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# people's VOICE

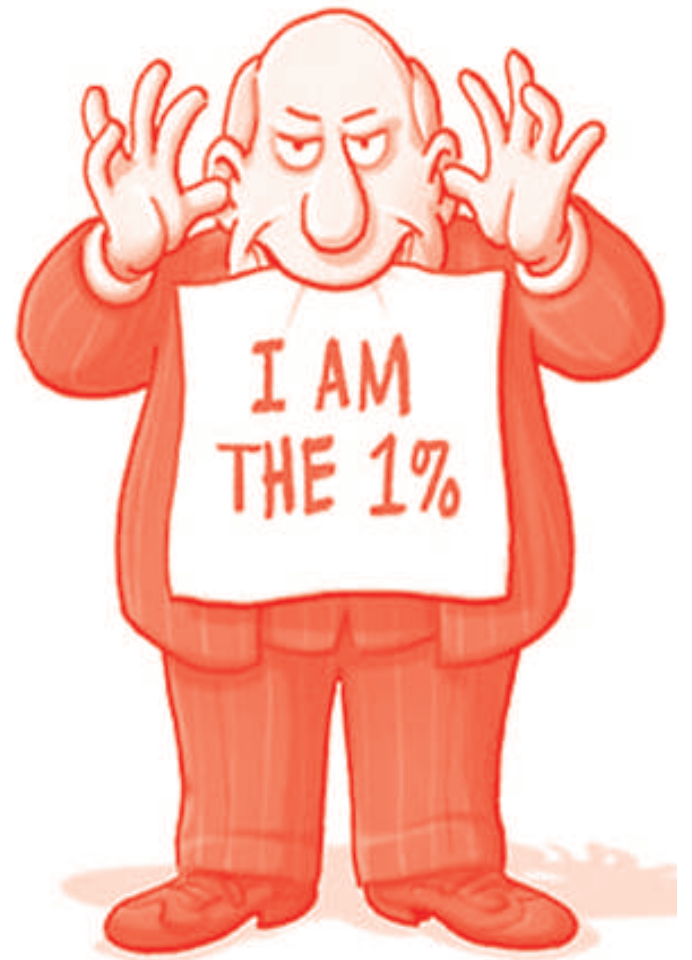
**"End inequality  
of nations"**  
*See page 6*

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## "The Feral Rich"

***Where do they get  
their wealth?***

***How can we fight  
their austerity  
policies? - Page 7***



**30,000 rally at  
Ontario Liberal  
convention: Page 2**



*"We are calling on Premier Wynne to begin governing Ontario with the people of Ontario," said OFL President Sid Ryan. "We need labour law reform that protects workers' rights to join a union and negotiate collectively with their employer. We need social program funding that pulls our hospitals, schools and universities out of last place. We need a poverty reduction plan that increases social assistance rates and provides a living wage for everyone. Most of all, we need fair taxation for banks and corporations and everyone earning over 250,000. The economy can't recover unless everyone recovers."*

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### **Their hoarded gold**

The big corporations in Canada have reaped huge benefits from tax cuts, promising to invest in job creation. But in reality, their hoarded gold does little except to swell the bank accounts of the rich.

**INSIDE**

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### **Art for freedom**

Braving minus forty temperatures, Montrealers come out to show solidarity with the Cuban Five political prisoners in the U.S.

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### **A terrible normality**

So many atrocities and genocides have been committed by imperialist powers that these actions are widely regarded as normal, not as unacceptable crimes in pursuit of profits.

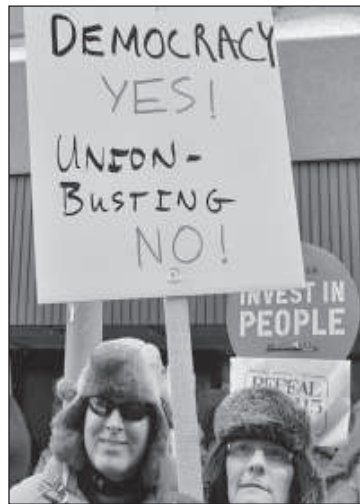
# Over 30,000 rally at Ontario Liberal convention

Over 30,000 protesters descended on Maple Leaf Gardens on January 26 as Liberal Party delegates prepared to elect the next Premier of Ontario. Coming from every corner of the province and every walk of life, the protest marked the largest opposition the party has faced since forming government in 2003.

"We are here to tell the new Premier of Ontario that you cannot lead this province unless fairness, equality and workers' rights are central to your economic strategy," said OFL President Sid Ryan to a thronging crowd at Toronto's Allan Gardens. "Today's rally is a testament to the Liberals' largest opposition - the people of Ontario."

In total, 131 buses travelled from every corner of the province to join thousands of protesters who arrived at the rally in droves by foot, transit and car. More than

100 community groups and labour unions converged outside the Ontario Liberal Leadership Convention to protest cut to social



Protesters at the Ontario Liberal convention. (Photo: Ed Bil)

programs and the cancellation of workers' rights.

"Austerity hasn't worked! By attacking good jobs and social programs, the Liberals have played right into the interests of a corporate sector that helped to create Ontario's deficit in the first place," said Ryan. "Banks and corporations are siphoning billions in tax breaks from the Ontario treasury while the rest of us are being left behind."

A report released last fall by 90 community and labour groups showed that Ontario is leading the race to the bottom. Poverty rates in Ontario are rising faster than the rest of the country and social program funding lags shamefully behind the other ten provinces. As a result, the incomes of 40 percent of Ontario's families have stagnated or fallen over the last ten years while one in seven children live in poverty.

"We are demanding a new path for Ontario that includes an industrial strategy rooted in job creation, respect for workers'

rights and a balanced approach to balancing the budget. Struggling Ontarians need a raise in social assistance rates and everyone deserves a living wage," said Ryan. "Sooner or later, the new Premier will have to seek election from the people of Ontario. So, today we are delivering their wake-up call."

When the third round of balloting was finished, the Liberal winner Kathleen Wynne, who "must meet the challenges left by her predecessor head on," said the OFL, calling on the new premier to tackle Ontario's growing inequality and protect workers' rights.

"We are calling on Premier Wynne to begin governing Ontario with the people of Ontario," said Ryan. "Struggling families cannot continue to be the only ones making sacrifices during tough economic times while banks and corporations siphon billions of dollars from the public treasury due to a decade of corporate tax cuts."

"It is time for a fair and balanced approach to balancing the budget.

Ontarians need an industrial strategy that promotes job creation. We need labour law reform that protects workers' rights to join a union and negotiate collectively with their employer. We need social program funding that pulls our hospitals, schools and universities out of last place. We need a poverty reduction plan that increases social assistance rates and provides a living wage for everyone. Most of all, we need fair taxation for banks and corporations and everyone earning over 250,000. The economy can't recover unless everyone recovers."

Ryan said he hoped for a new approach to governance in addition to new policies: "Progress requires genuine consultation and cooperation. Over a million workers in this province are hoping that Premier Wynne will open up a new dialogue with working people - one founded in respect for our rights and respect for our communities."

(www.ofl.ca)

## PV Drive kicks off March 1

The annual People's Voice Press Fund Drive will officially begin on March 1. That's when subscribers will start to receive our appeal in the mail. Some generous donations have begun to arrive in advance, such as a contribution of \$300 from our good friends at La Trova Nuestra, which holds a monthly Latin American pena at the CSE in Vancouver.

As usual for the past several years, our 2013 target will be \$50,000, which we met last year thanks to some significant and very welcome December contributions.

This time there's an interesting twist to the campaign. We need to find ways to raise extra funds this year, and to speed up the pace of the Fund Drive, without putting too much of a burden on our supporters. A very generous supporter has offered to help by contributing an extra \$100 to People's Voice for every donation of at least \$300 which arrives during the month of March. So when you get your appeal letter in the mail, think carefully and act quickly. If you can show your solidarity by sending any donation immediately, it would be a great assistance to our perennial cash flow situation. And if you can make your cheque for \$300 or more, PV will get \$100 extra to help us upgrade our equipment and make other improvements.

Thanks in advance from our Editorial Board, and we look forward to a successful and speedier Fund Drive in 2013!

## Big firms hoard tax cuts while economy drags

By Tom Sandborn, theyee.ca

Cuts in the tax rates for Canadian big business, promoted as powerful stimuli to economic growth, are not delivering on promised improvements in jobs and productivity, according to a study released by the Canadian Labour Congress on Jan. 30.

Despite business tax cuts by Liberals and Conservatives since 2000, and expectations that tax relief would lead to more jobs and productivity, the study suggests the main impacts of the cuts have been to jack up executive salaries and fatten hoards of "dead money" in company coffers.

According to the CLC, "... cuts in corporate income tax have contributed to a significant increase in cash reserves held by corporations, delivered higher compensation to CEOs, cost Canadians billions in lower than expected government revenues, led to a higher federal deficit and debt, and cuts to public services."

Under the new business tax regime, since 2000 federal corporate tax rates have plummeted from 28 per cent to 15 per cent. Corporate Tax Freedom Day, the date by which businesses have earned what they will pay in taxes that year, came two days earlier this year, on Jan. 30. In contrast, Tax Freedom Day for individuals, as tracked by the Fraser Institute came on June 11 last year.

According to Statistics Canada, the cash reserves of non-financial corporations in Canada increased by \$72 billion in 2011, from \$503 billion in cash reserves by the end of 2010 to \$575 billion by the end of 2011. (Financial companies are excluded from this measure because the nature of their businesses means that they regularly hold large cash reserves.)

Charles Lammam, a tax and budget policy director at the Fraser Institute, disagrees with the CLC

conclusions.

"The economic research is clear," Lammam told the Tye by phone from the Institute's Vancouver offices. "Lower tax rates on business lead to higher levels of investment, more expansion and more jobs."

Lammam disputes the CLC contention that business cash reserves represent unproductive hoarding. He pointed out that the current level of economic uncertainty may mean that new investments are being delayed. He also dismissed the contrast between corporate and individual tax freedom dates, saying that in the end corporate taxes are paid by individuals as well, albeit indirectly.

Seth Klein, director of the B.C. offices of the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives and author,

most recently of "Progressive Tax Options for BC," disputes Lammam's arguments.

"It is true enough that in the end individuals pay for corporate taxes, but almost always the tax paid is at reduced capital gains rates. And a lot of corporate profit flows to offshore investors and escapes Canadian taxation. We still need to be taxing corporations and I think the evidence is clear, as our research shows in B.C., that tax cuts to business do not deliver a stronger economy. We've seen provincial business tax rates cut from 16.5 per cent to 10 per cent since 2000 here, and it has done little to help the province's economy by delivering more investments."

Tom Sandborn covers labour and health policy matters for the Tye online. ●

## MAY DAY 2013 GREETING ADS

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

Ad rates (based on 5 column page):

One column-inch.....	\$15
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One column x 3 inches.....	\$35
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Send greetings to People's Voice at:  
706 Clark Drive, Vancouver, V5L 3J1  
E-mail: pvoice@telus.net

Celebrate the father of socialized medicine in Canada!

### NORMAN BETHUNE DAY

Saturday, Feb. 23, 7:30 pm

GCDO Hall, 290 Danforth Ave., Toronto

Tickets just \$5... Door Prize:  
One week all-inclusive trip  
for Two to Cuba!



Organized by Bethune Day Committee.  
Media Sponsor: People's Voice  
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An evening with Stephen Endicott on his new book:

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

Acclaimed Marxist historian Stephen Endicott presents a memorable account of one of the most militant of Canadian labour unions - The Workers Unity League.

All Welcome!

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

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

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

# For-profit hospital goes broke; taxpayers on hook

A Calgary for-profit hospital, once touted as “a beacon of hope for medical entrepreneurs”, has declared bankruptcy, leaving hundreds of people waiting for hip and knee surgeries. Alberta taxpayers will have to pick up the pieces.

As Calgary journalist Gillian Steward wrote in the *Toronto Star*, “for years, critics predicted that this experiment in privatized health care would prove unreliable and expensive. But no one imagined a scenario in which publicly funded Alberta Health Services would go to court in a bid to keep the lights on over the operating tables in an investor-owned hospital. No one imagined that AHS would be paying receivership fees in order to keep the doors open. But this is, in fact, what has happened because Calgary’s public health-care system is so reliant on private partners.”

