

**TORONTO  
FIGHTBACK**

*See page 2*

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

JAN.  
1-31,  
2012

VOL. 20  
#1

\$1.50

# people's VOICE

## **Benefits delayed for half a million jobless Canadians**



## **What's behind the attack on access to Employment Insurance?**

*- see page 4 -*

# **SOCIALISM IS THE FUTURE!**

***The 13th annual conference  
of Communist and Workers'  
Parties met in Athens during  
December...***

***Reports on pages 6 & 7***



Chris Bird

### **5 Bauman & Bountiful**

To the surprise of many observers, the legal ruling in the Bountiful cult case struck a good balance, protecting the interests of children without attacking the rights of consenting adults.

### **INSIDE**

### **6 Solidarity with teachers**

After months of fruitless negotiations with an implacable government, B.C teachers face a tough struggle for a new collective bargaining agreement.

### **12 Reports from Korea**

While the western media is full of wild speculation about recent developments in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, our correspondent examines the history of these events.



# Toronto negotiations will set pattern across Canada

## PV Ontario Bureau

Close to 30,000 municipal workers, organized into three CUPE Locals, are facing Toronto Mayor Rob Ford and a right-wing majority on City Council, with Canada-wide implications for years to come.

The Ford administration have made it clear that their main aim is to privatize, contract out, and eliminate city services, and to break the back of the union whose members deliver these services.

As CUPE Local 416 President Mark Ferguson said in late December, "This round of negotiations will be a watershed for city services right across the county. If we lose this battle in Toronto, Canada's largest city, you can bet the pattern will be repeated in city after city.... (This is) the toughest round of bargaining in our history."

Paul Moist, National President of CUPE, has called the negotiations in Toronto "our PATCO moment" - a reference to the air traffic controllers in the US who were all fired by President Ronald Reagan in his first act after being elected. Moist has called on CUPE locals across Canada to "move their warrooms to Toronto."

The three unions representing outside workers (Local 416), inside workers (Local 79), and library workers (Local 4948) have tried to negotiate through the fall. But they have been stymied by city negotiators who refused to bargain seriously, or to provide any figures on the city's financial position, other than public announcements of catastrophic financial crisis.

Instead, the city has laid charges against Local 79 of bad faith bargaining, in a pre-emptive move to secure public support. Local 79 had asked the city to open the books on its financial situation, citing the \$139 million year-end surplus which public organizations are demanding should be plowed back into services, not Ford's "rainy day" fund.

The unions, and many organizations, have also questioned the grossly inflated \$779 million budget shortfall projected for 2012 as a creation of the Ford administration. About \$500 million is the gap caused by chronic under-

funding, and is usually covered with funding provided by the province (which would rather cough up for Toronto than deal with the chronic and province-wide underfunding of cities).

The unions have indicated they are not intending to strike, but expect the city to lock them out as early as mid-January. The city has made no secret of the fact it hopes a winter lockout will demoralize picketers and hurt the union. As well, the just-released budget includes layoffs and the elimination of 2,338 jobs - another nail in the coffin of public services, and another attempt to split and demoralize city workers and their unions.

Under the rubric of ending so-called "jobs for life" provisions in the current collective agreement, the Ford administration is aiming to strip job security provisions which workers fought hard to secure in previous agreements, and which are a significant obstacle to Ford's slash and burn agenda. The city is also demanding cuts and take-aways to almost every part of the existing collective agreement.

Linking the attack on municipal workers' jobs with the attack on public services is a challenge the union has already taken up, with a fall PR campaign of posters and ads called "Taking Care of Toronto." The campaign followed on the heels of a September poll showing broad and deep

opposition to Ford's proposed budget and service cuts. The poll showed Ford's popularity collapsing, including amongst those who said they voted for him in November 2010.

Without recall legislation, there is no simple way to unload the Mayor and his brother, Deputy Mayor Doug Ford. They and other right-wing Councillors were elected on a platform of cutting unpopular taxes levied by the previous administration (under the City of Toronto Act) without cutting services. This could be done, Ford said, by eliminating the "gravy" that flowed through city hall.

The "gravy", it's now becoming evident, was not the \$14,000 tab for an end-of-term goodbye dinner paid for by the public when outgoing Councillor Kyle Rae used up his expense account treating friends and supporters. It's the public sector workers who deliver an extensive range of public services in Toronto every day, including libraries, child care, transit, social services, parks and recreation, garbage collection and disposal, public health, public housing, school food and nutrition programs, programs for at-risk youth and seniors, HIV-AIDS services, homeless shelters and transitional housing, settlement services, and much more.

Last July, a mass public movement against the cuts was

born after Ford brought in KPMG to prepare a list of services not mandated by provincial legislation to be cut in the 2012 budget. Over 300 individuals and organizations signed up to make presentations against the cuts, but only one day was set for the hearings which went through the night before adjourning at 7 am.

Stop the Cuts was formed, and demonstrations and public education and organization began across the city. The Labour Council became very visible as labour once again moved into the fray. One Toronto, a coalition of citizens and organizations concerned about arts, culture and democracy, moved into action, including Margaret Atwood (whom Doug Ford said he wouldn't know if she walked past him, and said she should run for public office if she had anything to say. Atwood had been very critical of the proposal to close public libraries.)

In early December, two days were set aside for public presentations to the Budget Committee, and once again almost 300 presenters signed up. Speaker after speaker laid out the horrendous impacts, begging or demanding that the proposed cuts be stopped. Doug Ford wrote a cheque for \$1,000 to one of the school food programs in his ward. The message wasn't missed: in future, charitable works will replace social programs in Toronto.

Progressive councillors tried to draw out presenters with questions about the services they were losing, but were cut short repeatedly by Budget Chair Mike Del Grande who said "You're wasting time!"

Communist Party (Ontario) leader Liz Rowley was escorted out of the building by security, for

proposing from the gallery that the Committee extend the hearings for a third day. The Party's presentation, subsequently delivered in writing to all members of Council, asserted the City's financial situation was a chronic problem of under-funding, not over-spending. The presentation urged Council to stop the cuts to services, negotiate a fair deal with its employees, and rejoin the campaign for a new financial deal for cities, once led by Toronto Mayor David Miller, and now by the Mayor of Calgary. Cities should receive adequate transfers through statutory grants, or be granted new wealth taxing powers in order to secure the funds to provide the services needed in 21st century cities. Further, 50% of gasoline and road user taxes should be returned to cities immediately, the Party said.

Many others said similar things, but none were heeded by the Budget Committee. The Stop the Cuts Committee, supported by the Labour Council, One Toronto, and other organizations have organized a mass demonstration against the budget for Jan. 17, 5:30 pm, at City Hall. Council is expected to vote on the budget on Jan. 17, 18, or 19.

The Communist Party is calling on all its members and supporters to come out on Jan. 17, to join workers on their picket lines, and to support them in every way possible, including through phone calls and letters to City Councillors and the Mayor, letters to the Editor, calls to phone-in radio and TV talk shows, and messages of support and solidarity.

This struggle will have repercussions across Canada for civic workers and their unions, and for cities and working people who want and depend on those services. This is a struggle for everyone. ●



People's Voice photo by Ed Bil

## Communist Party slams dismantling of Occupy Winnipeg campsite

The Communist Party has criticized the Manitoba NDP government for forcibly dismantling the Occupy Winnipeg campsite in Memorial Park and for illegally detaining the protesters in the camp.

"The Occupy movement in Winnipeg and around the world is exposing capitalism's enormous crime and greed, which continue today with impunity, protected by corporate-friendly governments," said a Dec. 21 statement by the Party's Manitoba Committee. "Because of its efforts, the Occupy movement is facing an often violent crackdown by governments which are acting in the interest of the top 1 per cent of income earners, who are benefiting enormously from present-day capitalism.

"The Manitoba government's

surprise action this morning is inexcusable and illegal. The excuse provided today by the Manitoba government for forcibly detaining the Occupy protesters and removing their belongings from the protest camp site is totally lame and is a cover for what amounts to a heavy blow to the democratic rights of all Manitobans.

"Thousands of people have visited or stayed at the campsite since it was set up in October and no one has been hurt by any 'hazards' identified by the Manitoba government. The right to protest and to freedom of expression must be respected by the Manitoba NDP government and the belongings returned immediately to the protesters. The government should apologize to the protesters for violating their

constitutional rights.

"Compared to the Mulroney Progressive Conservative government which allowed protesters to establish a Peace Camp which lasted two winters on Parliament Hill itself, Manitoba today has a less democratic government. The Manitoba NDP government treated the 2000 Peace Camp set up in Memorial Park in solidarity with the Esk nuopitijk (Burnt Church) First Nation in a completely differently manner.

"The Communist Party supports the right of the Occupy movement to continue camping in Memorial Park and to continue its activities which have already found wide support among the trade union and other popular movements in the province." ●

## NIAGARA NEWS BULLETIN

### People's Voice Niagara Bureau

\* **Four migrants from Caribbean and African countries** being held indefinitely at the Niagara Regional Detention Centre launched a rotating hunger strike to demand medical attention and due process for their release. A phone-in and petition campaign succeeded in getting them liberated from segregation, where they were confined for daring to strike about their conditions.

\* Three Mexican **farmworkers in Niagara have sued the federal government and their employer** as well as the go-between for being unfairly dismissed without due process. This is the first Charter rights lawsuit of its kind in Ontario, filed after an investigation by the Niagara Migrant Workers Interest Group, which includes the UFCW and newcomer organizations. The farmworkers claim their travel pay was improperly deducted twice, among other violations. The farm had received a provincial government award of \$50,000 shortly before firing the three workers.

\* Protesters marched as part of **International Day to End Violence Against Sex Workers** under slogans such as "sex work shouldn't equal murder" and held a memorial including a roll call for "stolen sisters".

\* **A patient died from bacterial infection** in the Niagara Falls hospital as part of a new outbreak, with six patients still suffering from hospital-acquired infections. A previous outbreak during the provincial election killed 37 patients. Nearby Welland has also declared an outbreak infecting eight patients and twelve workers, and two St. Catharines patients have died. Administration has repeatedly declared the crisis over, while workers and their unions warn the deaths will continue because of cuts in beds, staff, and services. At the other end of the region, at a coroner's inquest into the death of a teenager last winter, paramedics said that the closures of local emergency rooms create extra stress since they have to drive further to give care to patients.

\* Port Colborne **cut a Saturday bus service pilot project** as part of moves to reduce taxes by 0.5%, after the McGuinty Liberals failed to keep a promise to reverse the downloading of services by the former Conservative provincial government. Nearby Fort Erie is hiking bus fares 25%, part of which will go towards private profits as the local bus service is contracted out. ●



# COPE weighs up post-election strategies

## PV Vancouver Bureau

On election night in Vancouver, as losses for the Coalition of Progressive Electors became painfully clear, COPE supporters at the party's campaign office began wrestling with the results and considering the future.

For many, the emphasis is on looking forward. COPE has faced major setbacks before, such as the 1996 campaign which saw the defeat of every candidate. That outcome sparked a review of the labour/left civic party's strategy, leading to a successful campaign three years later, based on building broader electoral alliances.

Young community activists who have played a major role in rebuilding COPE in recent years quickly began discussing what comes next. With school trustee Allan Wong as the only COPE elected official, their focus is on moving into action around a wide range of urgent local issues, rather than immediately locking into a particular electoral tactic for 2014.

Among some others, one reaction was very different. Before anyone had an opportunity to examine poll-by-poll results, defeated council candidate Tim Louis was attacking the party's electoral cooperation agreement with Vision Vancouver. Speaking that night to the media, before the COPE executive or campaign team could weigh up the situation, Louis blamed COPE members for making a "tragic mistake" by voting 2-1 for the agreement with Vision, which he claimed had failed to urge its supporters to also vote COPE.

On the surface, the argument looks persuasive. The 18 Vision candidates for mayor, council, school board and park board all won, averaging some 60,000 votes. Only one of COPE's nine candidates was elected, and COPE candidates averaged 47,967.

