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people's VOICE

**Western Sahara
wants freedom**

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The People vs. US Steel



(Photo from USW Local 1005 website)

"Get on the bus" to Jan. 29
solidarity rally for locked out
Steelworkers in Hamilton

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3 Poverty & inequality

Child poverty remains at shocking levels in B.C., and Toronto is becoming a city badly divided between haves and have-nots. In short, while the rich get richer, the rest of us still get shafted.

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9 Justice at last

Three decades after the "dirty war" killed thousands and stole their children, Argentina's fascist dictator Videla is found guilty of mass murder.

10 Hockey for Peace

For many Canadian sports fans, the outrageous, bigoted rant by Don Cherry at Toronto City Hall was the last straw. Hockey Fans For Peace has been formed to speak out against the war in Afghanistan.

All out Jan. 29 in Hamilton - Join the People vs US Steel Rally!

By Liz Rowley

Across Ontario, Labour Councils and local unions are mobilizing for the "People vs US Steel Rally" being organized on January 29 by Local 1005 USW, whose 900 members and 9,000 Hamilton pensioners have been locked out since November 7.

Local 1005 President Rolf Gerstenberger says the union, the whole community and the country are under attack by this giant US transnational corporation. It's nation-wrecking on the one hand, vs. the dignity and rights of workers to decent pensions and jobs on the other. It's everybody's issue, says Gerstenberger.

The Local is calling on supporters across Canada to pass motions in support of the locked out workers, and to get their unions to put buses on the road to Hamilton.

As he did for striking miners and smelterworkers in Sudbury last spring, and for the G8/G20 protests in Toronto last June, OFL President Sid Ryan is calling on the labour movement in Ontario to load up the buses. The OFL is working closely with Local 1005, the Hamilton and District Labour Council, and the CLC to make Jan. 29 one of the biggest rallies ever. The rally starts at 1 pm at Hamilton City Hall, followed by a march.

The immediate issue in the lock-out is the Local's refusal to accept the de-indexing of pensions affecting the living standards and purchasing power of 9,000 retirees. US Steel also wants to replace the defined benefit (DB) pension plan with a defined contribution plan - a jumped up RRSP-type savings plan that guarantees no income security to workers in their retirement years. But it does offer big savings - and increased profits - to companies which use pension funds to gamble on the stock markets. The winnings go to the coupon clippers, while the losses are always collected by pensioners, as Nortel Networks retirees know only too well.

The other big issue is Canadian sovereignty and control over the key sectors of the economy, and primary and secondary industry, and manufacturing in the first place. Two decades after the first Canada-US free trade deal was signed, and since the foreign takeovers began in mining and steel, there is very little left in these industries that is not already

foreign-owned or controlled. Further, these multi-nationals are operating in Canada with virtually no controls.

In less than 10 years, Canada's steel industry has been completely taken over by foreign companies. Stelco in Hamilton was the last Canadian-owned steel company in the country. After a raid on the assets and pension plan by predators in bankruptcy proceedings, US Steel bought the plant three years ago, agreeing with Investment Canada to maintain employment and production levels in Hamilton. Almost immediately, the company began dismantling operations, laying off workers, banking coke ovens, moving equipment, and then shutting down the blast furnaces, which take months and millions of dollars to restart.

The union thinks US "Steal" has no intention of re-starting the blast furnaces or any other part of basic steel production in Hamilton. US Steel's own documents in court proceedings admit to price fixing by reducing and then eliminating production in Canada.

It's become obvious that the real reason for the purchase of Stelco was to mothball the operations, turning Canada from a basic steel producer to a marketplace for US Steel products.

But the union is challenging that "future", demanding that governments take action to protect the city and community, its workers and retirees, and its industrial base.

Foreign ownership and monopoly control is the elephant in the room, and the union is demanding that federal and provincial governments act immediately to prosecute US Steel for price-fixing and for reneging on its obligations under the purchase agreement.

The union also wants to maintain the previous collective agreement for another three years. That means the workers go back to work under the existing contract, and the company drops its pension demands.

But US Steel isn't having any of it. Nor are the federal or provincial governments. Collectively they would rather leave workers on the picket line, waiting them out like Vale Inco did for 12 months in Sudbury, and continues to do in Voisey's Bay. Meanwhile the profits continue to roll in south of the border, and a new blast furnace

has started up state-side as well.

Local 1005 is right: this fight won't be won at the bargaining table. It will take a whole community, and the whole labour movement to defeat US Steel, and all the other corporations waiting to see what happens in Hamilton.

The Communist Party fully

supports the union's demands, and further, calls for the nationalization under public democratic control, of US Steel operations in Hamilton. Canada needs a domestic steel industry that's publicly owned and controlled, and able to produce steel needed to build an industrial base and strategy for Canada, and

industrial, manufacturing and construction jobs for Canadians. If there was any doubt before, the actions of US Steel in Hamilton are the proof of this today.

The CPC is also calling on the provincial government to compel US Steel to return to the bargaining table to negotiate an early and just settlement with Local 1005. ●

Boycott campaign growing in Montreal

PV Montreal Bureau

"Pseudo-intellectuals, fanatics, radical-leftists, extremists, and a poor excuse for a public servant who should resign."

These are just some of the cheap insults aimed at local Montreal residents organizing with Palestinian and Jewish Unity (PAJU), who have been braving the cold for the past several months, pushing back against products from the Israeli-apartheid regime being retailed in local stores.

Their campaign aims to make St-Denis Street, a popular shopping place in central Montreal, "Israeli apartheid-free". They received a boost this winter when a member of the Quebec National Assembly joined the picket-line outside PAJU's first target store. The participation of Amir Khadr, Quebec Solidaire's MNA, has acted as a lightning rod for pro-Zionist media criticism.

"Just because a business is in my riding, I am not going to abandon my principles," Khadr told the *Montreal Gazette* recently. LeMarcheur retails a brand of Israeli shoes made by Rishon Lizon. It is located in Mercier (which was also the riding of Fred Rose, federal Labour Progressive Party MP many years before). Both PAJU and later Khadr made written appeals in advance to the owners to drop the product.

News stories have been particularly sharp, with coverage also in the pages of Israeli and Toronto papers. "Khadr should stop running around with his mates from the Communist Party," harangued one editorialist. "He should just resign," said another.

Montreal's corporate media appears to have a problem with Khadr and shoes. Last summer, they howled that he had lost dignity by hurling a shoe at a picture of George Bush, during a protest against a visit to Canada by the former president and war criminal. What they can't stand is that polls show the MNA from the left-wing party has a 45% approval rating, making him the most popular politician in Quebec.

The picket line is not PAJU's first participation in the growing international Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions (BDS) campaign. Last fall, the group also helped host a major cross-Canada conference on BDS in Montreal, featuring international speakers. The group has also celebrated ten years of Friday mid-day pickets outside Chapter's Indigo bookstore.

For that reason the spirit on the picket line is up-beat and firm, despite frosty temperatures and misinformation by aggressive

Zionist bloggers. "My mother went to the store," wrote one blogger and "was greeted by about a hundred threatening Arabs with Hezbollah flags shouting anti-Semitic slogans and blocking the street completely."

People's Voice supporters have joined the picket repeatedly since it began in October. We have seen an orderly event of twenty to fifty people, from all walks of life, including trade unionists, students, Jews and Palestinians. They've chosen to respect the law, marshalling on the sidewalk, but not blocking traffic. Despite police efforts to remove them, they hold banners high, fly a few Palestinian flags, and distribute a graphic leaflet on BDS.

"Help the owner make the right decision!" the leaflet says. "If the owner decides to remove the shoes made in Apartheid Israel, we will encourage everyone to choose to shop at Le Marcheur for having sided with solidarity and social justice. Since 2005's historic call from Palestine for a comprehensive, international movement for Boycott Divestment and Sanctions against Israeli apartheid, we have seen many important victories for this movement in both Canada and Québec. The past two years have seen growing numbers of Québec civil society organizations taking up the call for BDS. We can continue on this momentum and put an end to Israeli Apartheid!"

It's a just call. ●



PAJU supporters picket Le Marcheur in Montreal.

Niagara News Bulletin

By PV Niagara Bureau

Harper avoids steelworkers

Prime Minister Stephen Harper was recently confronted by steelworkers from nearby Local 1005 locked out by US Steel in Hamilton. The plant was formerly owned by Stelco which also owned Lakeside Steel in Niagara. While Harper said he was seeking the views of Canadians, he avoided the steelworkers and stayed inside a local restaurant to talk with Tory MPs. The PM explained that big manufacturers are not coming back and that Niagarans should look to small businesses for jobs, adding that locals would "benefit disproportionately" from upcoming centennial celebrations of the War of 1812. Despite rhetoric about economic recovery, Niagara region unemployment is still 9% according to latest StatsCan figures.

Culinary students get burnt

Students turned in the administration of the Niagara-on-the-Lake Culinary School to the province for using them as cheap labour for high-end restaurants and cheating them out of a real education. The school has since been shut down. But instead of protecting everyone through the Training Completions Assurance Fund, which was designed to retrain cheated students, the government has been deporting foreign citizens under the argument that they are no longer students since their school has been shut down. ●

Get on the bus to Hamilton!

To get on a bus for the Jan. 29 rally, or register your Local's or Labour Council's bus with the OFL coordinating team, contact the OFL's Laurie Hardwick at 416-571-3087 or l.hardwick@ofl.ca, or Mary Long at 289-244-2595 or president-hdlc@cogeco.net.

People's Voice and CPC(Ontario) are also sending a busload, leaving Toronto at 11 am from 290 Danforth Ave. (east of Broadview). Call 416-469-2481 for seats. (Donation of \$30 or pay-what-you-can requested.)

Child poverty remains high in British Columbia

PV Vancouver Bureau

BC Campaign 2000 has released its latest annual report on child poverty. The child poverty rate in British Columbia dropped to 14.5% in 2008, according to Statistics Canada. The number of poor children was 121,000 - one of every seven BC children. For children under age six the poverty rate was 19.6%, or one in five young children.

The 2010 Child Poverty Report Card was prepared by First Call: BC Child and Youth Advocacy Coalition and the Social Planning and Research Council of BC.