HRC was a focal point of the Alberta Conservative government’s health-care strategies. Passed in 2000, the Health Care Protection Act gave private surgical clinics the ability to keep patients overnight. The change allowed HRC to perform surgeries that had previously been permitted only in public hospitals.

As Steward explains, HRC catered mostly to clients of Workers’ Compensation, but the clinic could not survive without lucrative contracts from the publicly funded health-care system.

The Klein government had closed three public hospitals in Calgary to cut spending, causing a shortage of operating theatres. HRC had taken over part of one closed hospital, and lobbied

cabinet ministers and the local health authority to secure contracts to provide surgeries for patients who could not be accommodated in the public hospital system.

In 2004, the regional health authority awarded HRC a two-year contract worth \$20 million for the provision of 2,500 hip and knee surgeries. The health authority paid HRC 10 percent more than the cost of surgeries

done in a public hospital, but claimed it had little choice.

Now making money, HRC expanded into expensive space in a new development. But the private clinic was soon defaulting on payments, and eventually declared bankruptcy.

Alberta Health Services went to court in an attempt to save HRC, since without the private clinic there are not enough operating

theatres to accommodate all the patients scheduled for surgery.

Meanwhile in British Columbia, some patients are suing the provincial government for reimbursement of fees they paid to private clinics for surgeries normally covered by medicare.

Steward calls this “another trip to the courts that will cost the taxpayer plenty and divert even more money away from health care.” ●

## B.C. Liberals plan major giveaway to forest corporations

*PV Vancouver Bureau*

A prominent B.C. resource analyst says that Christy Clark’s Liberals plan to use the upcoming short session of the Legislature to make fundamental changes to provincial forestry policies.

Writing in *The Province* newspaper, Ben Parfitt says the government plans to introduce a two-paragraph bill which would allow the cabinet to grant forest companies *de facto* private control

over public forestlands.

Currently, private companies enjoy rights to log set volumes of trees on public forestlands. The change would give companies dramatically expanded powers over “vast semi-private fiefdoms.”

The proposed new bill is expected as the government faces mounting criticism over a forest-health crisis, due to decades of over-cutting and an unprecedented mountain pine beetle attack. Numerous sawmills have closed, creating hardships for many coastal, interior and northern communities. Major sawmills in Burns Lake and Prince George have been shut down by explosions and deadly fires.

Now, leaked documents indicate that the province is revisiting a controversial “rollover” idea first raised 25 years ago by the Socred government.

At the time, the NDP opposition called the plan “privatization on a massive scale” and the biggest giveaway in the history of BC. Faced with a storm of protests, the plan was dropped.

Parfitt writes that the 1980s

policy is the one now being contemplated by the government. That was the message from Minister of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations Steve Thomson, in a letter last September to Steve Zika, CEO of Hampton Affiliates, which owns the destroyed Burns Lake mill.

If the new legislation passes, the provincial cabinet could grant forest companies the rights to roll over volume-based forest licences into area-based Tree Farm Licences, or TFLs.

TFLs give corporations secure rights of access to publicly owned trees. The new legislation would massively expand Tree Farm Licenses, far beyond the current limited numbers.

TFL lands still remain publicly owned, and the government still collects timber-cutting (“stumpage”) fees from the logging companies. But the TFL rules make it very difficult for the province to take back control of such lands without expensive compensation payouts.

The government may argue that granting Hampton a TFL would

give the company the assurance it needs to build a new mill in Burns Lake. But this move opens the door to a rapid expansion of corporate power over public forestlands. Major forest companies like Canfor, West Fraser and Tolko could gain unprecedented control, without having to make any investments along the lines of what Hampton proposes.

For decades, forest companies have claimed that TFLs provide the security they need to invest in “renewing” forests. But the record shows that companies have historically made the minimal reforestation investments required by law, regardless of licensing arrangements.

Worse, writes Parfitt, “TFLs become tradable or sellable assets. If the right corporate suitor comes along, say a pension fund that has zero interest in maintaining sawmills, let alone building desperately needed value-added facilities like furniture plants, so be it.”

Yet this change could be legislated with no chance for any public response, warns Parfitt, who is a resource-policy analyst with the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives. He urges the Liberals to delay implementation to give the public time to digest the implications. Or, he suggests, the NDP Opposition could signal that the bill would be immediately repealed if it becomes the government this spring.

Communist Party of BC candidates in the May 14 election will be campaigning for major changes to provincial forest policy, including a ban on job-killing exports of raw logs, and repeal of the Liberal plans for expansion of TFLs. ●



### NIAGARA NEWS BULLETIN

*People's Voice Niagara Bureau*

\* **Over 150 Haudenosaunee (Six Nations) and settler allies** marched through downtown St. Catharines to commemorate the 400th anniversary of the oldest living treaty between the two communities, marked by the Gushwenta (Two Row Wampum Belt). Marchers blocked streets with round dances despite a snow squall and cold temperatures. For information see <http://niagaratwowordpress.com/>

\* Despite large rallies uniting the people of Welland and Niagara Falls, and a **20,000-signature petition against moving local OBGYN and pediatric services** to a P3 hospital in St. Catharines, the Niagara Health System is proceeding with the cuts. Meanwhile another C-Difficile “superbug” outbreak was declared in St. Catharines; an earlier outbreak killed 37 patients.

\* 100 workers and allies rallied in Fort Erie against Vertis Communications printing plant’s **layoff without severance or notice**. The local MPP declared it “premeditated murder” because the bankruptcy was “orchestrated” to avoid payouts, which CEP local 425G said averages \$30,000/worker.

\* Parents in St. Catharines are organizing to stop the school board’s **closure of yet another public school**, instead of reducing class sizes.

\* **A whistleblowing Marineland worker** who was sued for \$1 million by her former employer has filed a countersuit for wrongful dismissal, because she was fired after refusing to sign papers declaring she had not witnessed animal abuse. The Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals has issued orders for changes at the water park, and 15 workers have come forward about understaffing and abuse. Niagara Animal Defense League organizer Dylan Powell is on tour to speak out about Marineland’s \$1.5 million lawsuit against him for “intimidation and harassment” for bringing attention to labour and animal rights issues at the park.

\* Two **Niagara Falls casinos** are trying to buy out 92 slots workers, two years after buying out 70 other workers. At the same time one of the casinos scrapped valet service, affecting 15 workers, adding up to a slow mass layoff.



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



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

**Winnipeg, MB**

Wed., February 20, 7 pm, Millennium Library (Donald & Graham)

**Edmonton, AB**

Wed., February 27, 7 - 9 pm  
Mill Woods Recreation Centre, Green Room  
7207 - 28 Avenue

**Vancouver, BC**

Mon., March 4, 7:30 pm, at the CSE, 706 Clark Drive  
Info: Gabriel Au, 604-254-9836

(for latest info on other meetings, 416-469-2446)

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



# EDITORIALS

## Betraying people's movements

The announcement by NDP leader Thomas Mulcair that his party is "very open" to a Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) with the European Union is a betrayal of the movements resisting the "free trade" blitz to allow corporations to shift investments freely across borders. Trade unions, environmentalists, the Council of Canadians, and others have raised serious warnings about CETA. This anti-sovereignty deal would open up public services to further privatization, undermine the power of local governments, weaken environmental protections, and accelerate the neoliberal attack by big capital and right-wing governments.

Mulcair does add that transnational capital should not get everything it demands in CETA: just most of it. His view echoes the social democratic parties in Europe, which are mildly critical of neoliberal policies... until they take office. These parties reject socialist alternatives and agree that capitalism is the only possible form of human society.

Perhaps even worse, Mulcair supports investment deals with "people (in the EU) who evolve in a similar universe to ourselves," unlike people in China. His breathtaking racism is amplified by the claim that Europe and Canada have "advanced" laws on human rights, the environment, and labour practices. What about indigenous peoples whose treaty rights are ignored, workers whose collective agreements are shredded by bosses and governments, or peasants whose lands are destroyed by resource corporations based in Europe, Canada, and the US?

Of course, the Harper Tories represent the most dangerous big business threat to the interests of working people in Canada. But an NDP government which refused to challenge the agenda of big capital would do little to improve our lives. What's really needed is a broad and powerful People's Coalition, capable of fighting for a truly progressive agenda, both in the streets and inside Parliament.

## A salute to Stalingrad

This month marks the 70th anniversary of one of the most important battles in history. On February 2, 1943, the German Sixth Army surrendered at Stalingrad to the Soviet Red Army, the beginning of the end for Hitler's "thousand year reich". Five months of ferocious fighting had cost the Hitler war machine over 800,000 casualties and vast quantities of aircraft, tanks and artillery. Defending the strategically crucial city cost the Red Army over a million casualties, plus thousands of civilians. But there were no more fascist victories on the eastern front, and the drive to Berlin was under way.

For millions of citizens of the former USSR, Stalingrad is remembered as the turning point in the life and death struggle against Nazi occupation. Those who deny the world-historic nature of the 1917 socialist revolution should recall that the Great Patriotic War of 1941-45 was won under the leadership of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. Unlike most of the European capitalist countries which surrendered to Hitler fascism, the Soviet people fought back with enormous loyalty to their homeland and their socialist way of life.

We must never forget that 27 million Soviet citizens died in the Second World War. The Soviet Union played the main part in the defeat of fascism, and its heroic example inspired huge post-war struggles for trade union rights, democratic freedoms, and liberation from colonialism. The victory at Stalingrad literally opened the way for decades of progressive gains for the working class in Canada and other capitalist countries. For all these reasons, progressives must always condemn the lie that communism is a "totalitarian" ideology. The truth is that the red flag of the working class and human freedom was raised at Stalingrad by the Soviet Army, against the most monstrous capitalist regime in history.

## PEOPLE'S VOICE

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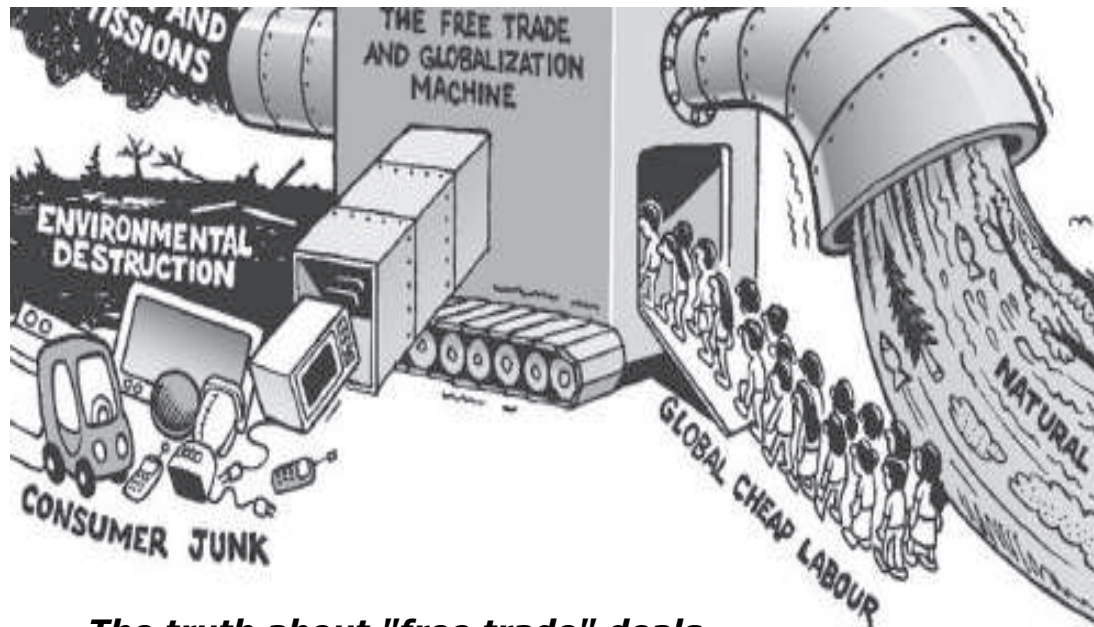
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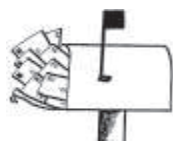
### LETTERS

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



## Letters to the Editor

### A wolf in sheepskin is not our kin

Stephen Harper has started a war on artists. He sees potential votes in shooting at what Canada may boast with no fear of making a fool out of herself - her great artists.