But this analysis breaks down on closer examination. The fact is that for six years, Vision has claimed a larger share of voter support than COPE, the party from which it bolted back in 2004.

Reports from the campaign indicate that while many Vision and COPE voters fully backed each other's candidates, others did not. COPE itself may have contributed to this

development, by deciding during the initial campaign period to avoid listing Vision candidates or the joint slate on COPE materials. This was done to allow COPE to project a stronger independent image, appealing to voters who might have sharp disagreements with Vision's record running the city over the past three years.

Some COPE candidates disagreed with this strategy, which was shifted by early November. For the final two weeks of the campaign, both COPE and Vision materials and ads placed much more emphasis on the joint slate. The E-day "doorknocker" delivered to tens of thousands of likely supporters was a useful tool to promote the full slate.

But was it too late? At that point, the media had turned the contest into a head-to-head battle for the mayoralty between Vision's Gregor Robertson and the right-wing NPA candidate, Suzanne Anton. As Vision and the NPA poured vast amounts into print, TV and radio ads, COPE's strategy of trying to compete for media attention by focusing on policy proposals was drowned out.

Another factor was the splintering of progressive voters at the ballot box. This hurt COPE incumbent councillor Ellen Woodsworth, who lost to Green candidate Adriane Carr by just 91 votes. Many COPE-leaning voters also backed Carr, unwittingly defeating Woodsworth and depriving council of its most powerful radical voice.

Could COPE have achieved more by running full slates and a mayoralty candidate? This seems unlikely. A "go-it-alone" strategy would have cost COPE most of its financial and organizational support from the labour movement, which desperately wanted to block the NPA from regaining control of City Hall. COPE's election budget would have been far lower, there would have been no E-day doorknockers, and the number of volunteers would have been far lower than the 400 who formed the backbone of the COPE campaign.

Here are some facts and figures which will be weighed up as COPE members analyse the campaign.

Overall votes and turnout were up, from 120,000 (31%) in 2008 to 144,000 (34%) in 2011.

The gap between Vision and NPA candidates stayed constant. For Mayor, Robertson won over Anton by 77,005 to 58,152 in 2011 (and 4007 for Randy Helten of Neighbourhoods for a Sustainable Vancouver), compared to his 2008 margin of 67,598 to 48,794 against the NPA's Peter Ladner. These numbers also show that both the NPA and Vision votes went up considerably.

COPE also made gains in 2011, such as a 2700 vote increase for Woodsworth. At school board, COPE incumbent Jane Bouey

gained 3800 votes over 2008, followed by increases of 2900 for Al Blakey and 900 for the popular Allan Wong, the only COPE candidate who stayed ahead of the NPA.

For the four COPE incumbents (Woodsworth, Wong, Bouey, Blakey), the average vote was 52,362. For the first timers, the average was 43,331. The result for former councillor Tim Louis, 43,936, was far closer to the first-timers, even though Louis received enormous media coverage, including a front page of the *Georgia Straight* weekly.

David Cadman, the long-time COPE councillor who was defeated for a nomination this time, received 56,000 votes in 2008. Following the pattern of other COPE incumbents, he would have gained votes and been re-elected by a margin of over 8,000, probably helping to pull Woodsworth up into tenth place. That would have given COPE two

councillors instead of zero.

COPE first-time candidates like R.J. Aquino brought new activists and energy into the campaign. But this was not enough to overcome the disadvantage of lower name recognition in an at-large election dominated by massive media ads.

While Tim Louis drew some new and former COPE supporters into the race, his vote gain of 600 over his 2005 result was very small. Even some COPE supporters did not vote for Louis for various reasons, such as his enthusiastic support for the Fire This Time cult which has sown divisions on the left. It appears that COPE did not benefit from having Louis on the ballot, and lost significantly by dropping Cadman.

The COPE executive is still reviewing the results, and preparing to move towards a more grassroots action strategy now that the political balance of forces has changed in Vancouver. ●

# COPE

## Communists call for big changes in British Columbia

### PV Vancouver Bureau

As the clock ticks towards a May 2013 provincial election, British Columbia Communists held their 39th convention in Vancouver over the first weekend of December.

Much of the convention debate was focused on a Political Resolution which analyses the main economic and social trends in the province after eleven years of Liberal rule. The Resolution stresses that "the political, economic and social environment in British Columbia must be viewed within the Canadian state, and where it fits into the wider context of the deepening systemic crisis of capitalism globally."

By the time that crisis erupted in 2008, British Columbia had already been squeezed by "free trade" deals into even deeper dependence on the export of unprocessed resources. The last two decades have seen the closure of hundreds of sawmills, a serious decline in shipbuilding, and closures of pulp and paper factories. This economic shift has been matched by major job losses, escalating deficits and debts, and under the Liberals, by "an orchestrated shift of wealth from 80% of the population to the top 20% who were either corporations or top feeders living off the corporate plunder of the economy and the environment."

One of the main policy goals of ex-premier Gordon Campbell was to remove most elements of progressive taxation. Campbell's tax cuts gave huge benefits to the wealthy and the big corporations, while middle and low-income earners saw their tax cuts swallowed up by regressive changes such as increased Medical Service Plan premiums and user fees.

As the Political Resolution points out, these changes have also reduced provincial revenues by an estimated \$3.4 billion per year. This deliberate revenue

reduction has been used by the Liberals to dramatically reduce spending on social programs, education and health care as a percentage of the provincial GDP. The targets of this reduction, not surprisingly, are organized public sector employees, poor people, students, seniors, and other sections of the population who are not part of the "1%" upper crust.

The BCLiberals' grip on power was finally shaken by the popular revolt against the HST in 2009. This hated tax, imposed without warning on British Columbians, marks yet another shift of wealth and income from the pockets of working people to big capital. But in a unique development, citizens used the province's initiative legislation to force a referendum on the HST. This upsurge of popular anger also compelled Campbell to resign in disgrace in late 2010.

Since then, his replacement Christy Clark has tried "populist" tactics to revive Liberal fortunes, with little success. Nearly 55% of B.C. voters rejected the HST, with the highest margin among working people and economically depressed areas. Opinion polls show the Liberals trailing the NDP by ten points or more, and the re-energized provincial Conservatives gaining ground,

which could divide right-wing votes and let the NDP sail to victory.

As the Resolution points out, "The NDP under the leadership of Adrian Dix might be able to shed some of (former leader) Carole James' image with big business and the main antagonists of the BC working class, especially with the call to roll back the last few years of Campbell's corporate tax cuts. However there's a problem with this, because even in pre-Campbell days the corporate taxes weren't enough and the system was skewed against working people."

In contrast to the NDP strategy of tinkering to reduce the impact of the Campbell legacy, the B.C. Communists are preparing to advance policy alternatives calling for fundamental change: "Make the corporations pay, regain ownership of resources, put the wealth to work for the people, create jobs and fight for a proportional representation system."

The Resolution calls for a new and truly progressive taxation system; major changes to resource policies, such as an end to anti-environmental "fracking" by the energy industry; action to defend and expand universal public healthcare, public education and child care; reversal of privatization; and an end to government attacks on the labour movement.

On the second day of the convention, delegates elected a new 15-member BC Provincial Committee of the Communist Party, and re-elected Sam Hammond as the party's provincial secretary and electoral leader.

The Provincial Committee will meet in late February to finalize editing of the Political Resolution and other reports, and to launch plans for expanded communist activity across British Columbia over the next year. ●



BC Communist leader Sam Hammond at a union rally.

**OUR STORY**  
Stuff they don't tell

**Jobless "occupy" Vancouver**

The Occupy movement isn't new. In 1935 the Depression was six years old and the unemployed wanted jobs not welfare. Breaking out of B.C. "relief" camps in organized divisions they made for Vancouver. Settling in Victory Square, they demanded real jobs, and repeal of vagrancy laws. For six weeks, with wide support, the men demonstrated until they negotiated an orderly evacuation and headed On-to-Ottawa on CPR freight trains.

.....  
1935: The trek was stopped by a brutal police riot in Regina.

© Williams 4/11



# EDITORIALS

## Attawapiskat: colonialism on trial

The revelations of appalling living standards in the northern Ontario community of Attawapiskat tell us more about the genocidal nature of Canadian racism and colonialism than about any so-called "failures" of aboriginal leaders. For many years, Aboriginal groups have told Canadians about abysmal housing, lack of clean drinking water, high unemployment and poor educational standards on reserves across the country. But instead of taking decisive action to promote Aboriginal living standards and genuine self-government, Canadian politicians have consistently stepped back from doing the right thing. Baby steps towards tackling the needs of First Nations are invariably followed by refusals to live up to treaties and campaign promises. The traditional lands and waters of Aboriginal peoples remain a source of vast wealth for transnational corporations, while the people themselves suffer Third World levels of poverty.

The racist claim that the Attawapiskat scandal somehow "proves" that Aboriginal peoples are incapable of managing their own affairs is a particularly vile accusation. The Harper Tories immediately called in a third-party manager to make decisions for the community, for a huge fee, of course. The "manager" was kicked out, but this episode raises a question: how can a government which plans to waste nearly \$500 billion on military purchases over the next 20 years accuse an Aboriginal community of misspending and lack of transparency?

It is not the Aboriginal peoples who drove millions of Canadians into poverty and unemployment, or who sold out Canada's industry and sovereignty for a quick buck. That historic failure was the work of our own ruling class, who have no right to point fingers at anyone, especially the peoples whose lands were stolen to lay the basis for Canadian capitalism. It's long past time to redress the historic injustices imposed on Aboriginal peoples in Canada, starting with decent housing and clean water on reserves across the country.

## Support call to save Medicare

The Canadian Health Coalition has is seeking widespread support for its updated Call to Care statement, which articulates a common vision for the future of health care, as governments prepare to renegotiate the renewal of the Health Accord in 2014.

As the Call reminds us, "Health care in Canada is a fundamental right without distinction of race, gender, age, religion, sexual orientation, political belief, immigration status, and economic or social condition," and organizations must mobilize to defend this right.

The CHC urges that important principles shape the Health Accord renewal, including: recognition of the highest attainment of health as a fundamental right; recognition that Aboriginal people must be at the table of First Ministers discussions on the Health Accord; recognition of health care as a public good for which no financial barriers must be erected, and which must be delivered on a public, not-for-profit basis; opposition to any commercialization and privatization of health care; the need for the federal government to fully assume its responsibilities in respect to health; expansion of the system to include a universal Pharmacare plan, a system of home and community care, long-term care, and a strategy for mental health; the need to move towards a community-based, multi-disciplinary team approach to the organization and delivery of services; accountability through democratic participation and transparent governance at all levels of the health system; recognition that decent wages and working conditions for health care workers are critical to a high quality system.

We urge all labour and people's organizations to sign on to this statement, which can be found at [www.healthcoalition.ca](http://www.healthcoalition.ca).

## PEOPLE'S VOICE

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

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

### Volunteers and contributors for this issue:

Dave Arland, Ed Bil, Chris Bird, Wally Brooker,  
Sean Burton, Miguel Figueroa, Sam Hammond,  
Darrell Rankin, Liz Rowley, Saleh Waziruddin,  
and our mailers in Vancouver & Toronto.

Editor: Kimball Cariou Business Manager: Sam Hammond

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

## LETTERS

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

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



## SPEAKING FRANKLY

## EI, the 99%, the 1%, and the widening gap

### PV Commentary

As many activists have pointed out, the Occupy movement continues to have a huge political impact, even though most of the tent cities have been removed by the ruling class. Beyond the matter of who decides where poor people can live and protest, the issues posed by Occupy remain: what is the source of staggering inequality in our society, and what can be done to change this situation?

Claims by Canada's right-wing politicians that "there are no serious problems" here are utterly false. A recent analysis from the OECD (a key institution of global capitalism) finds that the gap between Canada's rich and poor is growing. The OECD says that income inequality is at a record high among industrialized (read "developed capitalist") nations, and that the gap in both Canada and the U.S. is well above the 34-country average.