"Child and family poverty simply won't disappear on its own," said Adrienne Montani, provincial coordinator of First Call. Montani said 2008 could have the lowest poverty figures of the decade. The recession that started in late 2008 is almost certain to produce higher poverty figures in 2009 and 2010. Indicators such as increases in 2009 and 2010 in food bank use and families on income assistance signal this anticipated rise.

Other key findings include:

* The risk of poverty for female lone-parent families is 31%, two



Over one-third of BC's poor children live in families in which at least one adult works full-time. Above: Hospital Employees Union members rally for decent wages. (Photo: K. Cariou)

and a half times greater than for children in 2-parent families, but the majority of poor children (67%) live in two-parent families.

* The vast majority of BC's poor children live in families with some income from paid work, with over one third having at least one adult working full-time, full-year.

* The gap between the incomes of the richest 10% and poorest 10% of families with children grew from

a ratio of 11 to 1 in 2007 to 14 to 1 in 2008. Families in the three lowest income groups (deciles) saw an actual decline in their incomes between 1989 and 2008.

The provincial Liberal government has regularly denied the severity of the problem, and promised for over a year that a "cross-ministry initiative" will be coming soon. Poverty has yet to become an issue in the BC Liberal leadership

race. The NDP has called for the government to introduce a poverty reduction plan with targets and timelines, but has yet to put forward the details of their own plan.

The Report Card calls for commitment to reduce the before-tax child poverty rate in BC to seven percent or less by 2020, and outlines a range of policy changes and investments to reach this target, including increases in the minimum wage, welfare rates and child tax benefits; enhanced

employment insurance benefits and eligibility; universal access to high-quality, affordable child care; and improved access to post-secondary education for low-income students.

BC Campaign 2000 is part of a cross-Canada network that marks the anniversary every November 24 of the 1989 pledge by the House of Commons to work to end child poverty by the year 2000.

For details, visit the website at www.firstcallbc.org. ●

THE ECONOMIC DIVIDE

CEOs are "recession-proof"

A new study from the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA) reports that Canada's highest-paid 100 CEOs breezed through the worst of the recession with earnings 155 times higher than the average Canadian income earner.

Released on Jan. 3, the study, *Recession-Proof*, looks at 2009 compensation levels and finds that for Canada's top 100 CEOs took home an average of \$6.6 million during the first full year of the recession - a stark contrast from the total average Canadian income of \$42,988.

"At this rate of reward, this handful of elite CEOs pocket the equivalent of the average Canadian wage by 2:30 pm on January 3 - the first working day of the year," says the study's author, CCPA Research Associate Hugh Mackenzie.

The study shows executive compensation in Canada wasn't always this rich. In 1998, the best paid 100 CEOs pocketed an average of 104 times more than the average Canadian wage earner, compared to 155 times more in 2009.

"Even that extraordinary number understates the real story," says Mackenzie. "Thanks to a change in corporate reporting introduced in 2008, we only have a conservative statistical estimate of the stock options that make up about one third of CEOs' 2009 pay. The public will never know how much most of these CEOs actually got paid in 2009. And that's only half the story. These CEOs are sitting on \$1.3 billion of stock options they haven't yet cashed in. That's about \$2 in future income for every \$1 they declared in 2009."

When the CEOs decide to exercise those stock options, the study reveals Canadians will subsidize that bonus with an estimated average of \$360 million in foregone taxes, since stock options are taxed at a lower rate, as if they are capital gains. Among Mackenzie's recommendations: getting rid of that expensive and unfair loophole.

The study highlights the role that soaring executive compensation plays in the dramatic growth in income inequality in Canada identified in a recent CCPA study by Senior Economist Armine Yalnizyan. Yalnizyan found that fully one third of all income growth in Canada in the past 20 years went to the richest 1% of Canadians. ●

Disparity creating "two Torontos"

Three years ago, University of Toronto professor David Hulchanski published a paper on Toronto's "Three Cities," illustrating a growing disparity among the city's census tracts. But the three-way divide Prof. Hulchanski and his fellow Cities Centre researchers described is swiftly being reduced to two, according to a new study by the group.

Reporting on the findings, a recent *Globe and Mail* commentary says that Toronto is increasingly dominated by two opposite populations - one with an average income of \$88,400, and another of \$26,900. These two groups live in different neighbourhoods, work in different sectors, send their children to different schools and have divergent and unequal access to city services and public transit. Those in the lowest-income areas are also more likely to be immigrants and racialized communities.

If the trend continues, Prof. Hulchanski suggests, Toronto in 2025 will have a concentration of high-earners along the lakefront and subway lines, surrounded by low-income areas.

That trend risks creating pockets of the city that become "no-go zones," said Carol Wilding, president of the Toronto Board of Trade, warning that it "starts to put more of a crisis tone" on the city's economic and social problems. Wilding's answer, however, is to urge businesses "to get in there to invest in those neighbourhoods," rather than to demand comprehensive government action to create jobs and improve social programs and schools.

Referring to Toronto's mottos - "diversity our strength" and "the city that works" - Hulchanski says that neither rings true. He notes that Toronto's diversity is becoming balkanized, and that the creation of polarized pockets of high- and low-income residents means Toronto simply won't "work" as a municipal entity.

In one five-year period alone, average incomes declined in 34 of Toronto's census tracts (about 7 per cent of its total), with 23 of those areas becoming predominantly low-income. Meanwhile, 12 areas became high-income and nine earned "middle-income" status. ●

Voisey's Bay talks collapse

Special to PV

Negotiations to resolve the strike at the Voisey's Bay nickel mine collapsed on Jan. 6 after Brazilian-based mining giant Vale walked away from talks. The 130 workers at the Labrador nickel mine, members of the United Steelworkers, have been on strike since August 2009. A larger strike against Vale by 3,000 USW members in Sudbury ended last summer.

"We are incredibly frustrated

and disappointed at this turn of events," said Boyd Bussey, a United Steelworkers staff representative involved in the negotiations. "After more than 17 months, we came to these talks hoping to finally see a mutual commitment from Vale to reach a fair settlement and bring an end to this dispute."

Steelworkers Local 9508 and Brazil-based Vale last met at the bargaining table in October. Talks resumed on Jan. 5 with the assistance of a mediator appointed

by the Newfoundland and Labrador government. But Vale walked out before the Jan. 7 release of an industrial inquiry commission report ordered by the provincial government. The commission recommends that the parties "compromise" to end the dispute, saying that their differences are not "insurmountable".

The length of the new contract has been a stumbling block. The

see VOISEY'S BAY, p. 11

Ford shows anti-environment stripes

By Michael Oosting

Toronto's new mayor, Rob Ford, is keeping true to his right-wing inclinations with his recent announcement to the *National Post* that he intends to do away with the so-called "bag tax". The tax drew international headlines when it made Toronto the first place on earth to enact a fee on plastic bags in order to promote the use of environmentally friendly reusable bags. The practice has since become standard across the province.

Ford claimed his motivations were due to a "large amount" of e-mails and phone calls from outraged Torontonians. His spokesperson Adrienne Batra claims that the day the story broke, Ford's office received several calls and e-mails, the majority of which were allegedly in support of Ford's decision.

Yet when Global Toronto broke the story the next day, their reporters took to the streets to take in the opinions of Torontonians. Of more than a dozen people interviewed, only two actually supported Ford's plans, one of them adding that despite the cost, it does however help the environment, and can't be

considered entirely bad. Hardly the majority Batra spoke of.

Ford, of course, has a reason behind his decision. It was not to reflect the opinions of the people that elected him, but to appease the sole vocal critic of the bag tax - and Ford's true constituent - the Canadian Federation of Independent Business. CFIB president Catherine Swift, recently released a statement saying that "retailers are getting the short end of the stick when it comes to the bag tax".

Swift went on to say, "[retailers] are being criticized for taking it in and making money even though it was forced on them in the first place". So, it isn't shoppers who are becoming fed up, but the retailers who claim to be getting a bad reputation. And it's only the retailers that Ford is listening to.

The bag tax has been responsible for a 71% drop in plastic bag waste in Toronto since its enactment, a huge improvement for a city still desperately trying to cope with the loss of its main landfill across the border in Michigan. Also, the cost to the average family is very minimal; bags cost only 5 cents under the legislation.

This is just another knot in the string of Ford's right-wing "reforms" since he took office, coupled with his recent actions against Toronto's unions and public transit. Ford has been well at work making enemies, to which he is about to add environmentally conscious Torontonians. The new mayor's "historic turn to the right" as *Maclean's* referred to it back in early December, may turn into something that Torontonians soon regret. ●

March 7, 2007: During a Toronto city council budget debate, Rob Ford said: "What I compare bike lanes to is swimming with the sharks. Sooner or later, you're going to get bitten. And every year we have dozens of people that get hit by cars or trucks. Well, no wonder. Roads are built for buses, cars and trucks. Not for people on bikes. And my heart bleeds for them when I hear someone gets killed, but it's their own fault at the end of the day."

EDITORIALS

Where's Robin Hood when we need him?

The news that bank bosses in Britain have scored astonishing bonuses has enraged working people and the labour movement in that country. As the UK *Morning Star* wrote, "The City streets ran green today as banking bosses bathed in the expectation of yet more record bonuses." Top UK bank executives are forecast to rake in 7 billion pounds in "performance-related" cash in the latest round of payouts, even as they continue to rely on the security of vast taxpayer bailouts. The profits of Britain's top five banks soared to 37 billion pounds in 2010, and are predicted to rise to 51.7 billion pounds this year.

As reported on page 3 of this issue, the story is basically the same in Canada, where the highest-paid 100 CEOs somehow managed to weather the first round of the capitalist recession with earnings 155 times higher than the average Canadian income earner. These captains of industry racked up an average of \$6.6 million during 2009, compared to the total Canadian income of \$42,988. This disparity is much wider than a decade ago, when the top 100 CEOs were paid "only" 104 times the pay of the average Canadian worker.

Even more appalling, these CEOs have another \$1.3 billion of stock options to cash in. Canadian taxpayers - that would be you, dear reader - will heavily subsidize this particular ripoff. Since stock options are treated as capital gains and taxed at a lower rate, this will mean \$360 million in foregone federal taxes.

With the help of the corporate media, Stephen Harper and other Tory cabinet ministers keep posing as the best stewards of the Canadian economy. Too bad we don't have Robin Hood and his merry band around to return this massive pile of loot stolen from Canadian working people. Looks like that will have to be the job of the working class and progressive movements.