Here are his most infamous words: "I think when ordinary working people came home, turn on the TV and see a bunch of people, you know, at a rich gala all subsidized by taxpayers, claiming their subsidies are not high enough [...]. I'm not sure that's something that resonates with ordinary people."

This is not a populist lament, as some critics have stated. It is by far worse than an arrogant declaration of a man who claims that he thinks. It is the kiss of a Judas disguised in a blue-collared brand-name suit. What the proletarian-turned Harper wants is, in fact, the budding vote of a segment of leftists and leftist-sympathisers in an electoral campaign which for him is an ongoing process. But what Harper doesn't know is that he cannot bamboozle the true leftists, those who belong to the working class, blue or white collar; these amazing workers, who, despite their hard work, can barely make ends meet any longer, will never give votes to those who oppress them. Harper's naivety is enormous if he really thinks that we can be tricked by a wolf wearing a piece of sheepskin with a fake hammer and sickle patch embroidered by the Canadian and American corporate people who pull his red-painted strings.

Stephen Harper's mission is to create discord between us, the working class, who truly love art, and the wonderful Canadian artists; playing off one against each other, as though we were his dim-witted lapdogs, easy to lead in whichever direction the hand holding the leash of corporate buffoonery would like us to go. But just wait, Stephen, and you'll see who we are! We're proud of our artists who, according to statistics, make an average of \$23,000 a year. We're proud of these dedicated people, who create out of a vital artistic impulse which safeguards the intellectual and spiritual progress of this country and of humanity as a whole.

We know that culture matters. True artists, who do not sell themselves as commodity, have always been on the side of the many. It is no surprise that such

greats as the members of the Group of Seven, Emily Carr, Jean-Paul Riopelle, Paul-Emile Borduas, or David Milne are part of our Canadian identity.

In his famous 1942 article, "Talks at the Yenan Forum on Literature and Art," later partially reproduced in his Quotations (aka "The Little Red Book"), Chairman Mao Zedong wrote, "All our literature and art are for the broad masses of the people and, above all, for the workers, peasants and soldiers. They are created for the workers, peasants and soldiers, and are for their own use." So no, Mr. Harper! You cannot fool us by showing off your phony proletarian smile. The love for our artists is mightier than the mouth of a thousand hungry sheepskin-clothed wolves.

Daniel Deleanu, Toronto

### Time running out to join Che Brigade

The Canadian Network on Cuba writes that time is running out to send in applications for the 2013 Che Guevara Volunteer Work Brigade, "a potentially life changing experience away from the usual tourist routes, living and working with Cubans."

This is a non-profit tour organized by the Canadian Network on Cuba (CNC) and our Cuban partners, "Instituto Cubano de Amistad con los Pueblos (ICAP)", or Cuban Institute of Friendship with the Peoples. The purpose of this tour is to give participants (Brigadistas) an opportunity in 23 days to experience a little of the life, culture and history of Cuba at the very economical cost of \$1175 plus airfare.

Approximately one-third of our days will be devoted to offering our volunteer labour. Brigadistas will experience working alongside Cubans, using their tools, doing tasks that benefit the whole community. Bonding will occur leading to friendships and a reciprocal respect for each other's contributions.

"I want to point out the Che Guevara Volunteer Work Brigade is for all ages" says Dave Thomas, National Coordinator. "At 73 I was the oldest Brigadista last year. With volunteer work, in Cuba as in Canada, there's a job to suit everyone!"

The balance of the visit will be

divided between cultural events; cultural exchanges - we show them a little of Canada, they show us Cuba - visits to historical sites, schools, hospitals and community centres.

A highlight of the tour will be "International Night" delegates from over 30 countries display national dishes, music and dance.

"Our Canada table featured New Brunswick wine, Niagara wine, Seagram's Rye Whiskey, maple syrup and lots flag pins from cities and provinces across Canada," said Thomas.

"Arriving April 23 and returning May 15, the Brigade will spend 12 days in Havana with International Brigades representing over 30 countries. In week 2 we will travel to the Isle of Youth on Cuba's south coast to learn and work on that beautiful island. Finally we will travel to Veradero's famous beaches for well deserved R and R. Finally we will take a bus trip to the Bay of Pigs to understand that historic battle where we will meet veterans of the battle before heading to our homes across Canada", says Thomas.

Nothing can replace rising at 4:00 am, May 1, travelling into Havana to attend the May Day (International Workers Day) Parade where, at precisely 8:00 am, hundreds of thousands of flag waving, cheering workers begin to march by, proudly displaying huge union banners.

For full details, please visit: [www.canadiannetworkoncuba.ca/brigade/](http://www.canadiannetworkoncuba.ca/brigade/)

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# The Attawapiskat audit - another Harper ploy

By Jean Kenyon

Chief Theresa Spence of the northern Ontario First Nation community of Attawapiskat won widespread sympathy from Canadians when she embarked on a hunger strike in December, over the Harper government's assault on Aboriginal treaty rights and underfunding of basic services on reserves. Who could forget the painful pictures from last winter, of families living in uninsulated sheds in the deep-freeze climate of the James Bay shore?

Many of us considered it a victory for Chief Spence when Prime Minister Harper agreed he would meet with her and the other Chiefs on Jan 11.

But it soon became apparent that Harper was up to his usual shrewd political tricks. For on Jan 8, the Conservative government "leaked" an audit it had ordered of Attawapiskat's books, and the results appeared damaging to Chief Spence. It was enough to satisfy Harper's redneck base, while sowing doubt and confusion among average Canadians.

But many important facts about the audit didn't make it into the mainstream media. Here are some of those facts, as I've learned them from reliable on-line sources.

1. There was no finding of any fraud or misuse of funds, only that the paperwork wasn't done to the government's satisfaction.

2. The period audited was 2006-2011, and Spence did not become Chief until 2010. Attawapiskat was underco-management all that time, and audited financial statements were posted on its web site every year. And according to the Indian Act, all capital expenditures by bands must be approved by the Ministry!

3. The former Auditor-General of Canada, Sheila Fraser, wrote in her final report in 2011, that "a heavy reporting burden is put on First Nations," and the endless paperwork is often completely ignored anyway by federal agencies.

Yet this incident shows that they can take an interest in the paperwork, when it suits a political purpose. (Is this a sneak preview of how Bill C-377 is likely to be used against unions in the future?)

This should give us pause.)

4. There is no federal legislation governing the delivery of health and education on reserves - or the standards to be met or who delivers these services. In other words, there is no framework of accountability on the federal side! Yet the bands' spending is micromanaged by the feds.

5. Of course the biggest finding of the Auditor-General was that services on reserves are chronically underfunded. Each tiny band must negotiate with the feds every few years for money for basic services, then must set up their own staffing arrangements to provide the services.

How many villages of 2000 people - anywhere - would have the skill and the clout to secure

enough money, deliver a wide range of services, and track every dollar spent? And how much more difficult to do all this in a harsh and expensive environment - where, for example, building materials must be brought long distances by ice road - and where generations of unresolved social problems persist, resulting from the many traumas of colonialism? The mind boggles at the heavy burden placed on a small band!

6. The amount in question (\$104 million) sounds like a lot of money, until you consider two things. It was spent over six years, and it had to provide most of the services that the federal, provincial, and municipal governments combined provide to you and me.

It falls far short of the cost of health, education, social services, housing, and providing utilities in a harsh and remote setting. For example a tank of diesel fuel for the school's generator spilled in 1979, and ruined the new school building. But children continued attending the contaminated school until 2000, when they were moved into crowded portables. Food and gasoline are five times as expensive as in the south, straining the salaries paid by the band.

These are just a few things to keep in mind, the next time we see heartbreaking pictures of tarpaper shacks and despairing children.

The federal government would have us believe that it is being very generous to First Peoples. Nothing could be further from the truth. ●

## Appeal from "We Are All Untouchables"

By Gurpreet Singh

As social justice activists gear up for Vancouver's Community March Against Racism on March 23, I have launched a group "We Are All Untouchables!!!" on Facebook, in solidarity with Dalits or the oppressed classes of India who continue to be treated as "untouchables" by the so-called upper caste peoples.

Despite all the progress and development in India, Dalits continue to face social boycott, and are also forced to indulge in manual scavenging for a living. It is shocking that Dalits still face segregation at public places, especially in rural India, in accordance with the age old caste structure that bars them from visiting temples, or even taking food or water from community kitchens or public wells. In many parts of India, Dalits are not served at barber shops, or allowed

to ride motorbikes or walk in shoes in the presence of "upper caste" people.

In spite of a ban on untouchability and manual scavenging by the laws of India, these practices go on due to lack of political will to end this menace. Thousands of Dalits who are forced to indulge in manual scavenging are currently marching in India, seeking to end this inhuman trade. It is difficult for them to get out of it, due to lack of work opportunities for those considered untouchables by potential employers offering other dignified jobs.

This all reflects very badly on a state that is supposed to be secular. It is pertinent to mention that this caste based oppression is rooted in the Hindu religion. Yet it is accepted in a secular society. Even other modern religious groups have accepted it as a social reality.

The hypocrisy of this principle is also reflected by the fact that

sexual violence against Dalit women by rich and influential upper caste men is very common. In a nutshell, the attitude of treating Dalits as pests, or as born to serve those who consider themselves culturally superior, is at the root of this problem.

"We Are All Untouchables" was formed with the consensus of Dalit activist friends on the 64th Republic Day of India. It was felt that the Indian establishment has been indifferent towards caste based oppression which is as brutal as racism. To break this silence it is important for everyone to speak up against this injustice.

Members of the group have resolved to join the march with placards and signs bearing the slogan "We Are All Untouchables". Whether you are Dalit or not does not matter. What matters is that if you want to see an end to untouchability, show your solidarity and join this group. ●



**Marxist  
Theory**

## The systemic threat to human existence

The necessity for (the) transition to socialism in Canada and internationally has become all the more urgent in the face of the deepening environment crisis which increasingly threatens the very future of humanity and the liveability of our planet. Every effort to substantively overcome and reverse the impact of climate change and other environmental damage already committed, and to ensure environmental 'sustainability' into the future, is compromised not only by the specific policies of governments or decisions of corporations, but in fact by the socio-economic formation of capitalism itself.

By its very nature, capitalist development prioritises private gain over social interests and over the protection of the natural environment. The drive for profit and the accumulation of capital trumps all other considerations. Indeed the very concept of capitalist economic growth, based on the limitless expansion of commodity production and depletion of resources, and the universalisation of the 'cult of consumerism', is fundamentally

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

incompatible with the objective need to preserve our ecosphere for present and future generations.

The failure of the recent summit in Doha to once again make any meaningful progress in requiring mandatory reductions in fossil fuel emissions - despite resounding appeals from the scientific community and world public opinion - is compelling evidence of that basic contradiction between capitalist development and nature. The Harper Conservatives must be held to account for their shameful role in largely contributing to that failure.

Militarism and the drive to war are directly related to the global economic crisis, and the costs associated with the arms build-up and imperialist aggression and war - more than one trillion dollars a year - bleeds vital resources from

the education, health and the social developmental needs of humanity, further intensifying its consequences. Military spending is one of the most effective and lucrative ways of redistributing wealth via the public purse at the expense of the working class and the people. In order to carry through such a large-scale 'diversion' of public wealth, U.S. imperialism and the other imperialist powers including Canada exploit and enflame local and regional conflicts, and in some cases cynically manufacture perceived threats to national security. They arrogate to themselves the role of defending a global 'civilized order', with the 'responsibility to protect' the victims of alleged 'rogue' states and their demonized leaders, creating a permanent war mentality

to justify bloated defence and security budgets at home, and aggression and war abroad.

But the stepped-up drive to militarism and war has a much more profound basis than the desire to transfer vast sums of public resources into the swollen coffers of monopoly capital. War is an inherent feature of capitalism, especially in its final, imperialist stage of development. The scramble of rival imperialist states and centres to capture, dominate and exploit markets and resources - "to divide and re-divide the world" through the export of capital backed up by the use of

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



military force - is one of its most basic and important features. The overturning of socialism in the former Soviet Union and other Warsaw Pact countries, which had acted as a counterweight blunting the imperialist drive to war, and the current acute economic crisis

which has intensified competition to control markets and resources, have both served to spur this predatory dynamic of imperialism.