In Canada, the chasm has been widening since the mid-1990s, when the Chretien Liberals began slashing the social safety net. By 2008, the average income of the top 10 percent of Canadians was \$103,500, compared to \$10,260 for those in the bottom 10 percent. This ratio has widened to 10-to-1 from the 8-to-1 figure of the early 1990s. Moreover, the richest 1 percent of Canadians saw their share of total income grow to 13.3% in 2007, up from 8.1% in 1980. At the same time, the top federal marginal

income tax rates tumbled to 29% in 2010, from 43% in 1981.

The wider gap is largely due to deliberate steps by the ruling class to remove the redistributive impact of taxes and social benefits, which had previously cushioned the effect of unemployment. The growth of part-time and temporary contract work is also eroding wage levels, as is the shift to "self-employment".

As the OECD reports, before the mid-1990s, Canada's tax-benefit system offset more than 70% of the rise of market-income inequality. Today, taxes and benefits offset less than 40% of the rise in inequality.

Similar findings emerge from other sources. A September 2011 study by the Conference Board of Canada said that income inequality has risen more rapidly in Canada than in the U.S. since the mid-1990s, and that among 18 major countries, Canada had the fourth-largest increase in inequality since the mid-1990s.

This is not just an abstract problem, it's a matter of life and death. Montreal's public health agency has found an 11-year difference in life expectancy between men who live in the city's poorest neighbourhood and those in its richest.

Instead of trying to reverse this deadly trend, the Harper Tories are consciously making things worse for working people. One scandalous example is the ruthless slashing of employees at Services

Canada, those who are responsible for ensuring the flow of employment insurance benefits to jobless Canadians.

Just four years ago, in October 2007, 181,931 unemployed Canadians were waiting for EI claims to be processed, according to information published by the *Globe and Mail*. By October 2011, that number had skyrocketed to 360,481, which may seriously underestimate the real total. Some economists pin the actual figure by the end of 2011 at nearly 500,000.

This trend directly parallels a 13% decline in temporary and permanent staff in EI processing centres since October 2007. While hundreds of additional processing agents were hired during the economic crisis of 2008 and 2009, these employees and others have been let go without being replaced.

The result is catastrophic for jobless workers, many of whom are

see EI/GAP, page 11

## Renew today!

### Check your label

Please check the address label on the front page to see if it's time to renew. Subscribers who find "2012/01/01" on their label, for example, will have their subscriptions expire with this issue, January 1-31, 2012

Don't miss a single copy - renew today!

## REDS ON THE WEB

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

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

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

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



# Durban deal "locks in climate disaster"

## Special to PV

Negotiators wrapped up UN climate change talks in Durban on Dec. 11 with a deal committing all countries to negotiate a legally enforceable treaty on cutting pollution by 2015. Under a compromise brokered between the European Union and India, the treaty restricting greenhouse gas emissions will come into force from 2020.

The conference established a "green climate fund" to channel billions of dollars to poor countries, but failed to identify where the cash would come from.

Environmental groups fear that a delayed deal will lock in "dangerous" climate change, and warn that negotiators failed to show the ambition necessary to cut emissions by levels that would limit global temperature rises to no more than 2 degrees Celsius.

Keith Allott, head of climate change at World Wildlife Fund-UK, said: "Governments have salvaged a path forward for negotiations but we must be under no illusion - the outcome of Durban leaves us with the prospect of being legally bound to a world of 4 degrees warming. This would be catastrophic for people and the natural world."

Friends of the Earth (FoE) executive director Andy Atkins added: "The UN climate change process is still alive, but this empty shell of a plan leaves the planet

hurtling towards catastrophic climate change."

"On the eve of the climate talks, hundreds of families in Durban lost their homes and some even their lives in devastating flooding," pointed out FoE. "From the Horn of Africa to Thailand to Venezuela to the small island state of Tuvalu, hundreds of millions of people are bearing the brunt of the climate crisis they did not create. The lack of progress in Durban means that we are even closer to a future catastrophic 4 to 6 degrees Celsius of warming, which would condemn most of Africa and the small island states to climate catastrophe and devastate the lives and livelihoods of millions more around the world."

Friends of the Earth blames the U.S., Canada, Japan, New Zealand, Russia, Australia and New Zealand for trying to escape their legal and moral obligation to act first and fastest to cut emissions. The European Union, heralded by some as a climate leader, was a key architect of the new "Durban Platform" that will delay action for a decade and deliver a weaker, less effective system than the Kyoto Protocol.

The EU's strategy in Durban was to split the group of developing countries and force emerging economies like India and China, with hundreds of millions of people still below the poverty line, to take on unfair responsibilities for tackling the climate crisis. The EU also blocked progress in closing

loopholes in existing emissions targets, and was the principle driver of the push to expand destructive carbon trading.

The huge influence of corporate polluters and other corporate and financial vested interests over the positions of governments is the underlying reason why Durban's outcome was so disastrous, says Friends of the Earth. "The pressure and influence of these interest groups undermines the ability of ordinary citizens and civil society to hold our governments to account for their action on climate and their positions in the international climate negotiations."

Many negotiators expressed growing concerns as the talks progressed. The Africa Group (comprising the 54 countries in Africa), India, Venezuela, Bolivia, the Philippines, Thailand, Malaysia, Nicaragua and a number of small island states all pushed back against the destructive proposals being advanced.

But these countries were coerced into accepting a "take it or leave it" package to save the Kyoto Protocol and the Green Climate Fund. One of the most vocal critics, India, caved at the last minute to demands by the US and other developed countries to exclude provisions to safeguard an equitable approach to tackling the climate crisis.

As Durban wrapped up, the Harper Conservative government

announced that Canada will exit from the Kyoto Protocol.

"Harper's wait-and-see climate policy is just as ridiculous as saying, we're going to wait for that big truck in the next lane to start driving safely before we start driving safely," said Maude Barlow, National Chairperson of the Council of Canadians. "The Harper government has transformed Canada into a serial laggard on the most pressing issue of our times, addressing climate change, which is severely damaging our

international reputation."

While Kyoto is not perfect, according to the Council, at least it is legally binding and has clear benchmarks: "Canada leaving the Kyoto Protocol is not about achieving an agreement that keeps all polluters accountable, it is about allowing business as usual in Canada through an unaccountable deal with voluntary emission reduction targets and more loopholes."

(With files from the Morning Star, Britain) ●



Security personnel form a cordon as protesting environmental activists attempt to gain access to the plenary session of the U.N. Climate Change Conference (COP17) in Durban.

## Deadly greenhouse gas emissions in Arctic region

According to a Dec. 13 article in the British *Independent* newspaper, "dramatic and unprecedented plumes of methane - a greenhouse gas 20 times more potent than carbon dioxide - have been seen bubbling to the surface of the Arctic Ocean by scientists undertaking an extensive survey of the region."

The news may have dramatic implications for efforts to cut greenhouse gas emissions, which are a key factor in global warming and other aspects of climate change. The methane release was discovered by Igor Semiletov, the head of a Russian research team who has been surveying the seabed of the East Siberian Arctic Shelf for nearly 20 years.

"This is the first time that we've found continuous, powerful and impressive seeping structures, more than 1,000 metres in diameter. It's amazing," said Dr. Semiletov, who is a member of the Russian Academy of Sciences. "I was most impressed by the sheer scale and high density of the plumes. Over a relatively small area we found more than 100, but over a wider area there should be thousands of them."

Scientists estimate that hundreds of millions of tonnes of methane gas are locked beneath the permafrost, which extends into the seabed of the East Siberian Arctic Shelf. With the disappearance of the Arctic sea ice in summer, and rising temperatures which are melting the Siberian permafrost, the trapped methane could be suddenly released into the atmosphere, leading to rapid and severe climate change.

Semiletov's team published a study in 2010 estimating that the methane emissions from this region were about eight million tonnes a year. Their latest expedition suggests the phenomenon may be far larger. Last summer, the Russian research vessel *Academician Lavrentiev* surveyed about 26,000 square kilometers. Scientists deployed instruments to monitor plumes of methane bubbles rising to the surface. The team carried out checks at about 115 stationary points, discovering methane fields on a vast scale. Some plumes were a kilometre or more wide, and the emissions went directly into the atmosphere, with concentrations 100 times higher than normal. ●

# Bauman ruling tries to strike a better balance

## By Kimball Cariou

The legal ruling on Canada's law banning polygamy, handed down by BC Supreme Court Chief Justice Robert Bauman on Nov. 23, continues to draw both praise and criticism. Bauman was rendering a highly complex decision on matters which seem related, but are actually very different.

Written in 1890 to target Mormon settlers, S. 293 of the Criminal Code has been unenforced for decades. This vague but sweeping statute provides up to five years in prison for more than two people who are in "any kind of conjugal union."

The case was launched to test the validity of S. 293 as a tool to address the practices of the patriarchal FLDS Mormon cult based in Bountiful, British Columbia. But the broad scope of the legislation means that it could potentially be used by the state to criminalize large numbers of Canadians who are "guilty" of nothing more than non-monogamous sexual activity, or of participating in family forms which differ from the model promoted by the capitalist state and many religious outlooks.

The Bauman ruling will likely be appealed, perhaps directly up to the Supreme Court of Canada. But it would be unfortunate if a lengthy appeal process delayed prosecutions of the Bountiful patriarchs. The evidence presented to Justice Bauman, and the long history of the FLDS cult in Canada

and the U.S., makes it clear that the "plural marriage" Mormon doctrine has long become a convenient cover for a shocking pattern of child rape. The beneficiaries have been a handful of powerful men who supply themselves with "celestial wives" to satisfy their desires for sex with young girls. Other victims include the young non-elite males of Bountiful, who are poorly educated, and often must leave their homes and families to seek employment and the chance of normal human relationships.

The Bountiful cult is supported financially by the taxpayers of British Columbia, who have unwillingly subsidized the FLDS religious schools for many years. This scandal is a clarion call to end public funding of private religious schools, which violates the principle of separation of church and state. Those who engage in child sex abuse must be prosecuted under relevant Canadian legislation, and the Bauman ruling helps establish that the human rights of women, youth and children trump "religious beliefs".

The Bountiful cult is an extreme form of patriarchal control over women and children. On one level, this form of "polygamy" parallels the social system under which we live. Capitalism is also a form of human relations based on control by a tiny minority of (mostly male) bosses, who impose a range of forms of exploitation on working people. Unfortunately, the Bountiful abuses have sometimes been lumped together with ideas

and practices which are the opposite of patriarchy.

To give one example, a literal reading of S. 293 would seem to open the prosecution of individuals who practise non-monogamous forms of family relations commonly known as polyamory. Such people reject the patriarchal control of women which is sometimes reinforced through marriage, the very institution which Justice Bauman presents as a "core value" of western society.

This part of the ruling raises troublesome questions. Just because a social institution has ideological hegemony, is it above criticism? Given the figures regarding divorce rates, infidelity, violence, and abuse within families, the monogamous nuclear family model is no guarantee for happiness. As Frederick Engels recognized, the subordination of wives and the shift towards the nuclear family from larger kin networks were associated with the historic development of private property.

Other family forms must be considered on their own merits. The Canadian Polyamory Advocacy Association (CPAA) was a key intervenor in the case, arguing that many polyamorous women, as well as men, freely choose to have more than one partner. They fear that the wording of the 120-year-old statute might be used to criminalize egalitarian, secular, long-term relationships. Justice Bauman's decision clarifies that S. 293 does not apply to

unformalized polyamorous relationships, although other questions are left unresolved.

"Polyamorists are relieved they can be in loving, egalitarian, conjugal relationships without criminal sanction," said CPAA legal counsel, John Ince. "Polyamorists who are dealing with immigration or family custody issues for instance now need no longer worry about being considered to be criminals".

In the CPAA's view, the real issue is not the number of people in any given relationship; the health of the relationship and family is what matters.