The consequences of hate

The Jan. 8 massacre at a "meet the voters" event held by U.S. Rep. Gabrielle Giffords has ripped the mask from the face of ultra-right demagoguery. It is clear that the bullets fired by Jared Loughner were aimed at several targets: women who dare to challenge the misogynist ideology of male supremacy, immigrants and racialized people, and anyone who disputes the rabid "Tea Party" line. Perhaps the most critical target is the concept of democracy itself.

This is not to argue that the United States is a genuinely democratic society, or that Rep. Giffords is truly a "progressive". But for many years, ultra-right forces have made increasingly overt threats against any opposition. The election of a non-Republican African-American president and the adoption of even some timid measures to expand health care coverage have inspired this neo-fascist movement to mobilize against the limited forms of democracy which remain in the USA. Far from being a grassroots reaction, this movement is funded by the most reactionary, aggressive, militarist sections of US finance capital. One vicious example is Sarah Palin, who emerged from the murky ranks of the "militia" movements to the top leadership of the Republican Party, with the backing of energy and arms industry corporations. A website linked to Palin implicitly urged this crime, placing gunsights on a map of the districts of 20 Democratic politicians, including Gabrielle Giffords.

The smug idea that "it could never happen here" is disproven by Canadian history. But the drift towards the destruction of democracy is not inevitable. What's needed is a powerful mass movement, led by the working class and its allies, to win a program of truly progressive and democratic social reforms. This, not despair or cynicism, must be our response to the murders in Tucson.

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LETTERS

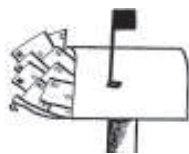
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Sun TV will be nothing at all like Fox TV in the US.



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Letters to the Editor

First World exploiting the Third

Re: Columnist had it wrong,
Letters to the editor, *Burnaby NOW*, Dec. 15

Once upon a time, a blind man grabbed hold of the tail of an elephant. "It is a rope," he said. Of course, anyone but a blind man can see that an elephant is not a rope.

Stephen Meighan blithely tossed off the claim that capitalism has created the wealth in our society. Just like the blind man who has hold of the tail of the elephant, it is easy to make such a claim, as long as you ignore most of the facts.

About 500 years ago, approximately coinciding with the development of the cannon-armed deep-sea vessel, the European nations came to dominate all of Africa, Asia and the Americas. For most of the past 500 years, the wealth of the whole world has been flowing into the coffers of the European nations and, later, their largest colony. Some time later, the capitalist system came to dominate the whole world. Parts of Asia have now recovered from that plundering, but Africa remains a basket case, and of course, the original inhabitants of the Americas have been largely exterminated. To conclude from this historical process that the wealth came from capitalism is just silly; the wealth of the First World came largely from plundering the rest of the world.

There are three types of

wealth. Real wealth includes things such as food and houses, primarily things that are necessary for our survival. Perceived wealth includes things such as art and jewels, which we can actually do without, but which are nice to have. Fictitious wealth includes things such as money, which has no value in itself but can be exchanged for the other forms of wealth.

As long as we don't create more of this fictitious wealth than the actual wealth it represents, we're OK, but when we start printing money freely, or when we speculate on the stock market or with real estate, all we're doing is selling our children into slavery. The only way to create the first two types of wealth is by applying some processing effort to natural resources. The capitalist economic system has no particular relationship to this process.

The main reason that capitalism does not create wealth is that it suppresses the talents and other abilities of the vast majority of people. Thus you have large numbers of highly skilled people who have no recourse but to do menial labour in places such as Canada, especially if they weren't born here. In the Third World, it's much worse.

Capitalism is very good at one thing: transferring wealth from the weak to the strong, whether they be individuals or nations.

As long as we are the beneficiaries of this process, we can fantasize that capitalism actually creates wealth. But ask the people who are dying of starvation or exposure, or worse, on the streets of Vancouver what capitalism has done for them. Ask the hundreds of millions of people that are dying of starvation or exposure, or worse, in the Third World what capitalism has done for them. They will not agree with Stephen Meighan.

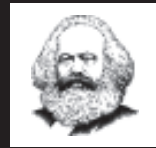
Victor Finberg, *Burnaby*

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Marxist Theory Today

Making the connections between class, race and gender

From December 3-5, the 12th International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties met in South Africa. The theme of the meeting was "The deepening systemic crisis of capitalism. The tasks of Communists in defence of sovereignty, deepening social alliances, strengthening the anti-imperialist front in the struggle for peace, progress and Socialism." We reprint here the contribution presented by Mary Davis on behalf of the Communist Party of Britain.

In Britain the Comprehensive Spending Review constitutes the most vicious assault on public services and the Welfare State in British history. The public finance deficit, such as it is, is being used as the cover for a programme of tax cuts and privatization - to benefit the rich and big business.

The mass media and the City have colluded with the ConDem government to launch an ideologically-driven offensive against the public sector, in the interests of monopoly capitalism. They are pursuing an agenda designed by the European Commission and European Central Bank.

For women these changes represent the biggest reversal in opportunities since the end of the First World War. Women's jobs will be hardest hit by public sector cuts. Of the 8.5 billion pounds being raised by cutting direct contributions to individuals, 5.7 billion pounds - two thirds - is coming from women, while 2.7 billion pounds is being raised from men. 300,000 women's jobs in the public sector will go, with 65% of public sector jobs done by women. Women will also be more heavily affected by increases in public sector pension contributions.

Given the theme of this conference it is appropriate to remind ourselves of the relevance of the crisis of capitalism to half the human race: notably women. This was recognised by communists in the early 20th century. A very advanced position was advocated by the Third Congress of the Communist International. Writing in July 1921 the theses could be describing our own era:

"The capitalist economic system has entered a blind alley; there is no scope for the development of the productive forces within the framework of capitalism. The sharp decline in living standards of the working people, the inability of the bourgeoisie to restore production, the rise of speculation, the disintegration of production, unemployment, price fluctuations and the gap between prices and wages, lead everywhere to the inevitable sharpening of the class struggle.

"...In the present period particularly, it is in the interests of the working class that women are drawn into the organised ranks of the proletariat ..."

Much more was said on women workers at this Congress: it repays careful reading. It is my view that in our day we, as communists have neglected this issue, but we simply cannot afford to both at the level of theory and practice.

Our foundation is an acceptance of a Marxist definition of class, but

a gender and colour blind misapplication of Marxist theory has resulted in a partial understanding of class which has had profound repercussions in labour historiography and labour movement practice. It is particularly important that we acknowledge this given that this year we celebrate the 100th anniversary of International Women's Day. We need a definition of class which is predicated upon an understanding of the relationship between class exploitation and oppression. We also need to sharpen our ability, already developed by our socialist feminist foremothers, in theory and practice to connect the hitherto separate spheres of class, race and gender in a manner that comprehends both their distinctiveness and inter-relationships. This is long overdue.

However, it is only through an understanding of the primacy of class as an economic relationship to the dominant mode of production that the connections between class race and gender can be correctly understood.

The renegotiation of the gender division of labour was central to the process of industrialisation in Britain - the first industrial nation - and to the formation of a working class. Since women were amongst the first factory workers, women led early industrial action, whether on an informal or formal basis and were amongst the first trade unionists. Gender remains central to the continual restructuring and renegotiation of capitalist relations over the past two centuries. This is true of Britain as it was many other capitalist countries.

A more fully worked out conception of historical materialism based on a clearer understanding



Scene from the new film *Made in Dagenham*, which dramatizes the historic 1969 strike for equal pay by women auto workers in Britain.

of the nature of the working class and the relationship between exploitation and oppression, would have had (and can still have) significant implications for the way our theory has developed in a non colour or gender blind fashion.

The subjugation of women and black people has been historically connected with class society for so long that it has become the accepted natural order of things. The oppressive ideologies sustaining subservience is so culturally rooted that it has passed beyond naked statements of class rule and entered into the very fabric of our lives including language itself. As such these ideologies have become universalised and hence disembodied from their class origins. They have thus fulfilled the ultimate goal of ideology - namely to represent the interests of the dominant class as the interests of society as a whole. How else are we to explain the permeation of racist and sexist ideas within the working class and even

within the socialist movement? And that the history of the working class/labour movement has airbrushed women out of existence despite its conspicuous presence.

There is an important connection between Marxist theory and practice; whether such practice involves historical scholarship or labour movement activism. The consequences of an inability to appreciate the role of women in the making and re-making of the working class have resulted in, until recently, the exclusion of oppressed groups from the mainstream of the labour movement. In this respect labour historians who ignore women are reflecting the innate sexism and patriarchy that has been the hallmark of the mainstream of many Labour Movements for much of their histories.

But women have played a part in working class politics or trade union activity and certainly their role in the labour process itself was and continues to be vitally important. The exclusion of women

from working class and labour history compounds the misunderstanding of class and class formation and has reinforced the theoretical confusion over such invented ideological constructs of the 'family wage' and the 'male breadwinner' which has insinuated itself into labour movement thinking since the mid 19th century. Such confusion explains the persistence even today of women's unequal pay and the fact that many trade unions either opposed equal pay or failed to accord it a priority in their campaigning.

This is not to write off the entire labour movement over its entire history as a misogynistic backwater. Working class organisations do not proceed in a linear onward and upward fashion. They are always marked by peaks and troughs in activity, effectiveness, membership and ideological clarity. These ups and downs are not always crudely determined by economic circumstances but have a great deal to do with the prevailing level of political class consciousness - this is why it's so vital for communists to take the lead as did Clara Zetkin in her day. In our day, of course we must learn the lessons of those countries which have already started on this path - that's why a conference of this nature is so important.

However, if class consciousness does not explicitly embrace the female half of the working class, such consciousness is but a chimera and we stand little chance of developing a strong, enduring and united movement of resistance to neo-liberalism, big business and imperialism. ●

Manufacturing anti-Semitism in Ottawa

By Reuel S. Amdur, from *The Canadian Charger website, www.thecanadian-charger.com, Dec. 2, 2010*

The Interparliamentary Coalition to Combat Antisemitism was holding their convention on Parliament Hill on November 8, but they had competition. Independent Jewish Voices (IJV) booked a room for a press conference.

