship in the world?

I found one answer in the stories of Denise, a student from Guelph. I was looking at a photo on Facebook. The image is actually more a dark blur. Faces and arms and a few feet, bodies dancing. The picture is broken by a wide ray of light, cast down over the field. The photo was taken behind the Tshwane University Trade School residences, in a large open field.

Denise seems to go everywhere with a camera. For taking a left-wing position on her student union, she has come under a lot of attack. But it wasn't the formal student discussions she first told me about. It was the parties, like the one in the photo.

The Cubans brought many things. First: people! (Speaking to one of their delegation leaders, I realized this was not his first time in Africa. Having served as a volunteer in the liberation of Angola, he was now a doctor.) The

Cubans also brought art and photographs of their socialist island - and a giant banner as long as a building, calling to free the Cuban Five from US jails.

"They Cubans also brought their own band," Denise said. "It played rock one moment then salsa the next. It was a strange mix, but very good." People kept talking about the 'Brazilian Party,' she said "but there really were no Brazilians. It seemed to be people from everywhere. Then on the last night I spent time with more [Latin Americans]. We just sung songs all night, all the songs of their revolutions and struggles."

The parties were about a good time, a short glimpse, a free-form exchange, about culture and life. They were part of thread that ran through the Festival of music, dance and singing. Just search the Festival's name on Youtube or Daily motion.

In one Canadian delegate's video (not published yet) you see a sort of spontaneous, at first cautious and then increasingly informal interaction with delegates from a member of the "axis of evil," the DPR of Korea. With the history of war between our countries, you might expect anger and resentment from the Korean side. Instead we learned that while, as one delegate said, "they're not too big on handshakes," the Koreans can sign beautifully, as well as laugh, smile, yawn, and frown like us - in short, that they are human.

The Solomon Song

Perhaps the most powerful songs of the Festival were the anti-apartheid struggle chants. The smash hit, the anthem of the Festival was the Solomon song. First you would hear the song. Then the singers would appear - chanting, stomping feet, twenty South African youth. It was in a language we did not understand, but with bold, rich and loud voices that immediately caught our attention, proclaiming with fists in the air: "Iyho uSolomon. Iyho uSolomon. Iyho uSolomon! Iyho uSolomon!"

More South African youth would come out of the buildings, drawn by the music, and join the stomping singers. Everyone's arms would be outstretched. Another twenty youths, then fifty to a hundred people began to move: "Isotsha lo Mkhonto We Sizwe! Wayo bulala amabhunu eAfrika!"

In only a few days, members of the Canadian delegation would be singing the Zulu words, proudly chanting and stomping with the a cappella singers. Later we would find translations, and discover the lyrics' political meaning. Most of the South African delegates were not singing in their first language, but the political meaning was still communicated.

The translation I wrote down was: "Solomon, Oh Solomon. He was the spear of the nation (referring to the former armed wing of the African National Congress, Umkhonto we Sizwe, "MK"). He struggled for liberation of Africa."

Our delegation has video and audio recordings of the song from

the beginning and the end of the Festival. In the opening ceremonies, delegates look genuinely surprised and confused at people's energy in delivering lyrics. By the end, groups of youth from Asia, the Middle East, the Americas, and Africa all run along together, singing the words in their own languages.

Solomon was actually a real person, a young ANC-MK militant sentenced to death. For two years the international democratic community campaigned against his execution and called for the recognition of all South African freedom fighters as prisoners of war. Then on April 6, 1979, 23 year old Solomon Mahlangu was hung by the racist regime.

Solomon's final words are reputed to have been: "My blood will nourish the tree that will bear the fruits of freedom. Tell my people that I love them. They must continue the fight."

Continuing the fight

You can read Solomon's words on the ANC website. But I heard them first from another Quebec delegate, recounting her experiences of that day. "No justice, no peace," somebody said. We laughed. But peace must blossom out of solidarity and friendship, out of a basic respect and tolerance, out of justice and struggle.

As the delegate told her stories, not every experience had been positive. Like other women delegates she had experienced sexual harassment by some other delegates. It was more than just an individual experience. There was a sense of betrayal of the Festival's spirit, the aspiration that - despite the differences of the women and men of the world in language, culture, beliefs, experience, nationality, and so many other qualities - those amongst the majority, toiling in fields or cities, can find a mutual common ground, craft a different destiny.

In this sense, even within the progressive forces we have much work to do, like on the question of sexism and women's struggles, mentioned in Festival's final declaration. A main place for that work is the broader struggle itself.

Internationalize resistance

From international campaigns, actions, revolutions, we can take inspiration. Youth, students, and working people can also learn. We can pick up the flag of resistance against "our" own government, and its foreign policies of plunder, economic blackmail, murder and ecocide, free trade deals, blockades, sanctions, aggression and war.

Such resistance is internationalism in its fullest sense. It is inseparable with the desire to overthrow imperialism, to defeat its governments and ruling class forces behind them, and to win peace, friendship and solidarity. In a way, it was the call of the Festival for the youth to carry forward, with confidence in our path. ●

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