This should be the focus of

debate if and when Parliament rewrites polygamy laws. Will a new law be used to impose certain narrow religious precepts on the entire population, at the expense of those who establish non-traditional but freely-chosen relationships? Given the influence of fundamentalist views within the Harper Tory caucus, this could pose serious implications.

In the meantime, the Bauman ruling, on balance, advances the rights of Canadians to be protected against patriarchal exploitation, while also beginning to recognize that adults should not be punished for choosing to love more than one partner. ●



# To identify the problem is not enough: CPC

*Excerpt from the contribution of the Communist Party of Canada to the 13th Meeting of Communist & Workers' Parties, Dec. 9-11, 2011, presented by Miguel Figueroa on behalf of the Central Executive Committee, CPC*

Concerning the current crisis. It is especially intense, global and all-sided not only because the onset of the cyclical crisis of relative over-production was artificially delayed as a result of neoliberal policies, financial speculation, the rise of fictitious capital, etc., but also because it is merging with intractable structural crises of the system, not least of which is the growing environmental crisis.

This confirms that capitalism is fast approaching its historical limits - perhaps more rapidly than even we Communists had anticipated - and also helps to explain why traditional bourgeois mechanisms



## Communist Party of Canada

of regulating and overcoming the crisis are increasingly ineffective, and why the resulting ruling class response to the crisis is more socially brutal, more militaristic, more dangerous to all humanity than during previous rounds of crisis - at least since the end of WW II. The objective "space" for



*Cultural performance in Athens during the 13th annual meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties. (Photo: <http://solidnet.org>)*

reformist "solutions" is evermore restricted. This is the objective basis for the deepening crisis and bankruptcy of the social democratic 'alternative' today.

While the contradictions underpinning this rotten system are more mature than ever before, laying the objective conditions necessary for the revolutionary leap to socialism, we must acknowledge that the subjective factors for transformation are lagging far behind in many if not most of our countries, especially in most of the advanced capitalist states including Canada.

The capitalist offensive against the social, economic and political advances and rights of the working class and its allies, the growing social disparities, the increasing state repression, etc. - all these developments are giving rise to increasing anger among working people, to the loss of bourgeois political legitimacy, and even to the growth of anti-capitalist sentiments.

And yet for the most part, the

working class - even within its most organized sections - is not yet prepared to embrace the socialist alternative, much less actively fight for it, to rally to the Communist parties, etc. In general we know the reasons for this growing divide, this contradiction between the objective and subjective factors for revolutionary advance - the increased sophistication of bourgeois ideological instruments of social control, of its use of racism, sexism, narrow nationalism, religious extremism to cloud and divert class consciousness; of the particularly pernicious use of anti-communism and the systematic dissemination of lies and distortions about socialism past and present to scare the workers away from the socialist alternative, and so on.

But to identify the problem - including our own subjective weaknesses and failings as a movement in this regard - this is hardly enough, comrades. We need to undertake a far more rigorous study of the problem of the

formation of social and class consciousness in the current conditions, and most importantly, how best to counteract bourgeois ideological influences on our class, and make a more skilful and compelling case for socialism as the only alternative to capitalism, as the necessary and desirable

alternative to capitalism. And we need to develop new and creative ways to make that case. Simply repeating over and over again slogans about the "superiority of socialism" just won't suffice. Perhaps we can make this a topic for a future meeting, or better yet, organize a special international conference around this theme.

Finally, a few words about these meetings. At the risk of repetition, we appeal again to all parties - and especially those parties in the Working Group - to give concentrated attention to improving the format for these annual gatherings. A great deal of time, energy and resources go into convening this international assembly every year, and we must find better ways to ensure that they are as purposeful and productive as possible - for instance by finding more time for targeted discussions and constructive debate on some of the big theoretical and practical challenges we face, more time for discussion and planning of joint actions, more time for regional caucuses, and so on. We are confident that this can be achieved. ●

## Fight to save Wheat Board not over

By Darrell Rankin

The fight to save the Canadian Wheat Board may need to change into a broader fight to save the family farm across Canada.

The Harper government is claiming victory in its effort to deliver the sale of wheat and barley produced in Western Canada from the control of farmers into the clutches of the giant global grain corporations. A legal challenge in mid-January may still block the legislation, but the Tories are planning to end the few remaining "supply management" programs that protect smaller farms right across Canada by means of new free trade agreements.

Harper's CWB law ignores the wishes of the majority of farmers who supported keeping the CWB (62%), and the fact that more than 60 per cent of Canadians voted in the last election for parties which respect the views of farmers.

The fight to block the attack on Western Canadian farmers grew since the day after the May 2 election, when Agriculture Minister Gerry Ritz reversed his six-week-old promise to respect farmer wishes. By mid-November, friends of the Wheat Board were able to enlist 46 groups to sign a letter urging Ottawa to respect farmer wishes before making any changes to the CWB. The list included the Canadian Labour Congress, and twelve other union bodies. At the end of November, the Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba federations of labour issued a joint statement in support of the CWB.

The movement to save the CWB has seen a wide range of tactics, including legal challenges, lobbying, interrupting the House of Commons from the visitor's gallery, and rallies.

All of these efforts are helping to build the coalitions needed to defeat the Harper Conservatives in the next election, including in the prairie provinces. A longer term issue is the need to develop stronger policies to defend the family farm. Thousands of smaller farms may be wiped out, consolidating the position of larger, corporate wheat farms.

Meanwhile, there have been several suspicious fires destroying property on pro-CWB farms in Saskatchewan. In one case, fires destroyed a pro-CWB sign and later machinery worth a quarter million dollars.

The Communist Party was also attacked in the House of Commons Committee hearings on the CWB bill for handing out leaflets at the large meetings of farmers held last summer. ●



*An ad hoc coalition in support of the Wheat Board picketed in Winnipeg on November 15. About 100 people attended, including the Manitoba Federation of Labour, Canadian Union of Postal Workers, the Council of Canadians, the National Farmers Union, and Friends of the CWB.*

## BC Communists call for solidarity with teachers

*Resolution in support of the BC Teachers' Federation, adopted unanimously at 39th B.C. Provincial Convention of the Communist Party of Canada, Dec. 3-4, 2011*

It is very clear that the BC provincial Liberal government has been provoking the BC Teachers' Federation (BCTF) to a full strike, so that they can impose a legislated contract. Aside from the net zero mandate, the BC Public School Employers Association (BCPSEA) has put a series of union busting proposals forward.

The latest set of BCPSEA proposals calls for further stripping of the BCTF collective agreement and includes (amongst a host of provocative proposals) the virtual elimination of seniority, the elimination of postings filled during the year (teachers to be placed by the employer), forced transfers of any employee at the initiative of

the employer, elimination of a grievance process for disputes in posting, in filling, elimination of processes during discipline and dismissal, caps and restrictions on sick leave, and maternity leave, and substantial restriction to professional autonomy. The employer has offered no improvement to any provision. The Labour Relations Board has turned down BCPSEA's outrageous demand for a 15% reduction in teachers' pay, and their claim that report cards were an essential service.

The recently announced BC Education Plan, the province's vision for education in the 21st Century - assumes contractual changes not yet agreed to by teachers. It is clear that the provincial government - rather than dealing with the Supreme Court's decision re the illegality of the contract stripping of Bills 27 and 28 - is intent on steamrolling an agenda that will increase corporate influence in schools, diminish democratic control by school boards, and

severely weaken the BCTF.

The attack on the BCTF should be a major cause for concern by the labour movement.

The Communist Party of BC condemns the provincial government and BCPSEA for its unwillingness to fairly bargain with teachers. We call on the provincial government to provide a massive infusion of funding into the woefully underfunded education system; to end the net-zero mandate; to expand the scope of local bargaining, and provide the necessary funding for that expansion; to drop the provocative demands that undermine basic union rights such as seniority; to seriously address the Supreme Court's decision re the illegality of Bills 27 and 28 and to begin to bargain fairly with the BCTF.

The Communist Party also declares solidarity with BCTF in whatever actions it takes to protect its members and further the interests of BC children, youth and parents. ●



# SOCIALISM IS THE FUTURE!

We salute from Athens the growing popular struggles releasing huge emancipatory potential against imperialism, against capitalist exploitation and oppression, and for the social, labour and social security rights of workers' all over the world.

The meeting was held in critical conditions in which the deep and prolonged capitalist crisis continues to prevail in the international situation, accompanied by the escalation of the aggressiveness of imperialism which is expressed in the decisions of the Lisbon Summit for the new NATO strategy. This reality confirms the analyses outlined in the statements of the 10th, 11th, 12th, International Meetings that took place in Brazil (Sao Paolo) in 2008, India (New Delhi) in 2009 and South Africa (Tshwane) in 2010.

It becomes increasingly obvious for millions of working people that the crisis is a crisis of the system. It is not faults within the system but the system itself that is faulty, generating regular and periodic crises. It results from the sharpening of the main contradiction of capitalism between the social character of production and the private capitalist appropriation and not from any version of the management policy of the system or from any aberration based on the greed of some bankers or other capitalists or from the lack of effective regulatory mechanisms. It highlights the historical boundaries of capitalism and the need to strengthen the struggles for anti-monopoly anti-capitalist ruptures, the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism.

In the USA, Japan, the EU, and in other capitalist economies the impasses of the various versions of the bourgeois management are being demonstrated. On the one hand the restrictive political line leads to a prolonged and deep recession; on the other, the expansionist political management, with large state support packages to the monopoly groups, finance capital, and the banks, intensifies inflation and leads to the swelling of the public debt. Capitalism converts corporate insolvencies into sovereign insolvencies. Capitalism has no other response to the crisis beyond the mass destruction of productive forces, resources, mass dismissals, factory closures, and the comprehensive attack on workers and trade union rights, on wages, pensions, social security, the reduction in people's income, the huge increase in

**Statement issued by the 13th International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties, held in Athens on December 9-11, 2011. The meeting was attended by representatives from 78 Parties from 59 countries; other parties which did not manage to take part sent written messages. The Communist Party of Canada was represented in Athens by CPC leader Miguel Figueroa.**

unemployment and poverty.

The anti-people offensive is strengthening which is manifested with particular intensity in certain regions. The concentration and centralization of monopoly capital is intensifying the reactionary character of economic and political power. Capitalist restructuring and privatisations are being promoted, aiming at competitiveness and maximisation of profit of capital, at ensuring a cheaper labour force and the regression of decades in terms of social and labour rights.

The intensity of the crisis, its global synchronisation, the prospect of the slow, weak recovery intensify the difficulties of the bourgeois forces in managing the crisis, leading to the sharpening of the inter-imperialist contradictions and rivalries while the danger of imperialist wars is being strengthened.

The attacks on democratic rights and sovereignty are intensifying in many countries. Political systems become more reactionary. Anti-communism is being reinforced. There are generalised measures against the activity of the communist and workers' parties, against the trade union, political and democratic freedoms. The ruling classes develop a multi faceted attempt to trap the people's discontent through changes in the political systems, through the utilisation of a series of pro-imperialist NGOs and other organizations, through attempts to channel the people's discontent into movements with allegedly non-political or even with reactionary characteristics.

We salute the people's and workers extensive struggles and uprisings, for democratic, social and political rights against the anti-people regimes in the Middle East and North Africa, namely in Tunisia and Egypt. Despite the contradictions which the current situation manifests, it constitutes a significant experience that the communist movement should study and utilise. Simultaneously we strongly condemn the imperialist war of NATO and the EU against the Libyan people and

the threats and interference in the internal affairs of Syria and Iran, as well as of any other country. We consider that every foreign intervention against Iran under whatever pretext attacks the interests of the Iranian workers and their struggles for democratic freedoms, social justice and social rights.

These developments confirm the necessity of strengthening the Communist and Workers' Parties in order to play their historical role, to further strengthen the workers and people's struggle in defence of their rights and aspirations, to utilise the contradictions of the system and the inter-imperialist contradictions for an overthrow at the level of power and economy, for the satisfaction of people's needs. Without the leading role of the communist and workers parties and the vanguard class, the working class, the peoples will be vulnerable to confusion, assimilation and manipulation by the political forces that represent the monopolies, finance capital and imperialism.