Dr. Michael Keefer, author of *Antisemitism Real and Imagined*, and IJV's Dr. Diana Ralph welcomed media from print, radio, and television. Copies of Keefer's book were available along with other handouts.

In welcoming media to the press conference, Ralph said that the Canadian Parliamentary Coalition to Combat Antisemitism "labels as antisemitic those who support justice for Palestinian people and aims to criminalize legitimate criticism of Israeli misdeeds."

One handout, from the Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East (CJPME), noted that the Canadian Parliamentary Coalition (CPCCA) had no official mandate and that it refused to allow their group to testify at their hearings. The CJPME also noted that Bloc Quebecois members of

the Coalition quit because of the refusal to hear CJPME and other groups whose views differ from the Coalition's predetermined position.

While the CPCCA claimed to be undertaking their work because of an alarming increase in antisemitism, the press conference made available highlights from the CPCCA hearings in which university administrators from Trent, York, McGill, and Brock found no reason for Jewish students to be afraid.

Police officials who appeared at the hearings also failed to corroborate CPCCA's concerns.

Another handout tallied the witnesses at the CPCCA's hearings. Forty-five percent (33) were from pro-Israel organizations, of which 13 were from outside Canada. Fifteen university administrators and sixteen police officials attended, along with ten individuals and persons from other Canadian organizations.

However, no Jewish organizations opposed to the CPCCA's perspective who had made written submissions were invited, nor were any of the groups that were supporters of Palestinian rights who wrote submissions.

A report by Mordecai Briemberg and Brian Campbell, of the Seriously

Free Speech Committee, was also available. They cited Irwin Cotler's statement to the *Canadian Jewish News* that "the new antisemitism aims at getting rid of the Jewish

other voices

state." The CPCCA and the ICCA set out to identify and label critics of Israel as new antisemites.

Briemberg and Campbell also quote Bernie Farber, CEO of the Canadian Jewish Congress: "We have come to a point in the 21st Century where at least in the halls of government and I think very much in the mainstream of Canadian life, we are viewed as part and parcel of Canadian polity." Hardly the stuff of victims of severe

antisemitism.

One other handout took issue with the funding of the ICCA conference in Ottawa and London and of the Global Forum on Antisemitism in Jerusalem. The \$451,000 for the Ottawa conference was questioned because the CPCCA and the ICCA are not incorporated bodies to which funds can be transferred.

Jason Kenney, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, told the CPCCA that MP's who took part in the overseas activities of ICCA and the Global Forum go at their own expense, with "no parliamentary defraying of expenses."

However, the report of the Office of the Conflict of Interest and Ethics Commissioner has a record of Cotler being reimbursed \$2,837.52 for the Jerusalem Forum in December, 2009. As well, the handout suggests that \$1,439.30 USD for transportation in February, 2009, appears related to the London ICCA conference. ●

Rebel Youth #11

The latest issue of Rebel Youth magazine is now available at offices of the Communist Party & Young Communist League. Check it out online at rebelyouth-magazine.blogspot.com/



Struggle of Western Sahara highlighted at Youth Festival

By Stephen Von Sychowski

The 17th World Festival of Youth and Students, hosted last month in Tshwane, South Africa, shone a spotlight on the struggle of Western Sahara, Africa's last colony. Delegates from the Polisario Front national liberation movement addressed the Festival's Anti-Imperialist Court to denounce the crimes of Morocco, which has brutally occupied Western Sahara for decades.

The origins of the Polisario Front go back to 1971, when Sahrawi university students in Morocco organized The Embryonic Movement for the Liberation of Saguiael-Hamra and Riode Oro. In 1973, the group relocated to Spanish-occupied Western Sahara and prepared for armed rebellion. On May 10 of that year, the Polisario Front was formed with the aim of forcing an end to Spanish colonialism through armed struggle.

In 1975, the fascist Spanish government of Francisco Franco began negotiations with Morocco and Mauritania to hand over its colonial subjects to its regional friends. By 1976, the Madrid Accords had been signed between the three countries. Spain departed Western Sahara while Morocco and Mauritania moved in.

The Polisario Front continued



"Free Sahara" banner displayed at the booth of the Spanish delegation during the Festival.

its guerilla war against the new occupiers, refusing to accept the notion that one set of occupiers is better than another. They also guarded fleeing refugees escaping occupied cities. The Polisario's strength grew immensely during this period, despite Morocco's bombing of refugee camps, and the assassination of Polisario leader El Ouali.

Meanwhile, Mauritania struggled to hold on to control. They received a helping hand from French imperialism in the form of air force attacks on Polisario columns. But Polisario attacks both within Western Sahara and Mauritania ultimately wore down military morale and crippled

Mauritania's economy, leading to a coup d'état.

The coup leaders moved to sign a cease fire with the Polisario Front. By 1979, a peace treaty led to the departure of Mauritanian forces and recognition of the rights of the Sahrawi people. King Hassan II of Morocco then moved unilaterally to annex the territories previously occupied by his former ally.

During the mid-1980's, desperate to fend off Polisario attacks, Morocco erected a massive wall protecting the main economic centres of Western Sahara. The wall was then staffed by a military force nearly as large as the Sahrawi population itself. The wall separated families and physically closed the Sahrawi out of the economy of their own country. Despite this, the struggle for liberation continued and attacks against the occupying forces did not end.

In 1991, a UN sponsored cease-fire came in to effect with the promise of a referendum the following year on the question of Western Sahara's independence from Morocco. But the referendum has never been held and the process remains stalled.

Meanwhile, the Polisario Front continues to carry out a campaign of peaceful struggle against the Moroccan occupation. More

recently, the Moroccan government put forward a new proposal in 2007 that "self government" could be granted through its Royal Advisory Council for Saharan Affairs governing the area with a degree of autonomy. Naturally this proposal quickly garnered the support of imperialist powers such as France and the United States, but has not won over the Polisario Front which continues to demand full independence.

Since 1979 the Polisario Front has been recognized by the United Nations as the legitimate representative of the people of Western Sahara, although Polisario's real legitimacy comes from the mass support of the Sahrawi people.

South Africa and over 50 other countries today recognize the legitimacy of the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic, which exists across the areas of Western Sahara not behind Morocco's wall. Included in these countries are socialist Cuba, and all the socialist countries of the world. Missing from the list is our own country, Canada, which shamefully claims neutrality on the issue.

Last October, thousands of Sahrawis left the occupied city of Laayoun and established the

Gdaim Izik protest camp by setting up tents in the desert. The camp soon swelled to 25,000 people and quickly garnered international attention.

On October 30, Tiago Vieira, President of the World Federation of Democratic Youth, along with several journalists and elected representatives from Spain, was detained and expelled from Morocco upon attempting to visit the camp to witness the situation first hand. No journalists or independent observers have been allowed by Moroccan authorities to visit the camp. This is probably due to the fact that it has been subject to attacks by Moroccan forces which killed at least one and wounded hundreds. Eyewitnesses state that Moroccan security forces targeted women, children, and the elderly in particular. But despite violence and repression, the struggle continues.

Western Sahara has been relatively unknown to most people in Canada and many other countries. Perhaps its prominent place in a massive gathering of over 15,000 youth and students from around the world will help to change that and add more voices to the struggle for freedom in Western Sahara.



Burning tents during the Moroccan raid against the Gdaim Izik protest camp.



Members of the Western Sahara contingent enter the opening ceremony of the Youth Festival.

Global migrant numbers to reach 400 million

By Sanjay Suri, InterPress Service

The population of migrants worldwide could rise above 400 million by 2050 if present rates of growth continue, says a report by the International Organisation for Migration released in late November. The report says that "if the number of international migrants, estimated at 214 million in 2010, continues to grow at the same pace as during the last 20 years, it could reach 405 million by 2050."

"The world itself is becoming a hotspot for migration," Peter Schatzer, chief of staff of the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), told IPS. "It's no longer the traditional migration routes to Europe and the U.S. alone that will see pressure. Now the emerging economic powers also attract migration, such as Brazil, South Africa, India, China."

Governments everywhere are ill prepared to deal with the new migration explosion, Schatzer cautioned.

"Most governments do not have a systemic and systematic approach, they do not have even a single ministry dealing with migration," he said. "It may be the labour, health, interior ministry and so on. What we suggest is the need to coordinate and have a dialogue between countries that send migrants, transit countries, and destination countries in order to get a handle on this." The report warns that without such action the world "will be taken by surprise by the relentless pace of migration."

The report, "The Future of Migration: Building Capacities for Change", says demographics, economic needs and environmental change are driving the growing numbers of international migrants. One reason for this steep rise will be significant

growth in the labour force in developing countries from 2.4 billion in 2005 to 3.6 billion in 2040, the report says. This could accentuate the global mismatch between labour supply and demand. The economic crisis has hit migrants hard. Remittances to developing countries declined by 6.0 percent in 2009 due to the economic crisis, the report says, "although some countries such as Bangladesh, Pakistan and the Philippines benefited from an increase in remittances between 2008 and 2009."

"In the developing world, between 2005 and 2014, 1.2 billion people will newly move into the labour market," Schatzer told IPS. "At the same time in the developed world populations are aging. This requires new types of work that cannot be filled by jobs by the indigenous population, but clearly the developed world cannot offer more than a billion jobs to the

developing world; most jobs have to be resolved in the countries of origin."

The mismatch is becoming ever more serious, Schatzer said. "This is a tremendous challenge for countries of the South because young people today have a lot of information. The globalisation of information has also let a lot of people in the South know how one could live, what conditions exist in destination countries. Dealing with these expectations will be a major challenge for the governments in the South."

"It is easy to say people should go away," he added. "But people don't necessarily follow that if they don't see a future for themselves. We must give people a future in their own countries." Recent moves against migrants in several

see MIGRANTS, p. 11

"We shall build a future of justice, equality, peace, hope and joy"

Excerpts from the Final Declaration of the 17th World Festival of Youth and Students, held in Dec. 2010 in South Africa.

We the delegates to the 17th Festival of Student and Youth, gathered from 126 countries, more than 15,000 in numbers, have met under the theme "Lets Defeat Imperialism for a world of Peace, Solidarity and Social Transformation" on the shore of the majestic, dynamic and vibrant South Africa. Here we have fought for decades, side by side, from all walks of life to bring down the tyranny of the Apartheid system, fostered to increase the hold of Imperialism on our people. We fought with the people of South Africa and today we meet here to further our struggle against, all injustices and discriminations.