Indeed, the U.S. and other leading imperialist powers have stepped up their aggression and war preparations in the recent period, despite their fiscal problems arising out of the global crisis: the continuing war of occupation in Afghanistan and drone attacks in Pakistan; the costly 'intervention' against Libya; preparations for direct aggression against Syria and possibly Iran; the U.S.-financed Israeli attacks on Gaza; military interventions and "police actions" in a number of African states; ominous threats against North Korea (DPRK); the proliferation of foreign military bases and expansion of naval fleets around the world; and massive investments in 'next generation', high-tech weapons systems. International treaty law and the rights of nations to sovereignty and national independence can also be counted among the casualties of this rapacious drive to dominate and exploit the entire globe. ●

# Time to end the inequality of nations

## Statement by the Central Executive Committee, Communist Party of Canada

The Communist Party of Canada welcomes the "Declaration of Commitment - First Nations: Working Towards Fundamental Change", which was signed on January 23, as a major advance in the historic struggle towards full and genuine equality of all the nations within the Canadian state. We pledge to work side by side with all progressive and democratic movements in Canada to help make the principles contained in this Declaration a reality, and to overcome the impact of centuries of racist oppression which began with the European colonization of the western hemisphere.

The Declaration has been achieved through the collective resistance of the Aboriginal peoples, who have never surrendered their demands that nation-to-nation treaties signed with the British Crown must be fully respected and honoured, and that traditional indigenous



territories which have never been ceded to the Canadian state (such as most of British Columbia) must be respected as the lands of their original inhabitants. These demands have been at the heart of the powerful Idle No More movement, challenging the concept that the capitalist state and the transnational corporations have an unfettered right to ignore the treaties and to exploit and despoil the environment and all the natural resources within the borders of Canada. We salute the inspiring actions of Chief Theresa Spence of Attawapiskat First Nation, Raymond Robinson of Cross Lake, Manitoba, Jean Sock

of Elsipogtog, New Brunswick and other fasters in recent weeks, whose courage and commitment have helped to make this Declaration possible.

At this point, the Declaration is a statement of intent, signed by the Assembly of First Nations, the Native Women's Association of Canada, and the caucuses of the two largest opposition parties in Parliament.

The Declaration calls for concrete action on many of the immediate problems of poverty and inequality faced by First Nations across Canada. But more fundamentally, it would also commit the Crown, Federal Governments, Provincial

Governments and all First Nations to discuss outstanding Treaty and non-treaty issues on a Nation-to-Nation basis, which is truly a historic statement.

These issues include resource sharing, sustainable environmental policies, a comprehensive review of Bills C-38 and C-45, guarantees that all federal legislation has the free, prior and informed consent of First Nations where inherent and Treaty rights are affected, an equitable fiscal relationship between First Nations and Canada, the removal of arbitrary funding caps, a public inquiry on violence against Indigenous Women, equity in capital construction and funding of First Nation schools, additional

funding support for First Nation languages, and full implementation of the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

It is an unfortunate political reality that the federal Conservative government under PM Harper still stubbornly refuses to accept the national rights of the Aboriginal peoples in Canada. Just as the Harper Tories used every possible dirty trick to turn Canadians against Idle No More and Chief Spence, they will continue to sabotage every attempt to achieve the goals of the Declaration of Commitment, such as offering token promises of improvements while simultaneously attempting to slander and divide the First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples.

Despite this, the fact that the caucuses of the two largest opposition parties have signed the Declaration is an important indication that the old "status quo" of Confederation - the view that Canada is nothing more than the structure of the federal and provincial governments - is an unacceptable relic of the colonial past. This concept argues that the Canadian state should be eternally based on constitutional agreements, undemocratically settled among a handful of 19th Century white, male politicians. In fact, these arrangements were simply meant to facilitate the drive by ruling elites for maximum power and profits.

As the long-time leader of the Communist Party of Canada, Tim Buck, said during his 1931 trial on sedition charges, the Canadian state was founded on the theft of indigenous lands, and the exploitation of immigrant labour. The "nation-building" project of the Anglo-Canadian ruling elite came at the expense of the indigenous peoples displaced by the genocidal policies of the ruling class.

Similarly, the national rights of the Québécois, Acadiens, and Métis were also trampled by Confederation. When it suited their purposes, the domestic ruling elite willingly sold out the sovereignty of the peoples of Canada in return for a share of the profits from integrating the country into the U.S. imperialist war machine. The so-called "free trade" agreements imposed by Conservative and Liberal governments in recent decades threaten to extinguish any meaningful exercise of political and economic sovereignty within Canada, including by Aboriginal nations.

The time has arrived to demand a new Canada. Ending the oppression and inequality of nations within the Canadian state will require unity of the working class of all nations against the corporate ruling elite. Unity to achieve the goals of the Declaration of Commitment will be a key element of efforts to create a broad and powerful people's movement to reverse the negative impact of capitalist domination since the time of Confederation. In stating our solidarity with the Declaration of Commitment, the Communist Party of Canada will continue to make this struggle a central strategic aim of our call for a People's Coalition to block the neoliberal agenda and win policies to put people and nature before profits. ●

## REDS ON THE WEB

[www.communist-party.ca](http://www.communist-party.ca)

[www.peoplesvoice.ca](http://www.peoplesvoice.ca)

[www.ycl-ljc.ca](http://www.ycl-ljc.ca)

[www.solidnet.org](http://www.solidnet.org)

## "We solemnly commit to a renewed First Nations-Crown relationship"

### Excerpts from the text of the "Declaration of Commitment, First Nations: Working Towards Fundamental Change"

We solemnly commit to undertake political, spiritual and all other advocacy efforts to implement a renewed First Nations-Crown relationship where inherent Treaty and non-Treaty Rights are recognized, honoured and fully implemented as they should be, within the next five years. This Declaration includes, but is not limited to, ensuring commitments made by the Prime Minister of Canada on January 11th, 2013 are followed through and implemented as quickly as possible as led by First Nation on a high-level priority with open transparency and trust. Furthermore, immediate steps are taken working together to achieve the below priorities:

\* An immediate meeting to be arranged between the Crown, Federal Governments, Provincial Governments and all First Nations to discuss outstanding issues

regarding the Treaty Relationship, as well as for non-Treaty area relationships.

\* Clear work-plans that shall include deliverables and timelines that outline how commitments will be achieved, including immediate action for short, medium and long-term goals. Addressing the housing crisis within our First Nation communities shall be considered as a short-term immediate action.

\* Frameworks and mandates for the implementation and enforcement of Treaties between Treaty parties on a Nation-to-Nation basis.

\* Reforming and modifying the comprehensive claims policy based on inherent rights of First Nations.

\* A commitment towards resource revenue sharing, requiring the participation and involvement of provinces and territories currently benefiting from resource development from traditional lands.

\* Commitment towards ensuring a greater collective oversight and action towards ensuring the



Participants in the Feb. 2 "Two Row Wampum Belt" rally in St. Catharines (see page 3 for details).

sustainability of the land through a sustained environmental oversight.

\* A comprehensive review and meaningful consultation in regards to Bill C-38 and C-45 to ensure it is consistent with Section 35 of the Constitution Act (1982).

\* Ensure that all federal legislation has the free, prior and informed consent of First Nations where inherent and Treaty rights are affected or impacted.

\* A revised fiscal relationship between First Nations and Canada that is equitable, sustainable and includes indexing and the removal of arbitrary funding caps.

\* A National Public Commission of Inquiry on Violence Against Indigenous Women of all ages.

\* Equity in capital construction of First Nation schools, including funding parity with Provincial

funding formulas with additional funding support for First Nation languages.

\* A change in how government operates that would include direct oversight, a dedicated Cabinet Committee and Secretariat within the Privy Council Office with specific responsibility for the First Nation-Crown relationship to ensure implementation.

\* The full implementation of the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples - UNDRIP.

**Fully endorsed and supported by:**  
*Assembly of First Nations  
 National Executive Committee;  
 Native Women's Association of Canada; Liberal Party of Canada  
 Parliamentary Caucus; New Democratic Party National Caucus.* ●

# The feral rich

For too long we've problematised the poor and overlooked the wealthy. It's time to turn the tables, argues Vanessa Baird, in this article from the Morning Star.

Now here's a puzzle. The world economy is in a fix. Most people are getting poorer. Household income is down by more than five percent on last year. That's the global average; in some countries it's much worse. We need 80 million new jobs to get us back to pre-crash employment levels. And the progress on reducing world hunger has stalled, leaving one in seven people without enough to eat.

But for one group of people life just gets better, no matter where they live. Known as HNWI's - High Net Worth Individuals - this global elites' fortunes just keep rising.

In the past year, the 400 richest Americans have seen their wealth grow by US\$200 billion [all amounts in US dollars] - enough to provide every student in the country with free education. During the same period, the 1,000 richest Britons have watched their fortunes swell to record levels, to \$667 billion. India's ultra-rich increased in number by 30 percent in 2012.

How did we get here? How did members of this new plutocracy manage to peel themselves off from the rest of humanity, to feed off the crisis?

But first: let's have a look at who they might be. Meet Carlos Slim Helu, the richest man in the world. A Mexican telecoms tycoon, the 72-year-old is worth \$69 billion. Young Carlos was just 12 when he bought his first shares in a bank. He invested heavily during Mexico's 1982 financial crisis, buying into a wide variety of interests, including tobacco. But it was the privatisation of the state telephone utility that really made his fortune. It is said (though he denies this) that his close links with the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) government secured him an effective monopoly, regardless of which party is in power. Today, Slim has so many business interests that it is said you cannot spend a day in Mexico without putting money in his pocket.

Meet Australian mining heiress Gina Rinehart, aged 58. The world's richest woman (worth \$28 billion), she suggests that poor people should "spend less time in the pub" and that the minimum wage should be reduced. She funds climate sceptics and is now trying to use her growing share in the Australian media to fight against carbon cuts.

Slim and Rinehart share the billionaire cachet with around 1,200 individuals in the world today. Beneath them is a legion of millionaires, now numbering around 29 million. Their wealth comes from various sources. Around a third of the super-rich have inherited it. Two-thirds are described as "self-made". A fair number are maths graduates who have gone into IT and software development. Few are complete rags-to-riches cases; most have comfortable backgrounds and university educations. Financiers are disproportionately well

represented among the wealthiest. Many of the rich have been busy augmenting their wealth through the services of hedge fund operators and private equity wizards.

New York City's Upper East Side is now home to a lot of people, many aged under 40, who are making \$20 or \$30 million a year from their hedge funds, reports business journalist Chrystia Freeland in her eye-popping book *Plutocrats: the rise of the new global super rich*.

But, naturally, maintaining the super-rich lifestyle has certain requirements, as Egyptian telecom billionaire Naguib Sawaris explained to Freeland. "To cover the fringe benefits, the plane, the boat, it takes a billion."

Luxury goods and services are in high demand. A London domestic service agency, Bespoke Bureau, placed 430 British-trained butlers last year, catering in particular to demand from Russia, China and the Middle East.

It may come as no surprise that many of the rich do not actually feel wealthy.

Economist Angus Deaton has shown that the richer you are the more covetous you become. Millionaires control 40 percent of the world's wealth. But Fidelity, a consultancy firm that regularly surveys millionaires, finds that whatever their wealth, they generally say they need double that amount. A recent survey of 1,000 millionaires, with an average net worth of \$3 million, revealed that a quarter felt they needed an extra \$5 million to feel wealthy.

## How it's happened

To find the origins of today's feral incarnation of wealth we have to go back to the 1980s.

Free market policies were embraced by conservative governments on both sides of the Atlantic which cut through regulation, privatised state utilities and opened up new business

opportunities. While most wages grew at a sluggish pace, top executive pay started to race ahead.

New laws eroded union power, while globalisation enabled transnational corporations to outsource production to the country that offered the cheapest, usually non-unionised, labour. Profit margins grew, benefiting shareholders and business owners. This was accompanied by fierce cuts in tax paid by both corporations and high earners.

But the most important factor was the decision to deregulate financial markets, taken initially in New York and London. Pay scales in the finance sector went through the roof, bonus culture went wild, greed was good. As we now know, it was a house of cards. The political response to the 2008 financial crisis - first to bail out banks, then to cut public spending - has produced the crowning irony of our times: those who made the mess have come out virtually unscathed while the rest of us are being punished.