Significant realignments in the international correlation of forces are under way. There is the ongoing relative weakening of the position of the USA, the general productive stagnation in the most advanced capitalist economies and the emergence of new global economic powers, notably China. The tendency for the increase of contradictions is strengthening, between the imperialist centres, and of these with the so-called emerging economies.

Imperialist aggressiveness intensifies. There are already several regional points of tension and wars and they are multiplying: in Asia and Africa, in the Middle East with the increasing aggressiveness of Israel particularly against the Palestinian people. At the same time we note the rising of neo-Nazi and xenophobic forces in Europe, the multifaceted interventions, threats and the offensive against the people's movements and the progressive political forces in Latin America. Militarization is being reinforced. The risk for a general conflagration at a regional level becomes even greater. In this sense the expansion and strengthening of the anti-imperialist social and political front and the struggles for peace in the direction of eradicating the causes of imperialist wars are fundamental.

There are two paths of development:

- the capitalist path, the path of the exploitation of the peoples which creates great dangers for imperialist wars, for workers', people's democratic rights
- and the path of liberation with immense possibilities for the promotion of the interests of the workers and the peoples, for the

achievement of social justice, people's sovereignty, peace and progress. The path of the workers' and people's struggles, the path of socialism and communism, which is historically necessary.

Thanks to the decisive contribution of the communists and the class oriented trade-union movement the workers' struggles in Europe and all over the world were further strengthened. Imperialist aggressiveness continues to meet resolute popular resistance in the Middle East, Asia, Africa and Latin America. This fact, along with experience accumulated so far especially in Latin America, the struggles and the processes that take place demonstrate the possibilities of resistance, of class

Communist and Workers' Parties, of the communist youth organizations and the anti-imperialist organizations in which the communists have an important contribution constitutes one of the most reliable elements for the expansion of the anti-imperialist struggle and the strengthening of the anti-imperialist front.

The ideological struggle of the communist movement is of vital importance in order to defend and develop scientific socialism, to repulse contemporary anti-communism, to confront bourgeois ideology, anti-scientific theories and opportunist currents which reject the class struggle; combat the role of social democratic forces that defend and implement anti-



At the podium is Aleka Papatrifa, general secretary of the Communist Party of Greece (KKE), which hosted the meeting of communist and workers' parties in Athens.

struggle, in order for the peoples to make steps forward, to gain ground inflicting blows to imperialism when they have as their goal the overthrow of imperialist barbarity.

We salute the workers' and people's struggles and note the need to further strengthen them. The conditions demand the intensification of the class struggle, of the ideological, political, mass struggle in order to impede the anti-people measures and promote goals of struggle that meet the contemporary people's needs; demand an organized workers' counterattack for anti-monopoly and anti-imperialist ruptures, for the overthrow of capitalism putting an end to the exploitation of man by man.

Today the conditions are ripe for the construction of wide social anti-monopoly and anti-imperialist alliances, capable of defeating the multifaceted imperialist offensive and aggression and of fighting for power and promoting deep, radical, revolutionary changes. Working class unity, the organisation and the class orientation of the labour movement are fundamental factors in ensuring the construction of effective social alliances with the peasantry, the urban middle class strata, the women's movement and youth movement.

In this struggle the role of the communist and workers' parties at national, regional and international level and the strengthening of their cooperation are indispensable. The joint coordinated activity of the

people and pro-imperialist policies by supporting the strategy of capital and imperialism. The understanding of the unified character of the duties of the struggle for social, national and class emancipation, for the distinct promotion of the socialist alternative requires the ideological counteroffensive of the communist movement.

The overthrow of capitalism and the construction of socialism constitute an imperative need for the peoples. In view of the capitalist crisis and its consequences the international experiences and practice of the socialist construction prove the superiority of socialism. We underline our solidarity with the peoples who struggle for socialism and are involved in the construction of socialism.

Only socialism can create the conditions for the eradication of wars, unemployment, hunger, misery, illiteracy, the uncertainty of hundreds of millions of people, the destruction of the environment. Only socialism creates the conditions for development according to the contemporary needs of the workers.

Working people, farmers, urban and rural workers, women, young people, we call on you to struggle together to put an end to this capitalist barbarity. There is hope, there is a prospect. The future belongs to socialism.

SOCIALISM IS THE FUTURE!  
Athens, December 11, 2011

**"It becomes increasingly obvious for millions of working people that the crisis is a crisis of the system. It is not faults within the system but the system itself that is faulty, generating regular and periodic crises. It results from the sharpening of the main contradiction of capitalism between the social character of production and the private capitalist appropriation, not from any version of the management policy of the system or from any aberration based on the greed of some bankers or other capitalists or from the lack of effective regulatory mechanisms."**

**For reports and photos of the Athens meeting, visit [www.solidnet.org](http://www.solidnet.org)**





# GLOBAL CLASS STRUGGLE

## End of Freeport strike delayed

A return to work following a three month strike against Freeport McMoran Copper & Gold in Indonesia was delayed in late December by a dispute with contractor PT Kuala Pelabuhan Indonesia (KPI). The union representing the Freeport miners is seeking guarantees that workers who took part in the strike will not be penalised. The delay pushed back the planned early January resumption of full operations at the world's second-biggest copper mine, on Papua island.

"There's no mobilisation today. If there's no mobilisation, automatically there's no work. Principally we're just waiting now for KPI," union spokesperson Virgo Solossa said on Dec. 28.

The strike was settled on Dec 14 when the union and Freeport agreed to a pay increase of 40% percent for around 8,000 union members and to a framework for a better deal for 15,000 other non-union workers and contractors.

Workers did not return immediately because of delays in organizing transport for thousands of miners in the highlands of central Papua, where security is tense because of a low-level separatist insurgency and concerns that returning strikers would be penalised.

KPI sacked 18 workers who failed to show up during the strike, which began on Sept 15. The company said it would allow 473 other workers to return under "certain conditions", and that the status of another 101 suspended workers was being evaluated. These workers were being asked to sign a document agreeing not to join a union, according to Maskat Kaliky, secretary general of the KPI union.

KPI runs the Freeport port through which ore concentrate is shipped. It also operates road and transport facilities as well as mobile equipment and employs 2,100 workers.

## Advances and setbacks for Egyptian workers

The success of the 2011 uprising in toppling Hosni Mubarak was made possible by industrial actions in key sectors of the Egyptian economy, not exclusively by the occupations of Tahrir Square. Starting on February 7, a public transport strike across Greater Cairo, coupled with labor protests along the Suez Canal and industrial actions across the country helped bring down Mubarak on February 11.

The revolution gave birth to the first independent trade union federation in Egypt's history, and compelled authorities to dissolve the board of the state-controlled Egyptian Trade Union Federation (ETUF) which had monopolized the union movement since 1957.

Among other gains, a new law has been drafted - but not issued - guaranteeing trade union freedoms and organizational plurality, and Egypt has moved towards the re-

nationalization of companies privatized during Mubarak's 30-year rule.

Yet 2011 was also marred by numerous violations of workers' rights. According to Karam Saber, Director of the Land Center for Human Rights, setbacks have included a new law criminalizing strikes (although this legislation has been rarely used), the forceful dispersal of strikes by hired thugs and security forces, and the referral of striking workers to military tribunals.

Established on the fifth day of



the revolution, the Egyptian Federation of Independent Trade Unions (EFITU) now has an estimated membership of more than 1.6 million workers, employees, and pensioners. Previously non-unionized workers, including fishermen, commercial divers, supermarket employees, seasonally employed-laborers, nurses and hospital staff, electronic journalists, pottery craftsmen, and quarry workers, have established their own independent unions.

Thousands of unionized workers have quit the ETUF and have established independent unions. They include Cairo's bus drivers, fare collectors, engineers and employees, who established the Independent Union of Public Transport Authority Workers in March.

Egypt witnessed the largest number of industrial actions in its history with the strike wave of 2011, or at least the largest since the massive 2007-2008 strike wave. Well over 200 strikes have been reported, along with thousands of labor protests, marches, hunger-strikes, occupations, sit-ins and sleep-ins. Among the largest and most significant strikes were: the Public Transport Authority workers' strikes of February and September/October, the strike at Mahalla's Misr Textile Company in February, the doctors' general strikes in May, and the teachers' mass strike in September. The common demands behind most of this labor unrest are improved wages, payment of overdue bonuses, safer working conditions, full-time contracts for full-time work, along with a fixed monthly minimum wage of LE1,200 (around \$US215) and a fixed maximum wage for management.

The Ministry of Manpower and Ministry of Finance has agreed to set the monthly minimum wage at the lower level of LE700 (around \$US125). This minimum is due to come into effect at the beginning of 2012, but may not be enforced. A maximum wage for management has not been determined.

## Steel picketers get global visit

Greek steelworkers mounting a marathon walkout against job losses were joined on the picket line outside their plant on Dec. 12 by communists from across the world.

Four hundred remain on strike after downing tools in late October at the Mittal steelworks at Attica, on the outskirts of Athens. Hundreds of strikers and their families turned out to cheer the arrival of delegates who were in Greece for the 13th annual meeting of 78 communist and workers' parties - the largest since its establishment.

Steel union president Giorgos Sifonios vowed: "If necessary we will celebrate Christmas right here, where we will stay until the redundancy programme is reversed and contracts restored."

Speakers from Belgium, Russia, Palestine and South Africa delivered messages of solidarity from every continent. Communist Party of Venezuela general secretary Oscar Figuera declared: "Workers of all lands - unite. That's the slogan of today as it was in the Communist Manifesto over 150 years ago."

## Attacks mar Bahrain struggle

Amidst the 2011 struggle for democracy in Bahrain, a different and disturbing narrative was taking place throughout the country. The recent Bahrain Independent Commission Inquiry (BICI) reveals the broad scope and violent nature of the ethnic pogroms which were reported to have targeted the migrant worker class during the unrest. The stories are recounted with a cold, clinical detachment which belies the scenes of horror.

According to a report by Murtaza Hussein on the Bikyamasr.com news website, in addition to documenting a campaign of government suppression, the BICI report details systematic violence directed towards South Asian migrant workers. A general reign of terror descended over Bangladeshi, Indian and Pakistani expatriate communities who were targeted by protestors during the unrest. The violence was further fuelled by reports of the Bahraini government recruiting mercenaries from South Asian countries.

Far from the glittering high-rises of central Manama lie the impoverished shantytowns which are home to the majority of Bahrain's labor class, expatriates from South Asia and the Philippines who by some estimates make up as much as 40% of the country's population. Inhabited by the construction workers, drivers, store-clerks, cleaners, and domestic servants, these camps as a rule lack proper sanitation and social infrastructure and are often subject to raids and demolition by the local authorities when deemed to be too close to "proper" residential areas and too far from the barren deserts where they are tolerated.

Cut off from public life by

officially enforced physical separation, the enormous disparity between themselves and other Bahrainis and the racial and linguistic differences which prevent them from having a voice with which to speak to authority, the labor class exists in near-complete isolation from mainstream society.

The attitude of Bahraini officialdom towards foreign workers was encapsulated in the words of former Minister of Labor Dr. Majeed Al Alawi speaking at a Gulf Cooperation conference in 2010, "Foreign workers pose a threat to our existence ... in some areas of the Gulf you cannot tell whether you are in an Arab country or an Asian one... we cannot call this diversity because no nation on earth would accept this erosion of its own culture on its own land."

## Construction deaths blight India's boom

One of the latest victims of the glitzy makeover of Mumbai was 19-year-old construction labourer Saddam Ansari, who fell to his death from the roof of an eight storey structure on Dec. 3. Barely a week before, a truck ferrying 30 construction workers overturned, killing Subhash Thakur and injuring 14 other workers.

As new flyovers, skyscrapers and water tunnels come up in Mumbai and its neighbouring cities, the ones paying the highest price are the 2.5 to 3 million construction workers.