We meet in South Africa on the eve of the Centenary of the Liberation movement, the ANC, in 2012. This we do to take stock with our comrades on how far they have come in building a non-racial, non-sexist, democratic and prosperous Society, fighting with every fiber in their beings to defeat imperialism in all its forms. We have come to celebrate the hosting of the festival in South Africa, aware of the magnificent role played by its movement to bring about democracy to South Africa, aware that the ANC YL was amongst the founding members of the Festival movement and the 1st African President of WFDY. We have come

struggle against the exploitation of man by man. Of particular importance is the contribution of Socialist Cuba, not only because it has hosted twice the festival, but also because by doing so in 1997 it helped the Festival movement to be re-launched despite the difficulties of the international anti-imperialist and working class movements in the 1990s. We congratulate WFDY on its 65th anniversary for its contribution to the struggle for peace, justice and the Festival movement, in this year that we celebrate also the 65 years of the peoples' victory against Nazi Fascism.

As the anti-imperialist movement of the youth and of the people developed its struggle, the imperialists also seek to consolidate their forces and to fortify their structures. They use all mechanisms in their hands such as NATO, AFRICOM, EU, IMF, WB, WTO and all ways of intervention such as blockades, sanctions, embargos, conflicts, military intervention, wars and occupations against sovereign states and progressive movements. The new strategic concept "NATO 2020", decided in Lisbon earlier this year incorporates all the changes made in its structure of the previous years...

The crisis of the capitalist system is inherent to the deepening of its inner contradictions, unveiling its historical incapacity to achieve progress for mankind. This crisis provides the ground for emerging imperialist forces that in



Canadian delegates carry their banner at the opening ceremonies of the 17th World Festival of Youth and Students. Members of the Canadian contingent also carried flags of all the nations in Canada.

and a mode of development that will strive to fulfill the youth's and the peoples' needs and rights.

...The "capitalist globalization", the system of exploitation and control of the people and resources is pushing masses of young people into the margins of society. They are the first victims of the social inequalities at all levels. The 212 million people unemployed, in a world where precarious, temporary occupation is the rule, are proof of this... Due to the economic crisis, even more jobs were lost, condemning more people to misery and poverty. We struggle against the elimination of the majority of labor rights, especially those of young workers who suffer more the effects of unemployment. An entire generation of young people is being transformed into a generation without rights.

We highlight the role of young women in the struggle for their emancipation as part of the general struggle against imperialism. Women, who are even more strongly attacked by the imperialist policies, deserve our appreciation and full support to end all abuses and discriminations existing in our world as part of our combat to defeat imperialism...

The imperialist profit drive and unbridled exploitation of planet's natural resources follows the logic of destruction and is the main threat to the environment and to the future of the planet. The environmental issue is taking on an alarming dimension due to the production of genetically modified (GM) organisms, which are jeopardizing humankind's future. Water all around the globe is being more and more a target to the exploitative nature of capitalism and is being used as a strategic and political weapon by imperialism. Imperialism's strategy is to pass the responsibilities for the environmental problems onto the people, individualizing what are presented as solutions in order to increase even further the big companies' profits through the so called "green" products.

Imperialist warmongering policies produce such crises as refugees, millions of people who are compelled to leave their homes, lands, jobs and families. We strongly condemn the imperialist

economic policies, interventions and occupations that have produced millions of immigrants, we uptake the struggle in the defense of the rights of the immigrants in work, education, social services. No human being can be illegal.

Imperialist policies attack the full development of education and of the young people, preventing them from accessing a free and quality education that is a school of freedom and commitment with peace. We defend and struggle for education as a public and social good, a universal human right, which gratuity must be ensured by the state. We reject the intentions of privatization that several public institutions of different levels are being victims of. We demand the withdrawal of education from the agreements of the WTO-education is not commodity!

The increase in use of drugs in young people is a dangerous phenomenon that proves the decay of the capitalist system. Millions of young people live with AIDS, mostly in Africa and Asia. The big pharmaceutical trusts monopolize the production and distribution of needed medicine are profiting from pandemics instead of providing the means of treatment. Children are being abused and forced into military operations, prostitution, and drug trafficking; the number of street children is increasing.

Despite this offense the progressive and peace loving forces have been resisting, conquering important victories and growing stronger. The struggle for peace has been very important along the years and with these recent actions we try to raise the consciousness of the youth

masses and focus the struggle against the enemy of peace, imperialism. The fight at national level plays a central role in the fight against the specific measures affecting the youth. We highlight the importance of the victories achieved by the struggles of the students, workers, peasants, indigenous and women's movements in times as these. We underline the importance of several electoral victories and other positive results of progressive parties and coalitions...

We, the youth and students of the world gathered in this historical festival, raised our voices against all the ills generated by imperialism, which is undergoing its greatest global crisis...

It is time to continue the struggle for youth development and our economic, social and cultural values and not those of a decadent system they are trying to impose on us. We shall build a future of justice, equality, peace, hope and joy for humanity. The future of a new stage of history is in our hands and it depends on the peoples, working masses and world youth and their power of transformation, to build a world of peace and solidarity, where the power and the produced wealth will belong to the peoples and the youth of the world.

We thank the people of South Africa for welcoming us to their country and celebrating with us the opportunity to see South Africa change. We commit to you that we the youth of the world will never let our guard down in pursuance of a world free of imperialism. Let us start getting ready for the 18th World Festival of Youth and Students! ●



A wide variety of gifts and mementoes were on sale at the anti-imperialist fair held during the Festival.

here to pay tribute to the contribution of Andile Yawa and all the festival veterans for giving to us a tool for Solidarity, brotherhood and an agent for change through the festival movement. We have dedicated this festival to the struggle and legacy of two heroes, who have made it possible for us to speak about Solidarity and World Peace: Commander Fidel Castro and Madiba Nelson Mandela. We thank them for their tireless spirits.

63 years after the WFYS Movement was initiated in Prague, we highlight the important role that the Socialist camp has played in the support of this top event of the anti-imperialist youth. The location of the WFYS itself is a statement of solidarity with the struggle of its people. The WFYS is an expression of the struggle against imperialism and the

the past have either clashed with the USA or EU, or have been their allies, to use the different timing in the manifestation of the crisis to increase their influence in the imperialist pyramid, to hold a bigger piece in the capitalist struggle for markets and exploitation. It is not a result of the administration models of the economy or the corruption of the system; it is now expressed all around the capitalist world in both neoliberal and social-democrat led countries. We are in a phase of deepening of the crisis; the recuperation in the following years will be minuscule: the rights of the youth will continue to be attacked at social, economical and cultural level every day. It demonstrates the historical limits and the failure of the capitalist system to answer to the peoples' needs and aspirations; it highlights the need for the creation of a society



The Vietnamese contingent at the Youth Festival.



GLOBAL CLASS STRUGGLE

Deadly poultry plant in Australia

Australia's National Union of Workers is stepping up its campaign in support of workers at the country's largest poultry producer, by calling on Baida's main bank and largest retailer to insist that the company guarantee ethical employment standards.

Already under investigation for underpayment of wages and benefits and discriminatory practices at its free range, "ethically produced" Lilydale poultry plant in Adelaide, Baida has now been cited for unsafe practices resulting in the death of immigrant contract worker Sarel Singh. Singh, who had already completed his shift, was decapitated when told to clean a line moving at full speed - 183 birds per minute.

Baida workers are denied permanent employment even after years of service, work in a climate of fear and uncertainty and are told they cannot access workers compensation if they are injured at work. But the company's premium product is marketed and sold as an "ethical choice" for consumers.

For months, the company has refused to address these serious issues. Instead, workers are being sat down with company lawyers and managers to be told that it is their union which is the problem. Some workers at other sites are being handed union resignation forms and encouraged to leave the union.

Brazil Minister backs Air Workers

Brazilian Labor Minister Carlos Lupi backs airline workers' demand for a 10% wage increase as carriers Gol Linhas Aereas Inteligentes SA and Tam SA make "a lot of money" from increased traffic by the nation's growing middle class. In a Jan. 5 interview with *Bloomberg News*, Lupi said that salaries in Latin America's biggest economy will increase faster than inflation this year. The pay increases won't stoke inflation, which is being fuelled by speculative capital inflows that have pushed the country's exchange rate to "worrisome" levels, he said.

Domestic demand, boosted by a 20% expansion in consumer credit, fuelled the fastest economic growth in two decades last year. The \$1.57 trillion economy expanded 7.3% in 2010, and economists expect gross domestic product to grow 4.5% this year.

"A virtuous economic cycle favours the worker," Lupi said. "If wages fuelled inflation, the world would be finished. We have a growing middle class that needs to buy, and pay raises will provide more tax collection, investments and ultimately jobs."

During former President Lula da Silva's eight years in office through 2010, roughly 36 million Brazilians joined the middle class, and Lula's central bank president, Henrique Meirelles, last year said 36 million more should reach that status by 2014. Brazil's population is now over 191 million. The economy created 2.54 million jobs in the first 11 months of 2010, helping cut the unemployment rate to an all-time

low 5.7%. Brazil may create 3 million jobs this year, with unemployment falling to a range of 5 to 5.5%.

Brazilian airline workers may declare a strike as early as Jan. 12 if companies don't increase their offer of an 8.2% pay rise, says Marcelo Schmidt, General Secretary of the National Union of Airline Workers. The union also wants an increase of 15% in starting salaries.

Burmese migrant workers protest

More than 300 Burmese migrant workers protested against labour rights violations on Jan. 3 in Bangkok. Employees of the SYK Autopart Import-Export Co. successfully pressed the company to meet demands including the right to paid national holidays, the



right to medical leave, and the right to obtain temporary passports and work permits, as well as for the installation of CCTV cameras in the workplace so hours of work could be properly recorded.

"We wrote our demands in Thai and delivered them to management", Ko Soe, a protest organiser told the media. The demonstration started at 8 am. By 11 am, worker delegates had reached an agreement with company representatives in the presence of local police.

Prior to the protest, workers had to give at least 30 days advance notice of resignation. Now, they are required to give only 15 days notice. In addition, workers now have the right to complain about salaries and conditions, and the right to have a pre-employment "security deposit" of 1,000 Baht reimbursed upon leaving the company.