Even government efforts to stimulate growth have lined the pockets of the already prosperous by pushing up share prices and other assets. In Britain, the richest households were \$561,000 better off as a result of the Bank of England's quantitative easing program; the average increase for the poorest households was \$1,900.

The rich can afford to speculate with high-risk, high-return investments. If they are prepared to touch the toxic-looking stuff, the rewards can be thrilling. Vulture funds, for example, buy up debts from entities that are weak, or on the edge of default, at knockdown prices. Dart Management, registered in the Cayman Islands, made a killing on Greek debt it bought at just 35 percent of the nominal price but which was paid back by the Greek people at a much higher value.

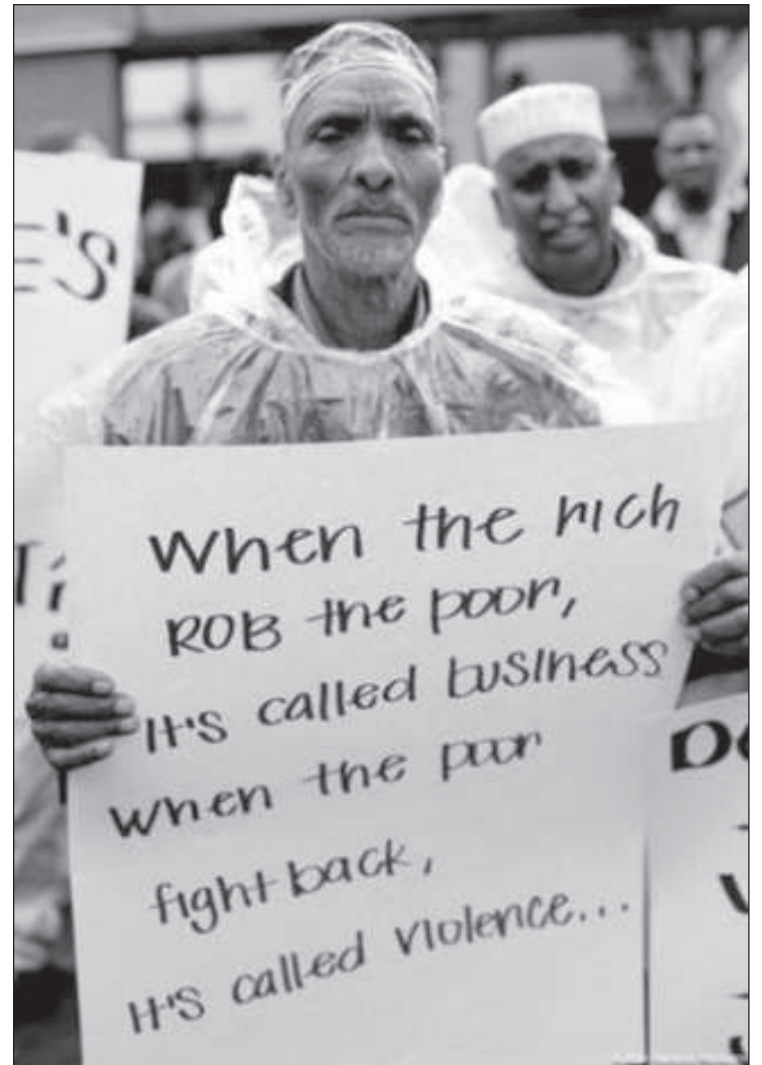
The crime scene is strewn with clues. Exhibit number one: the \$150 million mustered by the

British financial services industry to lobby politicians and regulators when the Barclays Libor rate-fixing scandal was provoking renewed calls for tougher rules. Exhibit two: the \$355 million the US finance industry spent on political lobbying in Washington in 2012, second only to the health industry lobby.

Politicians and regulators still persist in arguing in favour of light-touch self-regulation, saying that otherwise the high-finance "talent" will leave their jurisdictions, with a resulting loss in tax revenue. The same argument is used in support of low taxes on corporations and

eventually employ thousands of people, it is the customers and a healthy economic system surrounding the firm that create the jobs, not the owners.

Current reality is undermining the idea that the rich are "wealth creators" who add to the economy in a way that benefits society at large. In booming India, for example, many of the country's new millionaires are not software developers or manufacturing innovators, but what economists call "rent-seekers". Their predominant sources of income are land, natural resources and government contracts or licences. Rather than create



high earners. The corporate rich, especially those linked to finance, have governments in their pockets. To compound the problem, many in government are themselves millionaires and have close links to the industry.

This crisis has many victims, including democracy. British writer and commentator George Monbiot is not exaggerating when he describes the state we are in as one akin to "totalitarian capitalism".

"Rich people are successful and that's good for society" Underpinning all this is an enduring set of beliefs about the acquisition of wealth. For some, especially those who remember the Cold War, the amassing of personal fortune is synonymous with political freedom. Others simply believe that "rich people deserve their wealth". Some 60% of Australians surveyed said they agreed with this statement, as did 58% of North Americans. British people were not so sure - at 45% - while only 16% of Russians and 9% of Greeks concurred with the statement.

It is said that "rich people create jobs". Nick Hanauer, a wealthy entrepreneur who founded the online advertising company aQuantive and then sold it to Microsoft for \$6 billion, thinks the idea is absurd. For him it's like saying "squirrels create evolution". Even if entrepreneurs or investors establish and build companies that

something new, they use contacts and cronyism to get a bigger slice of a pre-existing pie.

It turns out that the rich are actually doing more harm than good. London is rapidly pricing out locals. Homeless people can be seen laying out their cardboard in the doorways of Mayfair's elegant Regency houses. There is a housing crisis partly due to shortage and recession - a million builders are jobless. But there's another reason. The city's real estate has become the number one haven for rich international investors, who are buying almost 60 percent of properties valued at \$3.2 million or more. These buildings are often left empty for months on end but harsh new laws have made squatting an imprisonable offence. Local councils, meanwhile, are breaking up communities and shifting their poorer residents to other cities, which may be hundreds of kilometres away.

What's happening in London is symptomatic of the distortions created by runaway wealth and overheated property values.

Thousands of kilometres away in Peru is another casualty of feral capitalism. Gold is a prize commodity in times of trouble - and mining is bringing fat returns for corporations, investors and purchasers. Peasants have been

## How do they spend it?

A few goods and services catering for the seriously rich:

Customised 18-carat solid gold mobile phone from Aesir Copenhagen, designed by Yves Behr: \$60,000

**Night in the Royal Penthouse of the Hotel President Wilson, Geneva: \$85,000**

Meal for two at New York's Masa restaurant: \$1,500

**Crocodile-skin umbrella: \$55,000**

Small private jet hire: \$9,000 per hour

**Mediterranean holiday at Royal Villa, Grand Resort, Lagonisi, Greece: \$48,000 a night**

Green, orange, and black Renova coloured toilet paper: \$20  
**Penthouse on the New York's Upper East Side: starting price \$60 million**

Trophy hunting in Namibia: \$16,000 (one giraffe, mounting and shipping extra)

**Crystal ErgoRapido vacuum cleaner (with 3,730 Swarovski crystals): \$18,993**

Louis Vuitton skateboard: \$8,250

**Little Gold 24-carat gold vibrator (silent and waterproof): \$325**

Diamond encrusted bluetooth headset: \$50,000

**Tub of Harrods Posh Instant noodles: \$43**

Luxury frisbee: \$305

**Virgin Galactic space trip (per person): \$283,000**



# GLOBAL CLASS STRUGGLE

## New fire deaths in Bangladesh

Seven young women, at least two of them teenagers, died on Jan. 26 in the latest Bangladesh garment factory fire. This was the country's 28th such fire incident since a deadly blaze at the Tazreen Fashion factory killed at least 112 workers in late November.

According to news reports, the 300 workers at the Smart Export Garments factory faced unsafe conditions similar to those found at Tazreen: locked doors and gates that prevented them from quickly escaping the blaze, a lack of fire extinguishers and piles of flammable material that were not stored in fireproofed areas. Some workers jumped out of windows to escape, and it took nine fire engines around two hours to stop the fire at the two-story factory building. Bangladeshi authorities have confirmed that the building was illegally constructed and lacked proper fire-safety measures.

Bangladesh is the second-largest exporter of ready-made garments after China, and clothes account for up to 80 percent of the country's \$24 billion annual exports. Yet the base pay for a garment worker in Bangladesh is the equivalent of \$37 a month - below the international poverty line of \$1.25 per day.

Workers who try to form unions often face abuse and even death. Labour activists report that over the past three years, hundreds of garment workers have been injured, and some killed, in clashes with police while demonstrating or on strike for worker rights, most often for higher wages. Last April, Aminul Islam, an organizer for the Bangladesh Garment and Industrial Workers Federation (BGIWF) was murdered, his body bearing signs of torture.

## Rallies hit Belgian steel closure

Following an announcement by ArcelorMittal, the world's largest steelmaker, that they will be permanently shutting down a plant and six finishing lines in the Liege region of Belgium, workers took to the streets in protest. Thousands rallied on Jan. 29 against the closure of the factory, which will effectively end 1,300 jobs.

Dozens of riot police were called in to crack down on the protesters. Water cannons were deployed against the many demonstrators, some of which were wearing respirators to protect themselves against the police attack, and some retaliated by throwing stones at the officers.

The closure of the coke plant and six production lines follows a declining steel demand in Europe, which has seen a decrease in construction and also car sales. Ford Motor Co. announced in October that it will be closing its car plant in Genk, Belgium, by the end of 2014.

The company has stated that it will still operate five steel production lines, which employ 800 people, but protesters want the regional government to intervene, but austerity measures are being imposed by authorities.

## Cane Cutters' union leader assassinated

On January 29, Juan Carlos Munoz, union leader of the cane cutters' sector of Sintrainagro union in Cauca, Colombia, was assassinated at 5 am by hit men, who waited for him on his route to work.

Munoz had been leading union



organisation at the La Cabana plant. Trade unionists at La Cabana have been targeted, including with immediate dismissal and pressure on their families, since putting forward a collective petition for improvements in December 2012. Despite workers informing the Ministry of Labour, the company continues to refuse to negotiate, denying their right to collective bargaining.

The case of La Cabana, and the aggression against trade unionists there, was raised in a recent hearing with Fernando Carrillo, Minister of Labour. Union leaders asked the government to provide protection, and made clear that if they did not, more unionists would be killed. The murder of Munoz, says the labour movement, is testament to the government's inaction.

## French public sector walkout

French civil servants went on strike on Jan. 31 for better pay in their first mass show of dissent since the Socialist Francois Hollande became president last year. Dozens of street protests were held across the country as part of a day of action called by three of the several unions which represent France's 5.2 million state workers.

The main complaint of the unions relates to the index used to calculate salaries, which has been frozen for three years. Raising the index by one point would cost 800 million euros if applied only to central government workers, or 1.8 billion if applied to all civil servants, according to the state audit authority.

But Jean-Marc Canon of the CGT union said the situation was "absolutely catastrophic", and noted that nearly a million civil servants were being paid the minimum wage.

The unions are seeking to put pressure on Civil Service Minister Marylise Lebranchu ahead of pay talks set to begin in mid-February. She has acknowledged "the difficult situation facing civil servants" but claims that pay raises

are unlikely given the budgetary constraints on the government.

## Brazilian oil workers strike

Brazilian oil workers are protesting the latest profit-sharing offer by state-run energy company Petrobras, which the union contends short-changes workers to the benefit of shareholders. A five-day strike is tentatively scheduled to start Feb. 20, says Joao Antonio de Moraes, general coordinator for the Brazilian Oil Workers Federation, or FUP.

The FUP is an umbrella union representing about two-thirds of Petrobras's 80,000 employees. If approved, the strike would come as Petrobras struggles with flagging crude-oil production. The past year has seen declining recovery rates at mature fields and maintenance shutdowns at ageing offshore platforms. The company's finances have also been stretched because of heavy imports of gasoline and diesel fuel that the company is forced to sell at a loss in the domestic market.

Petrobras just reported that its earnings for the fourth-quarter of 2012, which rose about 20% over the final quarter of 2011. But the company's full-year profit is expected to be the worst in nearly a decade. The FUP says that workers could accept a lower slice of Petrobras's profits, but only if Petrobras also reduces dividends paid to shareholders.