Labour officials state that, by their information, 40 such labourers died in the past six months in Maharashtra state. The real figure could be much higher, they admit.

"The law requires that we be informed of deaths at construction sites within 72 hours. But we receive no official intimation," says a senior labour official.

In Mumbai, workers can often be seen dangling from bamboo scaffolding at building sites without safety harnesses or helmets. Equally worryingly, they remain deprived of basic welfare assured to them by law. India enacted a law 15 years ago for the collection of a labour welfare fund. A welfare board to oversee disbursement of funds and ensure workers' welfare was formed last May. It is currently registering workers, who are largely unaware about the benefits owed to them.

## Fuel strike cripples Karachi

A strike by transporters and gas dealers coupled with the closure of government hospitals after a doctor was murdered, crippled Karachi, Pakistan's the financial capital, over the Jan. 1 weekend. Public transport remained off the road as thousands of bus and wagon owners complied with a strike called by their association against the closure of compressed natural gas (CNG) filling stations and its rising price.

The transport had to be shut down because CNG dealers also shut down their stations to protest against the government's unjust policies of distributing the natural gas quota.

The dealers said it was a token strike, but if action was not taken they would call a strike for an indefinite period. "Life is getting from bad to worse day by day for the people like us," one worker said. The strike was also observed in the other parts of Sindh province.

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

## Send me information on the Communist Party of Canada



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

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

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

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

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

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

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



# Holguin Colloquium calls for action on Cuban Five

For the seventh time, friends in solidarity from all around the world met at the Holguin Colloquium to discuss experiences and the work yet to be done in the tough battle for the release of the Cuban Five. A statement from the Colloquium reads:

After 13 years of unfair incarceration, the situation of our Five Brothers continues to be extremely serious. René Gonzalez completed his sentence last Oct. 7, but instead of being returned to Cuba, he received new punishment: he is being forced to remain on US territory for 3 years under supervised liberty, without being able to receive visits by his wife Olga Salanueva who has been denied the right to visit him and at the risk that the terrorist groups who René and his four brothers in the cause denounced, might try to kill him.

Gerardo Hernandez' situation continues being the most serious of the Five, with two life sentences plus 15 years of incarceration and systematically being denied visitation by his wife Adriana Pérez.

The sentences of Ramon,

Antonio and Fernando collectively add up to 70 years in prison. They are still awaiting the response from the Habeas Corpus Resources presented by the defence team of the Five, but we are aware of the fact that legal channels are running out.

While the Five remain unfairly imprisoned, Luis Posada Carriles who is responsible for the deaths of thousands of innocent human beings went through a travesty of justice where he was not tried for being a terrorist and he receives public tributes celebrating his crimes and makes statements without the least hint of remorse.

The request for extradition of the criminal Posada Carriles to Venezuela presented by the government of the sister Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela six years ago has still not been answered. The impunity granted by the various American administrations and the unfair incarceration of the Five strips bare the double standard of the US government in its false battle against terrorism.

Faced with the gravity of this situation it becomes vital to multiply our work and the need to



create the necessary mechanisms for bringing together, coordinating and following up the actions we are doing in order to better make use of the enormous energy and arduous work of the committees all over the world.

We, the 300 delegates from 43 nations attending the VII International Colloquium for the release of the Five and against Terrorism, call out for:

1. Intensifying actions in the USA

and from all countries, to organize a broad-based permanent denunciation and mobilization in cities where communications media are located.

Organizing conferences with American intellectuals and with the Network in Defence of Humanity.

Showing documentaries and videos on the case of the Five and terrorism against Cuba in open areas, parks and squares. To put up posters and billboards on the five. Organizing demonstrations in front of the White House, Department of Justice, Supreme Court and other areas where many people tend to congregate.

Visits to congressmen and representatives by their counterparts in other countries. Those unable to travel to Washington will be requested to send their letters to their counterparts in the Capital.

Organizing a mass letter-writing campaign from around the world. Mobilizing American and foreign religious organizations so that they join the activities.

Inviting other groups with similar causes - Boricuas, Mumia, Peltier, Lynne Steward, Jerico, etc. - to join forces in the demand for the release of political prisoners and the denouncing of the American legal system as a whole.

We propose June 8th, anniversary of the unfair sentencing of the Five, as the date for starting these days of solidarity. 2. Increasing the solidarity days for the Five on the 5th. Having this day multiply actions all over the

world, delivery of letters to US embassies in our countries that demand the release of the Five, sit-ins, telephone calls to the White House, messages to web pages, Faxes or telegrams to Obama.

3. Demanding respect for the visitation rights of Olga Salanueva and Adriana Perez. To take up again the work done by the International Commission for Family Visitation Rights.

4. Continuing work with parliamentarians, trade unionists, clergy, personalities and social movements, addressing their counterparts in the USA.

5. Calling on the youth of the world to organize concerts during the international solidarity days of September 12 (anniversary of their arrests), to October 6, "Day of the Victims of Terrorism".

6. Requesting well-known artists and intellectuals for their support in the making of documentaries and videos and public messages demanding the release of the Five.

7. Increasing use of social networks such as Twitter, Facebook, blogs and the internet to distribute and denounce the case. To take advantage of the possibilities provided us by alternative media. 8. Continuing to appeal to creativity and culture in order to denounce the case, just as the Cuban children of La Colmenita have done so well with their play "Abracadabra". To sue digital media to reproduce the graphics made by the Five, the work of Tony and Gerardo's cartoons, to do publicity material and set up exhibitions.

9. Demanding the dismantling of terrorist organizations based in Miami, and the trial and punishment of the murderers of our peoples.

10. Continuing to distribute the series "The Reasons of Cuba" on terrorism and the destabilizing actions of the USA towards Cuba and our peoples.

International solidarity and the united action of honest men and women throughout the world shall be the key to victory in this colossal injustice.

For René, Gerardo, Ramon, Antonio and Fernando, we demand: Freedom Now!

Holguin, Cuba, Nov. 20, 2011, "Year 53 of the Revolution" •

## No to war threats against Syria and Iran!

Statement by StopWar, Vancouver's broad-based anti-war coalition, Dec. 15, 2011, [www.stopwar.ca](http://www.stopwar.ca)

The drumbeats of preparations for military intervention and war against Syria and Iran are becoming louder. StopWar, Vancouver's broad-based anti-war coalition, which was founded in the movement to prevent the disastrous war against Iraq in 2003, appeals to all Canadians to help reverse this dangerous process. We call for the internal disputes in Syria and Iran to be left for their own populations to settle, without recourse to foreign military intervention.

The consequences of a new war in this region would be far reaching for the entire world. A NATO-led military aggression against Syria or Iran would result in massive human casualties, and enormous economic damage on a local and global scale. The impact would not be confined to the immediate military targets of the NATO powers and their allies; such a war could spread across borders, inflicting new suffering and chaos throughout the region.

There is no justification for such a reckless and potentially catastrophic course of action. In our view, military intervention by NATO in the Middle East and Central Asia is being driven by the interests of transnational energy and resource corporations. NATO is acting to defend and advance these interests, not to "protect human rights".

To those who argue that the so-called "Responsibility to Protect" doctrine obliges Canada to intervene in the name of human rights and wage yet another war, we point out that many of the leaders who are escalating tensions

against Syria and Iran are themselves accused of widespread violations of human rights, or even of committing serious breaches of international law.

The United States, for example, stands accused by world public opinion and many legal experts and scholars of practising systematic torture. In 2003, it committed the supreme war crime of unprovoked military aggression against Iraq - a crime which has resulted in millions of deaths, vast population displacements, and enormous damage to economic and social infrastructures. Israel, one of the most vocal critics of Syria and Iran, has for decades illegally occupied Palestinian territories, imposing a deadly apartheid-style oppression against the Palestinian people.

The NATO countries killed thousands of people recently in Libya in an attack that was a blatantly aggressive intervention aimed at 'regime change', despite the fact that it was initially presented as a limited mission to provide a 'No Fly Zone'. Libya risks becoming a precedent that NATO countries cite in order to justify new aggressive wars and interventions.

Far from advancing the cause of human rights, imperialist military threats and interventions often simply give excuses to authoritarian rulers to suppress struggles for freedom. We stand in solidarity with Iranians and Syrians, while we oppose any kind of sanctions and military interventions.

What right do the United States and Israel - or their faithful ally the Harper government of Canada - have to intervene in the internal problems of Syria and Iran? Why should Canada and the United States, which have led the

destructive military occupation of Afghanistan for over a decade, have any right to choose where their military forces will intervene next to topple local governments and impose western-friendly regimes?

Genuine social justice and peace are not created by crippling economic sanctions or endless wars and militarism. Instead, military spending and the arms trade must be dramatically reduced, and all weapons of mass destruction must be eliminated, including the creation of a nuclear-free zone in the Middle East. The peoples of the world must mobilize to change our planet's priorities and tackle the urgent needs of those who are today the most oppressed and poverty-stricken.

This is the view of StopWar. We urge all our supporters and friends to join with us in demanding that the Harper government end its vocal support for the war drive against Syria and Iran. Canada must instead begin to support steps which will de-escalate tensions in the region, including the immediate removal of all Canadian military forces from Afghanistan, and a complete end to Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories. •



### Investigation into Pablo Neruda's mysterious death

The Communist Party in Chile has asked for the remains of the poet Pablo Neruda to be exhumed due to allegations that he may have been poisoned.

The Nobel laureate died in Santiago in September 1973, 12 days after the military coup that brought Gen. Augusto Pinochet to power. Neruda's death certificate says he died of prostate cancer. But his former driver said he received an injection which provoked a heart attack.

According to a Communist Party lawyer, Eduardo Contreras, the hospital where Neruda was being treated for cancer says he was injected with a pain killer and died of heart failure shortly afterwards. But Contreras said Neruda, who was 69, could have received a lethal injection.

The request to exhume the remains will be considered by a judge, Mario Carroza, who has been investigating allegations that Neruda may have been murdered. Neruda's personal assistant and driver, Manuel Araya, told the judge in November that a few hours before he died on September 23, 1973, the poet was walking and talking normally. Araya alleges that agents injected Neruda with poison at the hospital on the orders of Pinochet. •



# Peace Congress convention delivers Action Plan for Peace

## Special to PV

The Canadian Peace Congress held a successful convention in Toronto on November 25-26. Delegates representing 14 member organizations adopted a detailed political resolution and a bold action plan for the current period.

Delegates discussed the deepening global crisis of capitalism, which is driving an increased aggressiveness by imperialism. While working people in capitalist countries face severe austerity measures that drastically cut jobs and social programs, their governments are ramping up military spending and seeking new pretexts for war. In Canada, NATO was identified as the key vehicle used by the Harper government for increasing militarism and aggressiveness.

The convention had an excellent discussion on the Action Plan, which identified and prioritized key areas of Peace Congress work. Delegates agreed that the Action Plan needed to be bold but doable, and one to which all the organizations in the Congress would be committed. Key areas of work are:

- \* Campaigning against NATO, demanding Canada's withdrawal and the military alliance's dissolution, including the development of a cross-Canada anti-NATO tour and participation in the "Retire NATO" activities in Chicago in May 2012;

- \* Campaigning against Canada's active involvement in wars in Afghanistan, Haiti and Libya, working to immediately withdraw Canadian military and to end those conflicts, and to build opposition to aggression and war against Syria and Iran;

- \* Campaigning against military

spending in Canada, which is at its highest levels since before World War 2 and continuing to rise, with special emphasis on engaging the trade union movement and on pressuring the NDP;

- \* Developing a new campaign to



Canadian Peace Congress President Dave McKee

oppose the development of Canadian military bases in foreign countries, to link this with the World Peace Council campaign against foreign military bases, and to relate this issue to that of Canadian resource industries in Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean;

- \* Working to oppose militarization of the Arctic and make it an international zone of peace, and encouraging cooperation and joint campaigning on this issue among WPC members organizations in circumpolar countries;

- \* Working toward the Third Trilateral Peace Conference, between the peace committees in Canada, the United States and Mexico and with participation of the Cuban Movement for Peace, to be held in Cuba in 2012;

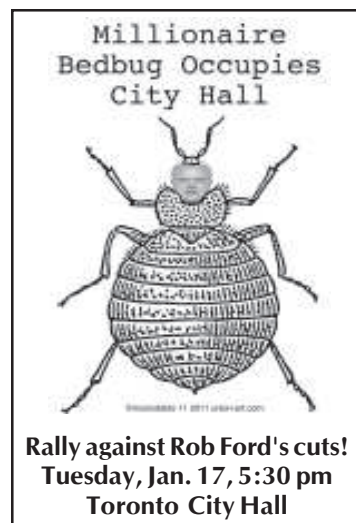
- \* Developing a new campaign to end nuclear weapons and strengthen Canada's commitment to a policy of no nuclear weapons, including opposition to building nuclear subs through the recently-awarded shipbuilding contracts to the Irvings;

- \* Producing a regular, cross-country peace publication.