Ko Soe explained that "Some (employees) have worked for the company for more than three years. Despite knowing our labour rights were being violated, we didn't dare to complain. But since December 29, we have campaigned to secure our rights."

SYK manufactures motorcycle helmets, spare parts, and accessories. It employs around 500 people including more than 300 Burmese migrant workers.

Minimum wage struggle in Egypt

The Egyptian government may face new protests and demonstrations over the minimum wage issue. 2010 ended with this situation still pending, after the government was instructed by the courts to set a minimum wage.

The Wage Council, an official institution headed by the minister

of economic development, is pushing for the amount of LE400 (\$70). Prime Minister Nazif has expressed support for this low minimum wage, claiming that it is necessary to avoid layoffs and to encourage new job creation. This sum is below the amount necessary to stay above the poverty line.

With an anticipated rise in inflation in 2011, the issue will become more contentious. The dispute started in 2008 as the world food crisis unfolded, causing Egyptian inflation rates to surge to 16%. As the food crisis spread, demonstrators pleaded for a set minimum wage, leading the government to put the issue on its agenda. In 2010, when food prices hit record numbers, sit-ins escalated in front of the Parliament building.

The Egyptian Center for Economic and Social Rights had filed a case with the Administrative Court, demanding a minimum wage be set at LE1200 (\$210). The court ruled that the government must set a minimum wage compatible with costs of living, but did not specify an amount. The newly elected Parliament is seen now as the last resort in the attempt to fix a fair minimum wage.

Samir Radwan, a newly appointed MP and an economist, told *Ahram Online* that resolving the crisis is considered the top priority on the agenda of Parliament's economic committee, which he heads. "It will be over soon and workers will hear very good news," Radwan promised.

Radwan had prepared in 2010 a study for the Information and Decision Support Center, showing that several laws have increased and modified the minimum wage in Egypt, the last being No. 53 of 1984, which defined the monthly minimum at LE35 (\$6), where it remains to the present.

However, "If the minimum wage was set any higher, it could discourage businesses from hiring or lead them to hire in a clandestine fashion," Minister of Finance Youssef Boutros Ghali said recently on television.

"It will not be solved until the government meets our requirements," Abd El Rahmaan Kheir, a member of the National Council for Wages, told *Ahram Online*. "The new Parliament will not change much," he added, noting that the majority of new MPs are related to the ruling National Democratic Party.

Ibrahim Azhary, the general secretary of Egypt's Labour Union, has voiced skepticism. "How will LE400 be enough for a family?" he lamented. Three years ago, the Labor Syndicates Union conducted a study showing that the minimum wage must be set at LE1000 to meet life expenses. Relations between workers and employers have "entered a dark hole, and if the government does not come up with a proper cure it will be a disaster," Azhary warns.

French port traffic crippled

Container traffic at Le Havre, France's leading box hub, has been hit by a dockworker strike which brought container handling to a

standstill. Port operations across France were halted early in January, when members of the General Confederation of Labour (CGT) staged a 24-hour walkout. Members were protesting against a major port services reform that was introduced in 2010.

Although operations at most ports had resumed by Jan. 5, all 1,800 freight workers in Le Havre, and most of the employees of the port authority were still refusing to go back to work.

Further halts were planned over the Jan. 7-10 period. There will be no cargo-handling operations and no manoeuvring of mobile structures during this strike. Cargo-handling operations on terminals were also expected to be disrupted.

Hong Kong sets minimum wage

Hong Kong's first statutory minimum wage has been set at HK\$28 (\$4.70) per hour as a report showed the wealth of the city's top 40 billionaires jumped 21%. Legislators on Jan. 5 ratified the government's plan to increase salaries for about 314,600 workers by an average of 17%.

Chief Executive Donald Tsang's government is introducing the minimum wage from May 1 to help reduce a widening wealth gap and resolve "social and economic conflicts" highlighted by Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao in December.

Hong Kong has the biggest divide between the rich and the poor in Asia, according to a United Nations report. The 40 richest people have US\$163 billion (\$211 billion), up from US\$135 billion last year after China's growth bolstered their investments, according to *Forbes Magazine*.

Meanwhile, hundreds of

thousands of workers live on wages as low as US\$2 an hour. "A minimum wage won't change the income disparity in Hong Kong," said Lee Cheuk Yan, a lawmaker representing the Hong Kong Confederation of Trade Unions. "Business owners are getting a big chunk of the profit while workers only get a small rise in their paycheck."

Some argue that the minimum wage is not high enough. "The minimum wage level is not enough for low-income groups to catch up with the inflation rate," said legislator Leung Yiu Chung, who called for an hourly wage of HK\$33.

In Beijing, the minimum rose more than 20% to 1,160 yuan (\$227) a month from Jan. 1. Singapore does not have a minimum wage. In Tokyo, the level is \$12.80 an hour. Thailand increased its minimum wages to 221 baht (\$9.50) a day in Phuket and 215 baht each day in the capital Bangkok on Jan 1.

Bus unionists released in Iran

Two activists from the International Transport Federation-affiliated bus workers' union in Iran have been released from detention. The move follows a letter from the ITF to the Iranian president, demanding the release of all detained unionists.

Morteza Komsari and Aliakbar Nazariis of the Syndicate of Workers of Tehran and Suburbs Bus Company were released at the end of December. Four others - Gholamreza Gholamhosseini, Ebrahim Madadi, Mansour Osanloo and Reza Shahabi - still remain in detention. Shahabi's family has already paid 60 million toman (US\$50,000) in bail as requested by authorities to secure his release.

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

Send me information on the Communist Party of Canada

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

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Life imprisonment for Argentina's executioner

From *L'Humanité*, Dec. 25, 2010

Jorge Videla, ex-dictator of Argentina, has been sentenced to life in prison for the murder of 11 "disappeared persons". Impunity has suffered a setback. But the ideology of state terrorism continues to legitimate its horrors.

For a few seconds, and finally now, forever, the bodies of 31 persons who "disappeared" during the Argentine dictatorship (1976-1983) have reappeared. By pronouncing the sentence against Videla, aged 85, ex-general of the first military junta, the federal tribunal of Cordoba swept away, on Dec. 20, more than thirty years of impunity.

In the box for the accused sat 29 other officials of the regime charged with murder, torture, and kidnapping. Ex-general Luciano Menendez also received a life sentence for crimes against humanity.

Until now, Videla had bragged about the political generosity he had enjoyed. In 1985, he had already

been condemned to life imprisonment, during the well-publicized trial of nine members of the junta, launched during the presidency of Raul Alfonsin, who was anxious to bring an end to the leaden years in which more than 30,000 persons "disappeared", were tortured, or thrown to their deaths from airplanes on "death flights".

The penalty was quickly buried by two laws, "duty to obey" and "final period" promulgated in 1986 and 1987 under pressure from senior officers of the military. To these symbols of denial of truth and justice in the case of crimes of the dictatorship, the ex-head of state Carlos Menem declared, in 1990, a presidential pardon. It was only in 2007 that this pardon was declared unconstitutional by the supreme court, following the abrogation, two years earlier, of the law of amnesty.

Jorge Videla was placed under house arrest in 1998, before being transferred to prison for two other sinister affairs. One was the "war bounty" of babies stolen from their parents who were later killed, the

babies being offered to favoured members of the regime. Another was for his participation in "Operation Condor", a multinational criminal organization commanded by the dictators of that period (Chile, Bolivia, Brazil, Uruguay, Paraguay) in order to exterminate "subversive elements" in South America, with the cooperation of the CIA.

During the trial in Cordoba, Videla found justifications for everything, acknowledging "I fully carried out my responsibilities, and my subordinates were content to obey my orders." In the image of the ex-dictator of Uruguay, Gregorio Alvarez, who denied the existence of violations of human rights in his country, the Argentine executioner showed unfathomable disdain in legitimating his acts.

"I have no intention of speaking of a dirty war," he dared say. "I prefer to speak of a just war that is not yet over."

Defending his barbaric acts in the name of "the honour of victory in the war against Marxist subversion," Videla even went so far as to question the tribunal, which, to his mind, "lacked competence and jurisdiction" to judge him, in view of his rank, and the "acts of war" for which he was tried.

At the verdict, the families of victims and the associations for human rights exploded with joy. "This is an important advance in law, for truth and justice," rejoiced Argentine Nobel Prize winner Adolfo Perez Esquivel. "At last a judicial power and a political decision to advance the process of establishing responsibility for the crimes committed against the people, so that this can never happen again."

On Dec. 21, in Buenos Aires, and in Mar del Plata, 19 people responsible for similar crimes received heavy sentences. In 2010, 14 trials of this nature put 66 authors of crimes behind bars, while 800 others await trial. If Argentina

figures as a pioneer in Latin America in the battle against impunity, the work to establish reparations is not yet accomplished.

The Association of the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo, still searching for their "disappeared" children and grandchildren, have called for an "ethical and political" trial of those who violated the preaching of Jesus.

"During the dictatorship, the priests and bishops legitimated the genocide, blessed the torturers, presided over sessions of torture ... Many of these persons are still members of the Church," recall the courageous mothers whom the regime treated as "crazy." ●



Photos of victims of Argentina's "dirty war".

Rapa Nui people attacked by Chilean police

Chilean police recently attacked Rapa Nui activists on Easter Island, wounding 24 people in an effort to dislodge indigenous families from a disputed area. According to *Indian Country Today*, police shot at protestors and beat some with batons on Dec. 3.

The attack follows a long history of disputes over indigenous rights and land issues between the Chilean government and the Rapa Nui people. Easter Island is famous for its giant "Moai" stone statues, which are sacred sites for the Rapa Nui.

After Rapa Nui families started to occupy contested areas last August, other incidents were reported. Then on Dec. 3, Chilean riot police arrived to enforce a court order mandating the removal of people occupying various sites.

Spokespeople for the Rapa Nui, Susana Hito and Santi Hitorangi, reported after the attack that "Leviante Araki, the president of the Rapa Nui Parliament was shot twice about his hip and rib cage and is being air lifted to Santiago for medical care... A young man, Richard Tepano, was shot at short range in his right eye and is now in critical condition in the hospital. Maori Pakarati was shot above his right eye and in his arm, a rubber bullet remains encrusted in his arm. Zita Atan was shot in the head, and Pia Vargas was shot in her right leg. Honu Tepano was shot in his shoulder. As the Chilean troops were charging towards the fleeing Rapa Nui Claudio Tuki was hit in the forehead, and Enrique Tepano was shot in his face."