FUP members have already held a 24-hour "warning" strike. Workers declined to change shifts at refineries and terminals, while workers at offshore platforms only performed routine duties. The strike did not aim to affect production, union officials said. But the Feb. 20 action would aim to shut down production for a full five days.

The last major strike at Petrobras took place in July 2008, when oil workers walked off the job for five days to protest work issues and profit-sharing proposals. That strike cost Petrobras about 63,000 barrels per day of crude oil production.

## Netanyahu plans new austerity measures

Israeli media outlets are reporting that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, whose party suffered major losses in the January elections, has set up a team to prepare deep budget cuts and tax hikes to deal with the country's huge deficit.

The group of Netanyahu's close associates is said to be planning cuts to public sector salaries won in the past few years. The most recent 1% pay hike, part of the collective agreement signed between the state and Histadrut (General Federation of Labour) in 2009, will be rolled back. These and other proposals are expected to ignite a clash with the Histadrut, which observers predict could force the government to make some compromises.

The government team also

intends to recommend tax hikes totalling several billion shekels, despite Finance Minister Yuval Steinitz's election campaign promises of no new taxes.

## More cuts for Irish workers

Pay increments for public sector workers in Ireland will be frozen for up to three years under a new government plan. The proposal has angered state employees, costing them annual pay increases worth between 1,000 and 3,000 euros.

Sources said a proposal to pause the payments is among the big-ticket items being considered to deliver the greatest savings at talks on a new deal between the government, employers and trade unions.

Other measures include pay cuts for staff at the top of their pay scales, those who no longer receive increments. Drastic reductions in premium pay, coupled with savings through a voluntary redundancy scheme, are also proposed.

Pressure is mounting on the Irish government to deliver a deal by the end of February, as cuts totalling 300 million euros must be made this year, towards a target of 1 billion euros by 2015.

## Depression among jobless UK youth

A "frightening" wave of austerity-stoked chronic depression is battering young people across Britain, says the Morning Star newspaper.

The Prince's Youth Trust (a UK charity) found that 27 per cent of working young people are "always" or "often" depressed -

while the figure rocketed to 48 per cent for those not in paid work, education or training.

More than one in 10 young people said they felt unable to cope with day-to-day life, rising to a fifth of those with neither employment, education or training, according to the trust's annual Youth Index.

Pollsters who surveyed more than 2,000 16-to-25-year-olds found a clear link to the economic crisis. More than a quarter said they believed it had "permanently damaged" their career prospects - and a fifth of those out of work said they believed their self-confidence would never fully recover.

Youth unemployment in Britain currently hovers around 20 per cent, with the total number expected to reach more than a million again this year.

Those in work continue to see hours, pay and conditions dwindling. Official figures in November showed that of the 316,000 new jobs since 2011, more than two-thirds were part-time - with an average 15.8 hours paying just 155 pounds a week (or about \$246 CND).

The survey follows an alarming study in August directly attributing more than 1,000 suicides since 2008 to the economic crisis. Researchers at the University of Liverpool found 846 men and 155 women took their lives during the last four years over and above pre-recession trends - meaning around two-fifths of the rise in suicides among men could be attributed to rising unemployment.

Suicidal protests are also on the rise. In December an 18-year-old Torbay man set himself on fire after being refused housing, while a Birmingham man set himself alight outside a job centre in June.

Many items in our "Global Class Struggle" column are from the Labour Start website, [www.labourstart.org](http://www.labourstart.org)

## Send me information on the Communist Party of Canada



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

**Central Committee CPC**  
290A Danforth Ave, Toronto, ON, M4K 1N6  
416-469-2446 <[info@cpc-pcc.ca](mailto:info@cpc-pcc.ca)> [www.comunist-party.ca](http://www.comunist-party.ca)

**Parti Communiste du Quebec** (section du Parti communiste du Canada)  
5359 Ave Du Parc, Suite "C"  
Montreal, QC, H2V 4G9  
Email: [pcq@cpc-pcc.ca](mailto:pcq@cpc-pcc.ca) Tél: 438-338-8890

**B.C. Committee CPC**  
706 Clark Drive, Vancouver, BC, V5L 3J1  
604-254-9836 <[cpcinfo.bc@gmail.com](mailto:cpcinfo.bc@gmail.com)>

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

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

**Saskatchewan CPC**  
Email: <[mail@communist-party-sk.ca](mailto:mail@communist-party-sk.ca)>

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

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

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

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

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



# Montreal cartoon exhibit of Gerardo Hernandez

*By the Comité Fabio Di Celmo pour les 5 of the Table de concertation de solidarité Québec-Cuba*

Over 100 people came to an exhibition/meeting jointly organized on January 24 by the Montreal branch of the CSN (one of the largest Quebec unions) and the Comité Fabio Di Celmo. The goal was to build support for the freedom of the Cuban Five as part of the worldwide effort.

Dominique Daigneault, General Secretary of the Conseil central du Montréal métropolitain (CCMM-CSN), the sponsor of the event, said that she was moved to see so many people, despite record-breaking close to minus 40 degrees temperatures.

She explained to the standing-room only crowd how the CSN has been supporting Cuba for a long time, and specifically the Cuban Five in the struggle against their unjust imprisonment. The case represents a major injustice, she said, and so justice must be rendered by allowing the truth to be known.

After the meeting, Daigneault signed the letter containing the signatures of close to 150 Quebec personalities who are in favour of the Cuban Five's liberation.

Her introduction was followed by a musical interlude and a screening of the video "The Bird and the Prisoner." American actor Danny Glover outlined Gerardo's incredible outreach to save a newborn orphaned bird that had wandered into his prison. This ongoing action, we saw, won the support of the prison population.

Next to speak was the Consul General of the Republic of Cuba in Montreal, Alain Gonzalez. Through his personal story, he vividly brought to light the terror carried out by the U.S. The Cuban people are accustomed to peace and security, which has on many occasions been fractured by U.S.-led terrorist actions against Cuba. As a young student, he learned through the experience of these actions, such as the Havana hotel bombings in the late 1990s in which Fabio Di Celmo, an Italian citizen residing in Montreal, was killed.

It is precisely this type of activity that the Cuban Five were intent on stopping by infiltrating terrorist groups in Miami. Alain Gonzalez is now a young diplomat in Montreal. He pointed out the double punishment carried out by U.S. authorities against Gerardo, who, in

addition to serving two concurrent life terms plus 15 years, has been forbidden to receive a single visit from his wife, Adriana Pérez.

Montreal writer and journalist Arnold August, representing the Comité Fabio Di Celmo, read a message sent by Gerardo Hernandez, in his own name and in the names of Ramon Labanino, Antonio Guerrero, Fernando Gonzalez and René Gonzalez:

*"Brothers and sisters, Words cannot express how deeply I appreciate the effort ... to make this exhibition a reality in the important city of Montreal. It is my understanding that all the promotion, explanations of my work and even this letter have been translated into French for the very first time.*

*"It has been humbling to me how many countries these cartoons have been shown in, because they were not made with the idea that someday they would be displayed all together in an art exhibit. As some of you know, I spend a great deal of my time responding to hundreds of solidarity letters and I do this work lacking the material and appropriate conditions of a real artist. I am an art aficionado who draws cartoons out of a necessity to express myself in a certain way. This necessity comes from a desire to send out a message to our people or to express my perspective before different events, such as the birthday of someone we admire or the death of a friend.*

*"Someone once said that 'humour liberates' (and if nobody did say that, I will say it now) and for me it is something that 'gets us out' for at least a few moments from behind the walls where we have been unjustly imprisoned for almost 15 years. The Cuban Five have been expressing themselves through humour - in this case - or by painting and poetry in the case of Tony, and - although less known - in the paintings of Fernando and the poetry of Ramon and René.*

*"On behalf of all of us, I want to thank you for being here today and for the solidarity that it represents in our struggle for justice. We know that the key to our inevitable freedom lives in that solidarity that continues to grow worldwide.*

*"Hasta La Victoria Siempre! "Gerardo Hernandez, Victorville Penitentiary, California, January 20, 2013"*

This was greeted by loud applause by the audience, visibly

moved by his words. Copies of the message were presented to the Cuban Consul General and the representatives of the CSN and Comité Fabio Di Celmo.

Arnold August then asked, "What more can we do to further the struggle to free the Cuban Five?" In addition to picket lines in front of the U.S. consulate in Montreal, held on the second Thursday of each month since May 2007, an important activity is being

organized in Washington D.C. by the International Committee for the Freedom of the Cuban Five.

These "Days of Action for the Cuban 5" will take place from May 30 to June 5, 2013. The highlight will be a demonstration in front of the White House on June 1 to demand that President Obama pardon the Cuban Five and allow them to return home to Cuba and their families.

August, in the name of the Comité,

called on all those present to participate in building a delegation from Quebec to go to Washington.

After the meeting, many people indicated their interest. The success of a delegation to Washington will be, in part, a direct result of Gerardo's message that touched the soul of the participants. From their cells, the Cuban Five inspire people all over the world, demonstrating their combination of immense courage and sincere humanism. ●



Dominique Daigneault of the Conseil central du Montréal métropolitain (CCMM-CSN).

## Unemployment will pass 200 million this year

Global unemployment is at a record high in the wake of the financial crisis, says a report from the International Labor Organization (ILO). A rise in joblessness of 5.1 million is expected in 2013, with the sharpest impact on youth in a climate of "stifling austerity and economic instability."

The ILO's annual report on worldwide employment states that about 197 million people were out of work in 2012, a rise of 4.2 million. Guy Ryder, director-general of the ILO, warns that "inadequacy of policy to counter" unemployment was largely to blame for the slump in investment and hiring.

"This has prolonged the labor market slump in many countries, lowering job creation and

increasing unemployment duration even in some countries that previously had low unemployment and dynamic labour markets," he added.

Even worse, the official numbers understate the full extent of the crisis because labour force participation has fallen dramatically. Over 39 million people dropped out of the global job market last year because of the increasingly bleak outlook. The economic climate in the eurozone has been earmarked as one of the worst areas for the job market.

The document reported that young people are losing valuable experience as a result of difficulties in getting onto the employment ladder in the first place.

"The crisis has dramatically diminished the labor market

prospects for young people, as many experience long-term unemployment right from the start of their labor market entry," the UN agency said, stressing that such a phenomenon had not been witnessed during previous downturns.

At present there are around 73.8 million people aged between 15 and 24 out of work worldwide, and the slowdown in economic activity is likely to push another half million into unemployment by 2014.

In the "advanced" economies during 2012, around 35 per cent of unemployed young people had been jobless for more than six months. This extended period of time out of work deprives youth of the necessary skills needed to compete in the job market. ●

## First verdict in Bangladesh war crimes trials

**PV Vancouver Bureau**

Over forty years since Bangladesh's 1971 war of liberation from Pakistan, the government of Bangladesh has finally started the trials of war criminals. This process has been long delayed by resistance from pro-Pakistani reactionary forces, according to the Communist Party of Bangladesh.

In January, the first verdict of the International War Crimes Tribunal-2 was rendered, sentencing 65-year-old Abul Kalam Azad to death for genocide and crimes against humanity. But Azad became a fugitive just hours before he was to be arrested last April, so the sentence cannot be carried out at this time.

Also known as Bachchu Razakar, the accused was found guilty of killing 14 Hindus, raping two women, torturing two other persons, and setting homes ablaze in Faridpur, his birthplace.

As the Dhaka *Daily Star* newspaper reports, "the judgment turns the spotlight on the nine-

month war in which the Pakistani army along with its collaborators killed three million Bangalees and violated more than a quarter of a million women."

"We should not forget the millions of victims who deserve that their tormentors are held accountable," Justice Obaidul Hassan said in the judgment. "The passage of time does not diminish the guilt. Justice delayed is no longer justice denied."

The "Tribunal-2" formed in March 2012 to prosecute the perpetrators of 1971 war crimes, an effort seen by many as an attempt to overcome the culture of impunity in Bangladesh.

Eight charges were brought against Abul Kalam Azad, a former Jamaat-e-Islami leader.

The trial was held in his absence, with a tribunal-appointed lawyer acting on his behalf. The judges found that the accused had physically participated in the commission of crimes, accompanied by armed accomplices. Azad was sentenced to death by hanging on four of the

charges, and found "guilty beyond doubt" on three other charges. He was given thirty days to launch an appeal, but some legal experts say that this right can be exercised only if he surrenders or is arrested.