The convention had a number of special interventions, including from the Canadian Peace Alliance (whose coordinator brought greetings and a report on the CPA convention and current campaigns), participants at the 17th World Festival of Youth and Students (held Dec. 2010 in South Africa), CODIR (the Committee for the Defense of the Iranian People's Rights), and activists who are working to rebuild the Quebec Peace Council.

The Convention held elections to the two Executive positions that are elected at large; Cheryl-Ann Carr from Winnipeg was acclaimed as Aboriginal representative and Dave McKee of Toronto as President. The remaining Executive positions are filled by designates from local peace councils.

This convention was a solid demonstration of the quantitative and qualitative growth of the Canadian Peace Congress. Membership and participation have increased significantly since the last convention three years ago, and the delegates concretely discussed how to build the membership further. The mood was strongly united, and eagerly geared toward campaigning. ●



The documents from the convention are available at the Peace Congress web site:  
[www.canadianpeacecongress.ca](http://www.canadianpeacecongress.ca)

## Harper government bans Internationale from Labour Temple dedication

### By Darrell Rankin

The Winnipeg branch of the Association of United Ukrainian Canadians (AUUC) cancelled a Nov. 19 ceremony to dedicate its Ukrainian Labour Temple as a National Historic Site. The AUUC made the decision 72 hours before the ceremony, once it was clear that Parks Canada had failed to send invitations or answer a letter about its unilateral demand to ban the hall's choir from singing *The Internationale*.

The hall was designated a historic site in 2009. AUUC members were looking forward to the ceremony which included placing a plaque on the building. After months of agreement and rehearsing, Parks Canada informed the AUUC on Oct. 9 that it would not allow the choir to sing the working class anthem.

The choir had voted unanimously that during the scheduled time for the song it would remain silent and explain that the song was banned. The reasons for the ban are unknown, and will likely stay that way unless revealed by an access to information request.



## MUSIC NOTES

By Wally Brooker

### Philip Glass joins NYC opera protest

Composer Philip Glass joined 200 "Occupy Museums" protesters at a Dec. 1 rally outside the Lincoln Centre where *Satyagraha*, his opera about M.K. Gandhi, had just completed its final performance. The targets of the protest were far-right billionaire David Koch (who has a Lincoln Centre theatre named after him) and New York's billionaire mayor Michael Bloomberg (a major sponsor of the Metropolitan Opera). The protesters, playing upon the Gandhian principle of *Satyagraha* ("truth force"), chanted "let's tell the truth, join us" as the crowd filed out. Initially separated from the protest by a metal barrier, opera-goers quickly joined the demo after seeing the composer on the side of the protesters "mic-checking" passages from the *Bhagavad Gita*. Tycoons like Koch and Bloomberg attack the people while currying public favour by patronizing elite cultural institutions. It's encouraging to see people fighting back against corporate colonization of the arts.

### Common Thread choir shines at CFMA

Toronto's Common Thread Community Chorus promotes ideals of community and social justice through choral music. While a "flying squad" of activists from this choir has been mentioned before in this column, the full 80-voice chorus must be seen and heard. On Dec. 4 they sang before hundreds of appreciative fans at the 7th annual Canadian Folk Music Awards. Under the direction of conductor Isabel Bernaus, the choir performed a glorious 30-minute set in the foyer of Toronto's Isabel Bader Theatre. For this observer it was an affirmation of choral music's rightful place in the folk music world. As for the Canadian Folk Music Awards, the packed house was a sign of a healthy roots music scene in Canada. A review of this significant event will appear in *People's Voice* in the near future. For more info: <http://commonthreadchorus.ca/> and <http://folkawards.ca/>.

### Dick Gaughan on working class song

Last spring Scottish communist musician Dick Gaughan gave a talk in Edinburgh on the topic "Song and the Working Class Movement." The socialist daily *Morning Star* sponsored the lecture as part of its "Our Class Our Culture" series. Now it's been posted on the Scottish Communist Party's website. Gaughan's majestic voice and skilful guitar work have uplifted working class struggles for over forty years. Calling on songwriters to join him in taking a class perspective, he examines the issue of arts patronage, discusses differences between protest songs and songs that offer hope and "clarification," and contrasts the pursuit of fame with an artist's legitimate need for recognition. Gaughan illustrates his points with salient references to artists like Bertolt Brecht, Hanns Eisler, Woody Guthrie, Victor Jara and Si Kahn. The discussion that follows dwells upon the contradictions of labour arts programs. If you're a musician or interested in working class culture don't miss Gaughan's stimulating lecture. Visit the *Morning Star* video section at [www.scottishcommunist.org.uk](http://www.scottishcommunist.org.uk).

### David Rovics: Songwriters Notebook

David Rovics is a perceptive journalist as well as a talented songwriter. The same powers of observation and analysis that underlie his anti-capitalist music are evident in his news analysis, his observations of life on the road and his thoughts on what it means to be a contemporary independent musician. Since 2006 Rovics has been publishing a blog in addition to maintaining a musical website. His Nov. 24 posting "Recollections From a 3-Month Tour" is highly recommended. From early August until well into November Rovics toured the USA, Canada and Western Europe, as people were organizing in resistance to the current ruling class offensive. Beginning at a protest in New Orleans, Rovics' itinerary included Norway, Denmark, Greece, Germany, Portugal and Ireland before returning to New York to play at Occupy Wall Street. Then he was off to sing at occupations across North America. Rovics' description of the people he met and the local acts of resistance that he witnessed is an inspiring read. Check it out at <http://songwritersnotebook.blogspot.com/>.

### Celebrating Ben Shek (1927-2011)

The Morris Winchevsky Centre was filled to capacity on Nov. 20 as the United Jewish People's Order celebrated the life of scholar, journalist, singer and choir activist Ben Shek. It was fitting that the tribute ended with Shek's beloved Toronto Jewish Folk Choir performing a set of Yiddish folk songs. Ben Shek had been a member and key organizer of the choir since 1951, and he personified its progressive spirit. The Choir celebrated its 85th anniversary not long ago with a live CD that collects recordings of recent performances under the direction of conductor Alexander Veprinsky. *Remembering Our Roots* features a host of Yiddish folk songs with a sprinkling of other favourites. To order send \$23 (\$20 each for two or more) to Toronto Jewish Folk Choir, c/o Winchevsky Centre, 585 Cranbrooke Ave., Toronto, ON M6A 2X9. For more info: [www.winchevskycentre.org](http://www.winchevskycentre.org). ●



# Zyuganov to challenge Putin for Russian presidency

*With files from the Morning Star and The Guardian*

As huge rallies continue to protest the rigging of Russia's Dec. 4 parliamentary vote, Communist Party leader Gennady Zyuganov has submitted his application to stand for the country's presidency in March. Zyuganov promises a rerun of the discredited Duma elections if he wins.

The Communist Party of the Russian Federation is by far the largest opposition party and officially received over 19 percent of the vote on December 4. But supporters say the true vote for the CPRF was much higher, alleging massive electoral fraud by the ruling United Russia party, which backs Prime Minister Vladimir Putin's presidential bid.

The latest polls by state-run pollster VTsIOM suggest that the election could see a runoff between

Putin and Zyuganov. Putin is running at 42 percent in first round support, compared with 53 percent in 2000. If no candidate achieves a majority, the election will go to a second round.

Zyuganov addressed thousands of communists at a rally outside the Kremlin on Dec. 18, where they demonstrated to press demands for a recount a day after President Dmitri Medvedev admitted that the country's political system was "exhausted."

Medvedev told United Russia members on Dec. 17 that the party would have to change to regain popular confidence. "The street - this is the mood of the people. It must be respected."

Thousands also demonstrated in St. Petersburg on Dec. 18, chanting: "Russia without Putin!" and "We want to live in an honest country." Attending the rally, teacher Natalya Sheikina said: "The

vote was rigged. Exit polls and official results differ dramatically."

Seven parties took part in the Dec. 4 parliamentary elections, with four gaining representation in the Duma, and three falling below the seven percent threshold to win seats.

United Russia was declared the winner, but its announced support fell from two-thirds in the 2007 election to 53 percent. The CPRF rose eight percent over its 12 percent result in 2007, moving into second place. Just Russia got about 13 percent, and the Liberal Democratic Party of Russia about 11 per cent.

Zyuganov called the elections "unprecedented in their filth, pressure and falsification". The CPRF election program called for ensuring national security, accelerated economic development, overcoming poverty and social degradation. ●

## A great Sudanese communist leader: Al-Tijani Al-Tayeb Babikir

The veteran Sudanese Communist Party leader Al-Tijani Al-Tayeb Babikir passed away on Nov. 26 in Khartoum, at the age of 85 years.

Comrade Babikir belonged to the generation which founded the SCP in August 1946. He was a member of the Central Committee from the first conference in 1959 to the fifth (and latest) in 2009, reflecting the trust and profound respect of his comrades.

Comrade Babikir was arrested for the first time in Cairo when he was a secretary of the Sudanese Student Union in May 1948. The reason was the involvement of the students in support of the Palestinians. Through the three military dictatorships that ruled Sudan in various periods, he spent twelve years in political detention, and about ten years in hiding among the Sudanese people, protected by their goodwill and compassion, as he always recalled with respect and deep appreciation.

Comrade Babikir was the editor-in-chief of the SCP's *Al-Midan* newspaper, from 1985 to 1989 and later from 2005 until he passed away.

When he was arrested in 1982, and after spending two years in solitary confinement, jailed without charge under the Jaafar Al Nimeiri dictatorship, Al-Tijani was brought

before Nimeiri's State Security Court. In his defense statement, he boldly refuted the regime's allegations against the SCP and eloquently outlined the party's vision for his country. His political defense not only lifted the spirit of the party members, but became a manifesto for the struggle against the military dictatorship and a classic of Sudanese political literature.

Comrade Babikir was a staunch defender of party unity against splits and secessions, standing on a deep conviction of Marxism, principles of the party, and love for the country and its people. He assumed leading positions in the Political Bureau, Central Committee, international relations office, and other bodies. He represented the party in the opposition National Democratic Alliance after the



Islamist military coup d'état of 1989. He also represented the party at the Peace and Socialism Journal in Prague in the 1960s.

Comrade Babikir was the leading force behind the *Red Flag*, the first underground newspaper that became *Al-Midan* in 1954, and he was the chief editor of *Sudanese Issues*, a journal dedicated to dialogue among Sudanese communists and democrats after the fall of the socialist bloc.

Comrade Babikir was an embodiment of Gramsci's organic intellectual, although he transcended that in favour of a universal/global perspective. Like other communists of his generation, he commanded the respect of all participants in the Sudanese political arena. His political presence, persona and conduct in such public space withstood all kinds of socioeconomic, cultural, religious and political odds.