Documentary filmmaker Hitorangi was shot in his right leg and in his back as he attempted to film the situation. The following day Hitorangi stated that "What happened

yesterday is their way of trying to stop any attempt of the Rapa Nui people to reassert their right to the land. All we're asking for is title to the land. It's a rightful claim. We are not asking the government for anything else."

This assault follows a distinct pattern of violence against the indigenous people of the island which was "annexed" by Chile in 1933. The Rapa Nui were first forced off their ancestral lands and confined to a section of the island called Hanga Roa. People who left the designated area were often brutally punished or exiled to a leper colony. These violent evictions enable Chile to lease the island to private enterprises. It was only in 1966 that the Rapa Nui people were allowed to travel throughout the island. More explicit repression of the Rapa Nui began during the Pinochet dictatorship, and continued after the return to democracy. The abuses continued even after government officials created a Rapa Nui Working Group last August. Before the working group finished its deliberations, Chilean police executed a series of evictions. The latest family to be evicted was the Tuko Tuki clan who were violently removed Dec. 3.

In October, a Request for Precautionary Measures was filed before the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights on behalf of 28 Rapa Nui clans. The Commission has not yet issued a protection order, and the Chilean government has not responded to the Commission's request for information.

"There is nothing on this island that can say or tell us the rights of the Rapa Nui," said Mario Tuki, spokesperson of the Tuki Clan. "This is the struggle of the Rapa Nui today, a struggle of what is ours, what belonged to our grandfathers and grandmothers." ●

Behind imperialism's gang-up on the Ivory Coast

By Asad Ali

According to the capitalist press, Ivory Coast President Laurent Gbagbo is a dictator who lost the election to Alassane Ouattara, and the AU (African Union), ECOWAS (Economic Community of West African States) and the rest of the world should force Gbagbo to step down. But the election results were declared for Gbagbo by the country's Constitutional Court, which is the deciding body, not the purely administrative Independent Electoral Commission.

France and the United States, among other imperialist countries, want us to ignore the Ivory Coast's

constitution and pick and choose the winner they like. The writer Leo Gnawa in his article "Ivory Coast: Obama is Wrong" finds a parallel with the Bush vs Gore US election of 2000, which was also decided by a court and not administrators. Would Americans have accepted NATO or UN troops intervening for Gore?

Ouattara is a former IMF (International Monetary Fund) Deputy Director who was Prime Minister under President Felix Houphouet-Boigny. Gbagbo was a leading dissident and political prisoner against Houphouet-Boigny, later founding the FPI (Ivorian Popular Front). Houphouet-Boigny favoured French businesses and helped overthrow his neighbour Kwame Nkrumah, winner of the Lenin Peace Prize and independence hero of Ghana, the first non-Arab African country to be decolonized.

Before the Ivory Coast's independence from France, Houphouet-Boigny was a French MP leading other African MPs in alliance with the PCF (French Communist Party). He broke with the communists under pressure from socialist

Francois Mitterrand (later French President) saying "I, a bourgeois landowner, I would preach the class struggle?". In 1985 Ivory Coast was the first non-Arab African country to restore ties with Israel.

In 2002 Gbagbo survived a coup attempt followed by a civil war, when France intervened with troops to get concessions for the rebels while recognizing Gbagbo's right to be President. Some commentators fear that if Ouattara is allowed to seize power from Gbagbo he will again favour the IMF and French businesses, whereas Gbagbo would require competitive bidding in the Ivory Coast's favour, giving equal opportunity to Chinese and Russian investors. If the AU and ECOWAS intervene in the Ivory Coast on behalf of France and imperialism, it could be a dangerous example threatening the sovereignty of other African countries under international pressure such as Zimbabwe or Sudan.

Ouattara called for ECOWAS special forces to invade, predicting Gbagbo "will start running away. I know him well." The Communist Party of neighbouring Benin issued a statement rejecting any intervention "whatever the excuse" and that it was "inadmissible for any patriot and a democrat" to call for the trampling of Ivorian sovereignty. Meanwhile Gbagbo has stood firm in the face of a visit by Nigerian ex-President Obasanjo, who an unnamed Ouattara advisor has said was going to give an ultimatum "in a mean way."

The Ivory Coast was also abandoned by its US lobbyist and ex-Clinton aide Lanny Davis, on the grounds that Gbagbo would not take Barack Obama's phone calls so that he could be "presented with options." ●



REDS ON THE WEB
www.comunist-party.ca
www.peoplesvoice.ca
www.ycl-ljc.ca
www.solidnet.org

"Don Cherry is nothing but a phoney"

By Jack Todd, *Montreal Gazette*, Dec. 13, 2010

There he is in Toronna, old Sour Grapes himself, invited to the inauguration of that Chris Farley reincarnation Rob Ford, decked out in a jacket of Liberace pink, dripping sarcasm and hatred with all his soul.

"Put that in your pipe and smoke it, ya left-wing kooks," Don Cherry bellows, among other sweet nothings to issue from the loudest mouth in Canada.

The lingo is a half-century old and mostly American, left over from political battles now in the history books. "Pinkos." "Tree huggers." "Left-wing kooks." But the hatred, and the ugliness it fosters, is very much alive.

The problem is not so much what Cherry says (we're accustomed to the bile he spews every time he opens his mouth), it's where he says it.

Like his appearance at the coronation of Ford, whose first act as mayor was to flush down the toilet the \$130 million Toronto has already spent to modernize and upgrade its transit system. Public transit, in the eyes of Ford and Cherry, is for bike-riding sissies, like the minimum-wage, blue-collar workers who rely on a transit system to get to work. Why don't they just make like the rich and take a limo to work, for heaven's sakes?

When Cherry dives in to right-wing politics with both feet firmly in his mouth, he is over the line - the line that separates commentary on hockey from such complex issues as public transit, health care and the war in Afghanistan.

Shameless to the core, Cherry has even devoted one entire segment of Coach's Corner to his

own self-aggrandizement as Canada's self-appointed No. 1 soldier. But Cherry the soldier is as phoney as Cherry the blue-collar guy. I know someone who has held the same blue-collar job for at least the past 15 years. Cherry has walked past this person on a regular basis for all those years - and never once said hello.

Still, Cherry wants us to believe that he is blue-collar, while guys like me are the elite, bicycle-riding columnists.

You want a tough, blue-collar guy, Don? A real one, not a phoney? Well, I grew up with one. A father who was a combat veteran of the First World War. An ex-boxer with his hands all smashed up, his nose broken, his brain addled after 70 pro fights as a light-heavyweight and more amateur bouts than he could count. A guy who would drive a spike with his bare fist, then lick the blood off his knuckles.

My father had just about every fault in the book, but he was real. He voted solid Democrat. He stood up for the working man and the little guy. When he had almost nothing, he would give part of what he did have to a family that had nothing at all. And he would have spotted a phoney like Cherry a mile off.

I thought I had said all I ever wanted to say about Don Cherry. But lately, the man has morphed into Glenn Beck in sequins, out to prove that he who shouts loudest is always right. It's always the same thing: the rage, the name-calling, the complete absence of reason.

Every time I see a Tea Party rally or listen to Cherry rant, I wonder: Why are these people so angry?



"Coach" Cherry autographing an artillery shell in Kandahar.

What are they so mad about? All these rich, fat, angry white men and rich, thin, angry white women, what is their problem?

They aren't begging on the street in Delhi, or working a mine in the Congo, or taking a bus and two subway trains to spend the night cleaning an office in Toronto before taking two subway trains and a bus to get home. Yet to hear the right-wing elite tell it, one of the great outrages in history is that the government actually wants them to pay taxes on the millions or tens of millions they earn. Imagine, the scandal of it all.

Cherry is entitled to his opinion, ignorant and wrongheaded as it may be. But if he wants to take up politics for a living, let him leave Hockey Night in Canada and go out on the campaign trail, where he might at least have to debate the issues, rather than pulling the rant-and-run that is his signature move.

Because when challenged, Cherry turtles. He doesn't debate, he preaches. He doesn't respond, he rants. And when all that fails,

when his complete lack of rational thought or reasonable ideas is about to become obvious, he falls back on name-calling. "Left-wing kooks." "Tree huggers." "Pinkos."

The CBC has done some dumb things over the years, like dumping the Hockey Night in Canada theme, or killing The Tournament while keeping the insipid *Little Mosque on the Prairie* on the air.

But the worst thing our national,

taxpayer-supported network ever did, by far, was to allow itself to be taken hostage by Don Cherry. It's time for the network to show some spine and say "enough." Politics or hockey commentary, but not both.

Meanwhile, we left-wing kooks will continue to support the right of working people to have affordable transit. We will insist that the best way to support our troops is to bring them home.

We will ask why the world should be run by the same investment bankers and right-wing politicians who triggered the greatest financial crisis since the Great Depression. We'll try to find ways to stop the wholesale destruction of our environment, so that the legacy we leave our children is something other than an infertile, ruined desert. We'll even attempt to persuade hockey players to wear visors, so that a player doesn't lose his vision on the ice.

So put that in your pipe and smoke it, Don. Just don't get ashes on the pink jacket. Liberace's ghost wants it back. ●

My beef with Stephen and Don

By Kimball Cariou

It's been an interesting week since Hockey Fans For Peace hit the media radar. As co-founder, I've watched the small membership of our Facebook group suddenly triple, and I've done some major radio sports talk show interviews.

Overall, the response has been great. Hockey fans across North America have contacted us, delighted that a group of fans has formed to speak out against the war in Afghanistan. Not surprisingly, there have also been some negative reactions, especially from avid supporters of Hockey Night In Canada commentator "Coach" Don Cherry.

This whole thing was largely sparked by Cherry's ugly rant at the inauguration of the new city council in Toronto. Cherry supporters argue that he simply "supports the troops." That claim was demolished over Christmas in Kandahar, where Cherry fired off artillery, autographed bombs, and bragged about "chasing the Taliban."