According to police sources, Azad fled to India, crossing the border without a passport or a visa, and may now be in Karachi, Pakistan. Interpol will be asked to detain Azad and bring him back to Bangladesh.

A total of 22 witnesses testified for the prosecution in the case, but Azad's family and friends refused to testify in his defense.

The prosecution witnesses gave accounts of a series of criminal acts by Azad during May and June of 1971, as part of a reign of terror by pro-Pakistan groups. For example, on May 16, 1971, about 10-12 armed men captured Madhab Chandra Biswas of Purura Namapara village, about 300 yards from his house, where Azad shot Madhab to death. The list goes on, including kidnappings, murders, arsons and rapes carried out by a large gang of men led by Azad. ●



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

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

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

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

**Phone 1-202-456-1111 Fax 1-202-456-2461**

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

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



## The Workers' Flag: Endicott book raises important lessons from the past

**Raising the Workers' Flag: The Workers' Unity League of Canada, 1930-1936**, by Stephen L. Endicott, University of Toronto Press, ISBN 978-1-4426-1226-6, 442 pp. paper (including 104 pages of notes, bibliography and index), 48 pages of photos

Review by Kimball Cariou

Thousands of books are published every year in Canada. Perhaps a few hundred focus on Canadian history, and a much smaller fraction examine the struggles and stories of the working class. Even fewer shed valuable new light on the labour movement.

Stephen Endicott's new book, *Raising the Workers' Flag*, stands out among this handful, both for the significance of its topic, and for the author's vivid depiction of the activists who built the Workers' Unity League during the Dirty Thirties.

The passage of many decades, and the deaths of most of the WUL labour militants, have tended to over-simplify debates and discussions on the left over the role of this unique organization. All too often, these debates revolve around one question: was the Communist Party of Canada correct to push for the WUL's affiliates to re-enter the main bodies of the labour movement, or should the Communists have tried to maintain the WUL as a separate, revolutionary trade union movement?

During those years, the Communist Party was the most important revolutionary force in Canada, especially within the trade union movement. So the author provides a tremendous service by presenting the stories of many key figures in the Communist movement of the 1920s and '30s, the men and women who

spearheaded the party's early organizing efforts among the working class.

As Endicott's vast research (including his studies of new archival material) makes crystal clear, reactionary critics are dead wrong to claim that such activities were "dictated" by the Comintern or the Moscow-based Red International of Labour Unions, to which the WUL was affiliated. Both of these bodies exercised overall leadership for the communist parties and the "red" unions, but the relationship was actually far more complex.

Endicott relates how Canadian representatives in Moscow, like Stewart Smith and Leslie Morris, for example, shared the knowledge and views of revolutionary trade unionists in Canada with their counterparts at the RILU, helping to shape communist strategies in a common global direction. Naturally, the views of the Soviet trade unions and larger communist-led labour bodies carried more weight than those of Canada.

But it would be a gross oversimplification to argue that the decisions to form "revolutionary" trade union centres (such as the WUL), or later to reintegrate these unions into the wider labour federations in the capitalist countries were "imposed" from above. There were sharp debates over such strategic shifts, but the decisions were carried out mainly because they made sense to labour leaders and activists on the ground in Canada, not because of a signature in Moscow.

From the terrain of the Canadian labour and communist movements in the 1920s, Endicott moves to a

series of chapters detailing the organizing campaigns by WUL unions across the country. These ranged from bitterly-fought strikes by coal miners and hard rock miners, to organizing drives among needle trades workers, woodworkers, and other brutally exploited sections of the working

Union which sparked the On to Ottawa Trek of 1935. Each of these historic struggles is presented in careful detail, giving the reader an understanding of the problems faced by the WUL in its efforts to lift the working class from sporadic acts of rebellion towards coordinated campaigns for progressive reforms, against the domination of big capital.

One of the most interesting chapters deals with women's status in the workplace and in the wider social realm. Many powerful women leaders emerged in the WUL, not just famed figures like Annie Buller and Becky Buhay, but dozens more who led strikes and campaigns in specific industries and cities. Although the post-war era saw a concerted drive to push working women back into the kitchens, the WUL helped to change the thinking of millions of women (and men) about gender roles in capitalist society. This shift was an underlying factor in the organization of women in the public sector which took off in the 1950s, and the emergence of women's liberation movements in subsequent decades.

By 1935 some 40,000 workers were members of WUL-affiliated unions, becoming an important

factor in labour and social issues across Canada. But at the same time, the working class on an international scale grasped the need to build wider unity against the threat of fascism. The decision was made at the RILU level to formalize a process which was already taking shape in many capitalist countries, towards integrating the "red" unions into federations mainly led by reformists.

Endicott's conclusion is that "in retrospect, the decision by the Workers' Unity League to merge its unions with the AFL unions at this moment in history was a tactical error, since a new, dramatic, more progressive development was in the offing", referring to what became the Committee of Industrial Organizations in the U.S.

Perhaps, but Tom Ewen and other WUL leaders had to act on the knowledge they possessed, rather than what they could not foresee. What is beyond question is that the WUL did more to change the course of Canadian history in six short years than most labour federations before or since accomplished through decades of "business union" or even "social union" strategies. There is much to learn from this book, not just about our past, but especially about the "class struggle" unionism that workers desperately need today. ●



class. One of the most significant contributions of the WUL was the fight to organize the unemployed, especially the Relief Camp Workers

## A terrible normality...

continued from page 12

inflation, labor struggles, high unemployment - hardly a year that would be considered "normal" in any pleasant sense. An extended normal period would itself have been an abnormality. The free market is by design inherently unstable in every aspect other than wealth accumulation for the select few.

What we are witnessing is not an irrational output from a basically rational society but the converse: the "rational" (to be expected) output of a fundamentally irrational system. Does this mean these horrors are inescapable? No, they are not made of supernatural forces. They are produced by plutocratic greed and deception.

So, if the aberrant is the norm and the horrific is chronic, then we in our fightback should give less attention to the idiosyncratic and more to the systemic. Wars, massacres and recessions help to

increase capital concentration, monopolize markets and natural resources, and destroy labor organizations and popular transformative resistance.

The brutish vagaries of plutocracy are not the product of particular personalities but of systemic interests. President George W. Bush was ridiculed for misusing words, but his empire-building and stripping of government services and regulations revealed a keen devotion to ruling-class interests. Likewise, President Barack Obama is not spineless. He is hypocritical but not confused. He is (by his own description) an erstwhile "liberal Republican," or as I would put it, a faithful servant of corporate America.

Our various leaders are well informed, not deluded. They come from different regions and different families, and have different personalities, yet they pursue pretty much the same policies on behalf

of the same plutocracy.

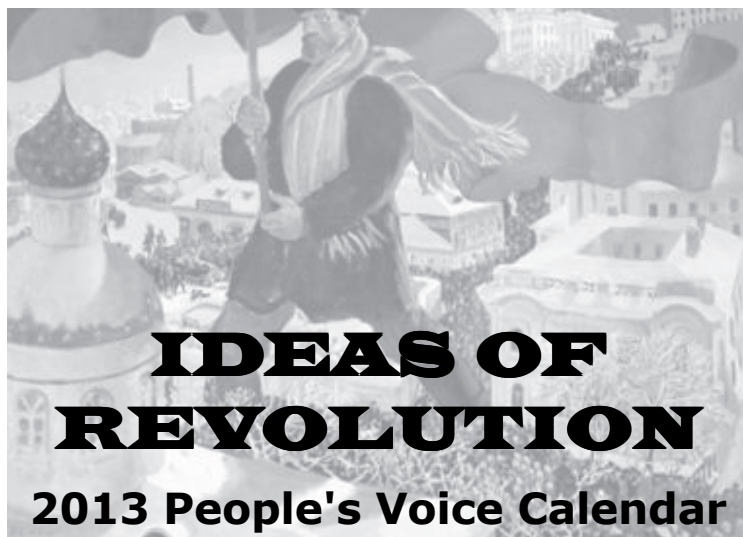
So it is not enough to denounce atrocities and wars, we also must understand who propagates them and who benefits. We have to ask why violence and deception are constant ingredients.

Unintended consequences and other oddities do arise in worldly affairs but we also must take account of interest-driven rational intentions. More often than not, the aberrations - be they wars, market crashes, famines, individual assassinations or mass killings - take shape because those at the top are pursuing gainful expropriation. Many may suffer and perish but somebody somewhere is benefiting boundlessly.

Knowing your enemies and what they are capable of doing is the first step toward effective opposition. The world becomes less of a horrific puzzlement. We can only resist these global (and local) perpetrators when we see who they are and what they are doing to us and our sacred environment.

Democratic victories, however small and partial they be, must be embraced. But the people must not be satisfied with tinselled favours offered by smooth leaders. We need to strive in every way possible for the revolutionary unravelling, a revolution of organized consciousness striking at the empire's heart with the full force of democracy, the kind of irresistible upsurge that seems to come from nowhere while carrying everything before it.

Parenti is the author of *The Face of Imperialism* and numerous other books. For information, visit [www.michaelparenti.org](http://www.michaelparenti.org). ●



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

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

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



# Egyptian Communists back anti-regime protests

As this issue of People's Voice goes to press, sharp political struggles continue in Egypt, where the democratic and progressive goals of the uprising against the Mubarak regime are under pressure by the Morsi government.

The Egyptian Communist Party, which was finally able to function legally after the 2011 uprising, issued a statement on Jan. 31, titled "Continuing the Revolutionary Struggle against Opportunism and Forces of the Fascist Religious Right."

The Party reconfirms that it will continue to struggle "within the ranks of the poor, workers, peasants and all the toilers of the Egyptian people, in the heart of which are the revolutionary free youth... and within the ranks of the true revolutionaries who are demanding to complete the march

of the revolution until achieving its demands for which it started (Freedom - Dignity - Social Justice)."

The Communists are taking part in demonstrations, including the huge February 1 rally in Cairo, to oppose the Muslim Brotherhood regime, and to demand early presidential elections and action to achieve the goals of the revolution.

They oppose calls for "dialogues" with reactionary forces which are responsible for the bloodshed in the streets, and for the new constitution which enshrines social and religious discrimination and robs the working class and the poor of their right to health, education and housing.

The Egyptian regime, the Communists stress, is responsible

for violence, arrests, kidnappings and killings of revolutionaries, and for the economic, social, political and security deterioration of the situation in the country. For this reason, the Party opposes opportunist attempts to save the authority of the ruling class, led by the Muslim Brotherhood, which is "a brutal authority of a fascist and authoritarian type."

The statement calls on all civil forces and supporters of the revolution to unite around the demands for "freedom, dignity, social justice, and retribution for the blood of the martyrs." •

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

## The Feral Rich...

continued from page 7

shot as they protested against gold and other precious-metal mining projects that are poisoning their water and polluting their land.

The rich, says French writer Hervé Kempf, are quite literally destroying the earth. With their investments in oil and mining, the new global oligarchs are making the planet uninhabitable. And, like Gina Rinehart, they are using their clout to block the changes desperately needed to tackle climate change.

When young rioters rampaged the streets of British cities 18 months ago, many received harsh prison sentences. Media reports at the time used the words "feral" and "underclass" to describe them.

But one commentator, Peter Osborne of the usually conservative *Daily Telegraph*, pointed to another group of people that had "forgotten they have duties as well as rights," the feral rich of Chelsea and Kensington, who had been nurturing "an almost universal culture of

selfishness and greed".

There are signs, though, that some natural political allies of the rich - and some rich people themselves - are feeling increasingly uneasy. The perversity of the current situation and its egregious unfairness is damaging capitalism, they say. They are reminded of Marx's prediction about capitalism having within it the seeds of its own destruction.

There are even indications of tensions between the millionaires and the billionaires - the latter having become so much richer, so much faster, than the mere millionaires who are struggling to keep up. Equality is a buzz word that has entered all spheres now - including elite gatherings of business and world leaders at the World Economic Forum and in the pages of *The Economist*. Widening inequality is seen as a danger, a source of social unrest that disrupts the workings of capitalism.