Comrade Babikir and his colleagues were the product of the space and socioeconomic structure of an underdeveloped country in the 1940s. In his case, Babikir represented the antithesis to the contradiction between that huge challenge and the greatness of the response. As Lenin could have said: that is the essence of a revolutionary! ●

## What's Left

### Vancouver, BC

**StopWar Winter Fundraiser**, join StopWar members and supporters for a potluck dinner, Sat., Jan. 7, 7 pm at 65 W. Cordova (just east of Abbott), bring a dish and/or something to drink, and a donation for Vancouver's broad-based anti-war coalition.

**Left Film Night**, 7 pm, Sun., Jan. 29, Centre for Socialist Education, 706 Clark Dr. "Cultures of Resistance," (2010, 73 min., dir. Lara Lee). Admission by donation, call 604-255-2041 for details.

**Jose Marti Celebration**, sponsored by Canadian-Cuban Friendship Association-Vancouver, for details on date and location, contact CCFA c/o Ray Viaud, 604-154-1250.

### Ottawa, ON

**Celebrate the 53rd Anniversary of the Cuban Revolution**, 7-9 pm, Thurs., Jan. 19, at Carleton Univ., 2203 Duntun Tower. Guest speaker Kenia Ador Agramonte (2nd Secretary of Cuban Embassy), will talk on the current situation in Cuba, followed by screening

of the new Saul Landau film, "Will the Real Terrorist Please Stand Up". Hosted by CPC Carleton and Ottawa Cuba Connection.

### Toronto, ON

**Celebrate Howard Kaplan's First Year** as York Centre School Trustee, buffet dinner, Sat, Jan. 7, 5-9 pm, 209 Oakwood Ave. (just north of St. Clair W., adults \$15, kids \$8, proceeds to People's Voice. Sponsored by Public Sector Workers Toronto. Can't come? Buy & donate a dinner ticket. Info: elizzhill@hotmail.

**Annual Norman Bethune Dinner**, Sat., Feb. 25, 7 pm, at 290 Danforth Ave. Tickets just \$5, available across Canada from supporters of media sponsor People's Voice. Door prize: all-inclusive trip for two to Cuba! Info: 416-469-2446.

### Montreal, QC

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

## El and the growing gap...

continued from p. 4

unable to find out why their benefits are delayed. Documents obtained by the *Globe and Mail* claim that telephone lines are so jammed that just one in three calls is answered. Claimants who have spoken to *People's Voice* say it's worse; one in Vancouver was unable to get a single phone call answered for a month, and could only get help by pressing Service Canada staff to bypass the regular procedures to give her access to a special line.

Are such policies the result of uncaring, thoughtless political decisions, or are they a deliberate strategy? Given that the negative impact of neoliberal policies on poor people is widely documented, it seems clear that pro-corporate governments like the Harper Tories know exactly what they are doing.

It seems equally clear that only massive political pressure by a highly united and mobilized working class - organized and unorganized, young and old, male and female, citizens and migrants, straight and gay - can force a shift to pro-people economic policies.

But as Miguel Figueroa told the

recent Athens meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties (see pages 6 & 7), "traditional bourgeois mechanisms of regulating and overcoming the crisis are increasingly ineffective... the resulting ruling class response to the crisis is more socially brutal, more militaristic, more dangerous to all humanity than during previous rounds of crisis..."

Our struggle begins with the fight to reverse neoliberal attacks such as the corporate drive to remove access to EI benefits. But our aim must be to topple the system which is based on maximizing corporate profits at the expense of working people. Capitalism is the source of the crisis, and socialism must be our goal. ●

### Tom Bull

**We are sad to note the passing of Comrade Tom Bull in Toronto on Dec. 12. A full obituary will appear in our next issue. A celebration of Tom's life will be held on Sunday, Feb. 5, 2 pm, at the GCDO Hall, 290 Danforth Avenue.**

## Revolution from the South

### 2012 People's Voice Calendar

#### honouring the centennials of the ANC and the Communist Party of Chile

Now available, \$5 plus \$2 shipping, from People's Voice, 706 Clark Drive, Vancouver, BC, V5L 3J1 For info on bulk orders, call 604-254-9836 or email pvoice@telus.net



## People's Voice deadlines

February 1-14 issue: Thursday, Jan. 19

February 15-29 issue: Thursday, Feb. 2

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

## Win a Trip For Two to Cuba!

Annual Norman Bethune Dinner Sat., Feb. 25, 7 pm, 290 Danforth Ave., Toronto

Tickets just \$5, available across Canada from supporters of media sponsor People's Voice. Door prize: all-inclusive trip for two to Cuba! Info: 416-469-2446.



# Japan remains unrepentant for past crimes

By Sean Burton

On Dec. 14, the Korean Council for the Women Drafted for Military Sexual Slavery held its 1000th protest outside the Japanese embassy in Seoul. During its wartime occupation of Korea and other parts of east Asia, the Japanese military forced hundreds of thousands of so-called "comfort women" to provide sexual services to its soldiers. At protests held every Wednesday since January 1992, the women have presented demands to Japan: to recognize the drafting of the women as a criminal act, to conduct an investigation, to issue a parliamentary resolution for an apology, to provide legal remedies, to list in history textbooks, to construct a memorial and archive, and punish those responsible.

Japan's war crimes are widely known, but there has been a concentrated effort to sweep them under the rug as the country became a key U.S. ally. True, some war criminals were punished, and limited apologies were made. But Japan has had great difficulty being up front with its past actions, and many right-wing activists refuse to even acknowledge that crimes were committed.

Today, there are only 63 former comfort women still living, and the frequency of the protests has wavered. Tokyo undoubtedly desires the issue to die out along with these women. At the 1000th protest, a special monument funded by private donations was unveiled on the sidewalk across from the Japanese embassy. The statue depicts a young Korean girl staring at the building with the shadow of an old woman beneath her. Shockingly, *Hankyoreh* newspaper quoted Japan's State Secretary for Foreign Affairs Osamu Fujimura as saying it was "truly dismaying" that the statue was set up and that calls would be made to have it removed via diplomatic channels. Prime Minister Yoshihiko Noda conveyed the same demands directly to south Korean president Lee Myung Bak at a summit in Kyoto on December 18.

It does not help that the position of the south Korean government is not clear. On the surface, Seoul

insists that Japan make amends for drafting the comfort women. President Lee purportedly informed Noda that the monument would not be removed "unless sincere measures were taken". Nonetheless, Japan and south Korea have long had a cozy business relationship. New Korean history textbooks have evidently purged the comfort women from their pages. Earlier standards required textbooks to describe how Japan mobilized the Korean people via military and labour conscription, including the comfort women. Since 2009, standards for high school texts have omitted comfort women, nor have they been mentioned in any supplemental manuals. Given that

high school texts require more in-depth study, the absence is conspicuous. Yet the territorial dispute over Dokdo island is mentioned a number of times. As one professor remarked, human rights and peace concerns were being superseded by blind patriotism.

Japan must not be allowed to get away with this heinous wrong. The thousands around the world who come out in support of the surviving comfort women will continue their struggle one way or another. But there will be no true reconciliation until the full weight of Korean society is mobilized, and that will never happen so long as south Korea remains a client state of larger powers. ●



Members and supporters of the Korean Council for the Women Drafted for Military Sexual Slavery at their Dec. 14 protest outside the Japanese embassy in Seoul.

## The Legacy of Kim Jong Il

By Sean Burton

The passing of Kim Jong Il, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's top leader, is a timely moment to consider the tremendous threat to Korea posed by U.S. imperialism and its lapdogs in east Asia, particularly south Korea and Japan.

When Kim Jong Il assumed formal leadership of the DPRK, he had enormous shoes to fill. His father, revolutionary leader and DPRK founder Kim Il Sung, had long striven to preserve Korean socialism and national liberation. But by the time of Kim Il Sung's death in July 1994, the DPRK was entering a period of extreme privation brought about by the loss of economic support from the Soviet Union and eastern Europe, a series of natural disasters, and the ceaseless efforts of Washington to sanction the country to death. Indeed, American pressure to stamp out whatever remnants of socialism could be found naturally provoked the DPRK to pour more of its increasingly limited resources into its military budget.

In the absence of Kim Jong Il's illustrious father, the DPRK's detractors claimed that the country would soon fall apart. Much to their chagrin, socialist Korea is still very much alive in 2012. Kim Jong Il had to preside

over what has been arguably the most difficult period of his country's existence. The DPRK has even become a nuclear power, enough to make the U.S. military hesitant to attack.

With the passing of Kim Jong Il on Dec. 17, another imperialist media frenzy is stirring rumours and anti-North propaganda. In addition to mocking the grief displayed by thousands of Koreans, mainstream coverage of events in the DPRK pins all the blame on Kim Jong Il for the so-called nuclear crisis and lack of cooperation with other countries in the region, particularly for tensions with U.S.-occupied south Korea.

It is a common refrain that the DPRK is isolated and closed-off, to reinforce the myth that the DPRK is the author of all its problems. And yet Pyongyang graciously announced that it would open its doors to any and all mourning parties from the south! Seoul's response was to prohibit any such travel, save for a handful of people. Seoul also produced a very weak message of condolences, but for the most part its actions have been anything but friendly. The ROK military and US Forces Korea have been placed on high alert, and plans to intervene militarily in the north in the event of a "stability crisis" have long since been developed. Right-wing groups also stepped

up efforts to send propaganda over the border during the mourning period.

Japan is also watching the situation very closely. It has built up its military to a substantial degree and now maintains one of the largest and most well-equipped forces in the world, with a \$50 billion budget. Japan is highly invested in Korean affairs, and has never made amends for its brutal colonization of the peninsula that started 100 years ago. Whereas the south Korean regime was established primarily by the help of former Japanese collaborators, the fiercely independent and anti-imperialist north has long vexed the government in Tokyo. Given Japan's impressive military and its close ties with the Americans, the DPRK has every right to feel

threatened.

It has been widely claimed that Kim Jong Il was a barrier to peace and reunification. Indeed he has been a barrier - to the imperialist-led absorption of the north and the inevitable destruction of its socialist system. The DPRK's leaders know all too well what would happen to their country. They also know that there will be no true peace or unification so long as U.S. imperialism and its cronies threaten the north on a regular basis. Kim Jong Il guided a small, economically poor country against the mightiest empire on earth, while trying to maintain a socialist system. For that, he deserves the respect of all who call themselves anti-imperialists. Long live the Democratic People's Republic of Korea! ●

### End the Drone War: One more reason for NATO to get out of Afghanistan and Pakistan

Statement from the Canadian Peace Alliance, Nov. 29, 2011

The attacks that killed 24 Pakistani soldiers are but the most recent and most high profile attacks in a decade-long drone war in Pakistan. Unfortunately these attacks are not an aberration, but part of a systematic use of drones that have killed thousands of people.

The Obama administration, while promising to scale back US operations in Central Asia, has overseen a huge increase in drone attacks. More than 300 attacks have occurred, or one every 4 days, under President Obama's leadership.

It is impossible to estimate the number of dead from the attacks but a series of investigations by the Bureau of Investigative Journalism show almost 3,000 dead including 175 children. The government of Pakistan says that 700 civilians were killed in 2009 alone. The Brookings Institution estimates that for each "militant" killed, 10 civilians die in drone strikes.

This most recent attack shows the complete disdain that Washington has towards the people of Pakistan. The CIA, which oversees the drone war, was given the location of the Pakistani checkpoint near the border but once again chose to fire. Either the drones are preposterously inaccurate or there is an utter contempt for the people of Pakistan.

All told, there are more than 30,000 Pakistani soldiers and civilians who have been killed since the war on terror started. The instability in the country is increasing and the potential for civil war and more bloodshed in the future.

As many predicted, the war in Afghanistan has spread to Pakistan and the prospects for peace in either country grow more distant with each new drone strike. It is time for the international community, including the government of Canada, to condemn these killings and the violations of Pakistani sovereignty and to bring all western forces home from the region. ●

## NEWS FOR PEOPLE, NOT FOR PROFITS!

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

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

people's  
**VOICE**

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

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Postal Code \_\_\_\_\_

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

12/01