This is where hope lies: in disruption from below. Today's

inequality is the result of years of deliberate action to crush unions, drive down wages and create a self-serving elite of plutocrats. Mouthing nice words about greater equality is not enough. It has to come with serious redistribution of wealth and a dismantling of the institutions and practices that are perpetuating privilege and inequality. What the young British rioters of 2011 were doing was redistribution in action, but without discipline or a political framework. When Uncut protesters occupy Starbucks coffee shops and turn them into creches - because that's the kind of thing that's being cut when the coffee giant dodges its taxes - it's smart and appropriate and wins public support. When 800 council workers in Caerphilly, Wales, walk out in protest at a 30 percent hike in pay for their bosses, it shows a significant shift in focus.

The mobilisation around corporate greed and aggressive tax avoidance in various parts of the world is revealing a long list of culprits - Apple, General Electric, Vodafone, Starbucks, Google, Amazon, PepsiCo, Goldman Sachs, Facebook - and generating widespread feelings of anger and revulsion. The mood has changed. In Greece, a country where tax avoidance was previously the social norm, the journalist who was put on trial for revealing the names of 2,000 high level tax dodgers is viewed as a hero by the people.

This coming year will see more austerity measures, as governments try to convince the people that the national deficit is their fault and they must pay for it with their jobs and their public services and their pension and their savings. They may encounter more resistance than they expect. Remember, the political class, like the rich, are in the minority. The plutocracy, and those in power who do their bidding, need the cooperation of the 99 percent, even if they think and behave as if they don't. They detach themselves from the rest of humanity at their peril. And we ignore them - or accept their hideously distorting power - at ours. •

### Al Warrington

Albert Warrington, a long-time Communist and supporter of the working class press, passed away on December 12, at the age of 93, survived by his wife Elaine. Al was a former President of the Mine Mill & Smelter Workers Union Local 480 in Trail, B.C., where he was active in the union from 1949 to 1968, and then the Steelworkers until 1975. He joined the Communist Party in 1951, and was a party candidate in Kootenay West in 1960. During the Second World War, Al was in the Princess Patricia Canadian Light Infantry, and fought in a decisive and bloody battle at Ortona in northern Italy, helping to liberate it for the Allies in December 1943. Over 1300 Canadians were killed in the battle for Ortona, which was a strategic port on the Adriatic Sea. After moving from Trail to the Lower Mainland, he was a member of the Burnaby Club CPC, which remembers that "Al had a great sense of justice for the working class and a keen BS detector." There will be no memorial, but Al Warrington will always be remembered by his friends and comrades.

### In Memory of Albert Warrington

- friend, union leader and dedicated Comrade.  
1919 - 2012

Burnaby Club, CPC

## What's Left

### Vancouver, BC

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

**Left Film Night**, Sunday, Feb. 24, 7 pm, Centre for Socialist Education, 706 Clark Drive. Screening of "REDS", Warren Beatty's epic depiction of the Russian Revolution. Free, donations welcome. Put March 31 on your calendar for the annual Left Film Night pasta dinner, proceeds to PV Fund Drive. Call 604-2455-2041 for info.

### Winnipeg, MB

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

**Idle No More panel discussion**, Sunday, February 24, 2 pm at Millennium library. Info Peace Alliance Winnipeg and Project Peacemakers, 775-8178.

### Toronto, ON

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

**Norman Bethune Day dinner**, celebrate the father of socialized medicine, Sat., Feb. 23, 7:30 pm, GCDO Hall, 290 Danforth Ave. Tickets just \$5, door prize one-week all-inclusive trip for two to Cuba. Organized by Bethune Day Committee, media sponsor People's Voice, ph. 416-469-2446.

### St. Catharines, ON

**Mohammed Mahjoub speaks out** about his Security Certificate detention, Tuesday, Feb. 26, time and location TBA. For information contact Imran Kaderina at Brock OPIRG, imran@opirgbrock.org

### Montreal, QC

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

### NO TO AUSTERITY & WAR TOUR

**No to Austerity, No to War!** Speaking tour with Miguel Figueroa, leader of the Communist Party of Canada, see ad on page 3. Upcoming dates include **WINNIPEG**, Wed, Feb. 20, 7 pm, Millennium Library (Donald & Graham); **EDMONTON**, Wed., Feb. 27, 7-9 pm, Mill Woods Recreation Centre Green Room, 7207-28 Ave.; **VANCOUVER**, Monday, March 4, 7:30 pm, Centre for Socialist Education, 706 Clark Drive, 604-254-9836 for info. Look for details of tour in other locations in our next issue, or ph. 416-469-2446.

### Helen O'Shaughnessy

**Helen O'Shaughnessy, long-time activist for better pay and working conditions in the fishing industry and equal rights for women, died on Jan. 25, aged 88. Her life was celebrated on Friday, Feb. 8, at the Maritime Labour Centre in Vancouver. An obituary will appear in our next issue.**

## People's Voice deadlines

March 1-15 issue: Thursday, Feb. 14

March 16-31 issue: Thursday, March 7

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



## La Trova Nuestra

Friday, Feb. 22, 8:00 pm

### "La Peña Nuestra"

Centre For Socialist Education, Vancouver  
706 Clark Drive (Clark and Georgia st)  
\$10 Entry

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

SPEAKING  
FRANKLY

## A Terrible Normality

By Michael Parenti

Through much of history the abnormal has been the norm. This is a paradox to which we should attend. Aberrations, so plentiful as to form a terrible normality of their own, descend upon us with frightful consistency.

The number of massacres in history, for instance, are almost more than we can record. There was the New World holocaust, consisting of the extermination of indigenous Native American peoples throughout the western hemisphere, extending over four centuries or more, continuing into recent times in the Amazon region.

There were the centuries of heartless slavery in the Americas and elsewhere, followed by a full century of lynch mob rule and Jim Crow segregation in the United States, and today the numerous killings and incarcerations of Black youth by law enforcement agencies.

Let us not forget the extermination of some 200,000 Filipinos by the U.S. military at the beginning of the twentieth century, the genocidal massacre of 1.5 million Armenians by the Turks in 1915, and the mass killings of African peoples by the western colonists, including the 63,000 Herero victims in German Southwest Africa in 1904, and the brutalization and enslavement of millions in the Belgian Congo from the late 1880s until emancipation in 1960 - followed by years of neocolonial free-market exploitation and repression in what was Mobutu's Zaire.

French colonizers killed some 150,000 Algerians. Later on, several million souls perished in Angola and Mozambique along with an estimated five million in the merciless region now known as the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The twentieth century gave us - among other horrors - more than sixteen million lost and twenty million wounded or mutilated in World War I, followed by the estimated 62 million to 78 million killed in World War II, including some 24 million Soviet military personnel and civilians, 5.8 million European Jews, and taken together: several million Serbs,

Poles, Roma, homosexuals, and a score of other nationalities.

In the decades after World War II, many, if not most, massacres and wars have been openly or covertly sponsored by the U.S. national security state. This includes the two million or so left dead or missing in Vietnam, along with 250,000 Cambodians, 100,000 Laotians, and 58,000 Americans.

Today in much of Africa, Central Asia, and the Middle East there are "smaller" wars, replete with atrocities of all sorts. Central America, Colombia, Rwanda and other places too numerous to list, suffered the massacres and death-squad exterminations of hundreds of thousands, a constancy of violent horrors. In Mexico a "war on drugs" has taken 70,000 lives with 8,000 missing.

There was the slaughter of more than half a million socialistic or democratic nationalist Indonesians by the U.S.-supported Indonesian military in 1965, eventually followed by the extermination of 100,000 East Timorese by that same U.S.-backed military.

Consider the 78-days of NATO's aerial destruction of Yugoslavia complete with depleted uranium, and the bombings and invasion of Panama, Grenada, Somalia, Libya, Yemen, Western Pakistan, Afghanistan, and now the devastating war of attrition brokered against Syria. And as I write (early 2013), the U.S.-sponsored sanctions against Iran are seeding severe hardship for the civilian population of that country.

All the above amounts to a very incomplete listing of the world's violent and ugly injustice. A comprehensive inventory would fill volumes. How do we record the countless other life-searing abuses: the many millions who survive wars and massacres but remain forever broken in body and spirit, left to a lifetime of suffering and pitiless privation, refugees without sufficient food or medical supplies or water and sanitation services in countries like Syria, Haiti, South Sudan, Ethiopia, Somalia, and Mali.

Think of the millions of women and children around the world and

across the centuries who have been trafficked in unspeakable ways, and the millions upon millions trapped in exploitative toil, be they slaves, indentured servants, or underpaid labourers. The number of impoverished is now growing at a faster rate than the world's population. Add to that the countless acts of repression,

continuing catastrophes of Chernobyl and Fukushima and other impending disasters awaiting numerous aging nuclear reactors.

The world's dreadful aberrations are so commonplace and unrelenting that they lose their edge and we become inured to the horror of it all. "Who today remembers the Armenians?" Hitler

by their superiority in firepower and striking force. Violence is what we are talking about here, not just the wild and wanton type but the persistent and well-organized kind. As a political resource, violence is the instrument of ultimate authority. Violence allows for the conquest of entire lands and the riches they contain, while keeping displaced labourers and other slaves in harness.

The plutocratic rulers find it necessary to misuse or exterminate restive multitudes, to let them starve while the fruits of their land and the sweat of their labor enrich privileged coteries.

Thus we had a profit-driven imperial rule that helped precipitate the great famine in northern China, 1876-1879, resulting in the death of some thirteen million. At about that same time the Madras famine in India took the lives of as many as twelve million while the colonial forces grew ever richer. And thirty years earlier, the great potato famine in Ireland led to about one million deaths, with another desperate million emigrating from their homeland. Nothing accidental about this: while the Irish starved, their English landlords exported shiploads of Irish grain and livestock to England and elsewhere at considerable profit to themselves.

These occurrences must be seen as something more than just historic abnormalities floating aimlessly in time and space, driven only by overweening impulse or happenstance. It is not enough to condemn monstrous events and bad times, we also must try to understand them. They must be contextualized in the larger framework of historical social relations.

The dominant socio-economic system today is free-market capitalism (in all its variations). Along with its unrelenting imperial terrorism, free-market capitalism provides "normal abnormalities" from within its own dynamic, creating scarcity and maldistributed excess, filled with duplication, waste, overproduction, frightening environmental destruction, and varieties of financial crises, bringing swollen rewards to a select few and continual hardship to multitudes.

Economic crises are not exceptional; they are the standing operational mode of the capitalist system. Once again, the irrational is the norm. Consider U.S. free-market history: after the American Revolution, there were the debtor rebellions of the late 1780s, the panic of 1792, the recession of 1809 (lasting several years), the panics of 1819 and 1837, and recessions and crashes through much of the rest of that century. The serious recession of 1893 continued for more than a decade.

After the industrial underemployment of 1900 to 1915 came the agrarian depression of the 1920s - hidden behind what became known to us as "the Jazz Age," followed by a horrendous crash and the Great Depression of 1929-1942. All through the twentieth century we had wars, recessions,



Millions of people were killed by Belgian imperialist authorities in Congo, starting in the 1880s. Those who resisted forced labour in the rubber plantations often had their hands cut off by the Belgian military. In World War One (1914-18), citizens of Britain, Canada and other allied countries were urged to support "plucky Belgium", which had just carried out one of the most terrible genocides in history.

incarceration, torture, and other criminal abuses that beat upon the human spirit throughout the world day by day.

Let us not overlook the ubiquitous corporate corruption and massive financial swindles, the plundering of natural resources and industrial poisoning of whole regions, the forceful dislocation of entire populations, the

is quoted as having said while plotting his "final solution" for the Jews. Who today remembers the Iraqis and the death and destruction done to them on a grand scale by the U.S. invasion of their lands? William Blum reminds us that more than half the Iraq population is either dead, wounded, traumatized, imprisoned, displaced, or exiled, while their environment is saturated with depleted uranium (from U.S. weaponry) inflicting horrific birth defects.

What is to be made of all this? First, we must not ascribe these aberrations to happenstance, innocent confusion, and unintended consequences. Nor should we believe the usual rationales about spreading democracy, fighting terrorism, providing humanitarian rescue, protecting U.S. national interests and other such rallying cries promulgated by ruling elites and their mouthpieces.

The repetitious patterns of atrocity and violence are so persistent as to invite the suspicion that they usually serve real interests; they are structural not incidental. All this destruction and slaughter has greatly profited those plutocrats who pursue economic expansion, resource acquisition, territorial dominion, and financial accumulation.

Ruling interests are well served

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