But many hockey fans across Canada have been disturbed by a larger trend - the strategy of the Harper Conservatives to turn athletes and the Canadian Armed Forces into props for their war-making agenda. It's difficult these days to find a major sports event which does not incorporate reference to "our brave troops in Kandahar." For me, the most gut-wrenching was at the Oct. 31 Saskatchewan Roughriders vs. B.C. Lions game at Empire Stadium in Vancouver. The entire half-time show was devoted to the military. Hundreds of troops paraded across the field, as the announcer continually told us to stand in support of the mission in Afghanistan to allegedly "defend our freedoms in Canada." As an exercise in jingoistic propaganda, this hit a new low. (No, I didn't stand.)

The psychological aim of this strategy is to sow divisions among Canadians, particularly among the solid majority who want an early return home for the troops in Afghanistan. "Real" hockey fans and "real" Canadians, we are urged to believe, all "support the troops" and therefore back the alleged aims of the military mission.

Anyone who questions this reasoning is immediately under suspicion. Such individuals are somehow not considered true fans or "patriotic" Canadians. Supposedly we "spit in the faces" of the troops. We are even accused of being "Taliban recruiters." (A *Toronto Sun* writer hurled this absurd slander at me on Jan. 7 during a call-in on 640 AM's "Opie Show"!).

For fans like me on the Left, such outrageous lies are easy to dismiss. My credentials as a lifetime "true fan" of sports at every level are impeccable. I bleed Roughrider green when I cut my finger, or else the "bleu, blanc et rouge" of *les Canadiens*. I have a letter signed by New York Mets manager Casey Stengel, sent to me when I was just eight years old. I stop to watch Mabel League women's slo-pitch games at my neighbourhood ball diamond, and volleyball at Kits Beach. I go to every game of my son's Special Olympics soccer team. You get the idea. Bullies like Don Cherry and Stephen Harper can never tell me I'm not a genuine sports nut.

But for many Canadians who consider themselves sports fans, this campaign of intimidation can be stifling. That's why launching Hockey Fans For Peace was so important. We are showing the world that people can love hockey and speak out against the war. We won't let right-wing bullies dictate our beliefs and actions. We will keep cheering for our favourite teams, and we will continue to demand the immediate removal of Canadian troops from Afghanistan.

So remember, Don and Stephen... you're not the boss of us!
(Readers can find Hockey Fans For Peace on Facebook.) ●

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



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

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

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

Haiti election report reveals "massive irregularities"

Washington, D.C.- The Center for Economic and Policy Research (CEPR) has released the full report of its independent recount of vote tally sheets from Haiti's November 28 election, highlights from which were first presented in a December 30 press release.

"The amount of votes not counted or counted wrong in this election is huge - much larger than has been reported by either the Organization of American States or the Provisional Electoral Council (CEP)," CEPR Co-Director, and co-author of the report, Mark Weisbrot stated. "I don't see how any professional observers could legitimately certify this election result."

The report, "Haiti's Fatally Flawed Election", finds that: Based on the numbers of irregularities, it

People's Voice co-sponsors "Seeing Red" forum in Vancouver

People's Voice and Vancouver's People's Co-op Bookstore are co-sponsoring a panel forum titled "Seeing Red". The event will look at past and present state repression in Canada. Speakers include Daniel Francis, author of "Seeing Reds", the recent book examining the "red scare" of 1919, and Micheal Vonn, a prominent spokesperson from the B.C. Civil Liberties Association. PV Editor Kimball Cariou will introduce the panel, which takes place on Thurs., Jan. 20, 7:30 pm, Room 1800, SFU Harbour Centre, 515 W. Hastings. Call 604-255-2041 for more information.

Voisey's Bay...

continued from page 3

union wants a five-year deal. Vale originally offered a three-year deal. The commission recommends four years, and suggested compromises on other issues, such as bonuses. Both sides had already agreed on a wage increase of 65 cents an hour over three years.

The transnational has accused the Steelworkers of being manipulative, by insisting on a five-year contract that would expire at a time that would "align with a potential strike in Sudbury."

"Already they are planning for the next strike, rather than our future shared success," a company news release said.

But the company has done everything possible to break the resolve of its Canadian workers over the past two years, from employing scabs to hurling wild accusations about the "greed" of the workers. Meanwhile, Vale reported profits of a staggering \$6 billion for the third-quarter of 2010 alone, or more than \$2 billion per month. ●

is impossible to determine who should advance to a second round. If there is a second round, it will be based on arbitrary assumptions and/or exclusions.

For some 1,326 voting booths, or 11.9 percent of the total, tally sheets were either never received by the CEP or were quarantined for irregularities. This corresponds to about 156,000 votes, or 12.7 percent of the vote, which was not counted and is not included in the final totals that were released by the CEP on December 7, 2010 and reported by the press.

This is an enormous amount of votes discounted, by any measure, and especially in an election in which the difference between the second and third place finisher - which determines who will participate in the run-off election - was just 0.6 percent of the vote.


Many more tally sheets that had irregularities in the vote totals that were sufficient to disqualify them. For 8.4 percent of the tally sheets - involving more than 13 percent of the vote - there were vote totals for the major candidates that would be expected to occur by chance less

than one percent of the time. That most of these implausible vote totals were due to errors or fraud is supported by the large number of clerical errors found on the tally sheets - over 5 percent of these - which the study did not count as irregular.

The participation rate was extremely low, with just 22.9 percent of registered voters having their vote counted. As a comparison, presidential elections in 2006 saw a participation rate of 59.3 percent.

The report also notes the greatest flaws in the electoral process occurred before election day: the banning of over a dozen political parties from the ballot (including the most popular party), and the "gargantuan task" of attempting to register 1.5 million internally displaced persons - a task that clearly was a resounding failure.

The Globe and Mail's Jessica Leeder reported on this story in the January 9, 2011 edition of the newspaper. For more information on the situation, visit the Canada Haiti Action Network website, www.canadahaitiaction.ca. ●




Norman Bethune Day Dinner

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

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

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




Operation Soap "scrubs" civil rights

Attacks on the rights of one community threatens the rights of all. On a cold February night in 1981, 150 Toronto Police raided four gay bath houses under the bawdy house laws and arrested over 300 men. The resulting mass protests galvanized the gay community and led to the establishment of Gay Pride Week. A further raid moved City Council to investigate charges of police brutality which resulted in a report, *Out of the closet*, which recognized the gay community as a legitimate part of Toronto and urged a permanent dialogue with Toronto police.

1981: On the 40th anniversary of the 1970 Quebec October crisis, we should note that more were arrested in the bath house raids.

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What's Left

Vancouver, BC

"Seeing Red," public forum on past and present state repression in Canada, with author Daniel Francis and Micheal Vonn of the B.C. Civil Liberties Association., intro by PV Editor Kimball Cariou, Thurs., Jan. 20, 7:30 pm, Room 1800, SFU Harbour Centre, 515 W. Hastings. Sponsored by People's Voice and People's Co-op Bookstore, ph. 604-255-2041 for more info.

Left Film Night, "The Cradle Will Rock," Tim Robbins film on 1930s cultural upheavals in New York, 7 pm, Sun., Jan. 30, Centre for Socialist Education, 706 Clark Drive. Admission free, donations welcome, call 604-255-2041 for details.

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

Winnipeg, MB

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

Toronto, ON

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

Get on the Bus to the "People vs. U.S. Steel" rally in Hamilton. Join People's Voice readers on a bus leaving 11 am, Sat. Jan. 29 from 290 Danforth Ave. Call

416-469-2481 for seats. Donation of \$30 or pay-what-you-can requested.

Never Again for Anyone, hear Auschwitz survivor Dr. Hajo Meyer, writer Lee Maracle, and Khaled Mauammar, President of Canadian Arab Federation, Tuesday, Feb. 1, 7-10 pm, Winchevsky Centre, 585 Cranbrooke Ave., \$10 or PWYC. For further info, visit: www.neveragainforanyone.com.

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

Hamilton, ON

The People vs. U.S. Steel, Day of Action rally and march with locked-out Steelworkers, Sat., Jan. 29, 1 pm, starting at Hamilton City Hall. For info on buses, call 1-800-668-9138.

St. Catharines, ON

Get on the Bus, Sat., Jan. 29, join Niagara Labour Council on a free bus to the "People vs. US Steel" rally at Hamilton City Hall. Buses leave at 12 noon sharp from the CAW 199 Hall, 124 Bunting Road.

Montreal, QC

Whose Security? Countering the National Security Agenda, February 4-6, Concordia University, People's Commission Network Popular Forum. For details and registration, please visit www.peoplescommission.org.

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

People's Voice deadlines:

FEBRUARY 1-14 issue: Thursday, Jan. 20

FEBRUARY 15-28 issue: Thursday, Feb. 3

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

Migrant labour....

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European countries could be excessive, Schatzer said. "Such actions are a reaction to a perceived or real malaise; they are also part of the response to an economic crisis where migrants are blamed, not necessarily justifiably, for competing for jobs with the local population."

In the EU, Frontex has become the controversial strong arm of immigration control. Such organisations have a limited role to play, Schatzer said. "Frontex is the European agency trying to help European governments control their borders better. It is an effort to coordinate these approaches, but border guards or walls cannot solve such problems because when one area is controlled, smugglers and traffickers move somewhere else."

Beyond the headline-grabbing migration moves into Europe, South-South migration is becoming increasingly an issue, the report says. "The emerging economies of Asia, Africa and Latin America are becoming ever more important countries of destination for labour migrants, emphasising increasing South-South movements of people and the need for those countries to invest in migration management programmes and policies." Not all new migration is for economic reasons. Emerging patterns of irregular migration involve "growing numbers of unaccompanied minors, asylum-seekers, victims of trafficking, or those seeking to escape the effects of environmental or climate change but for whom there is currently little international protection," the report says. ●

CPC-PCC
90**TIM BUCK: "Keep your feet on the ground and your eyes on the stars"**

Born in 1891 in Beccles, England, Tim Buck was trained as a machinist. Entering the workforce before his 12th birthday, he came into contact with the rising socialist movement. After completing his apprenticeship in 1910, he emigrated to Canada, which was cheaper than going to Australia. Hired at the John Abell Co. in Toronto, a plant producing steam tractors, he quickly became involved in the labour movement. In 1913 his fiancée Alice Ayres arrived in Toronto, and the young couple had several children, including sons Ronald and Edward (Ted), and daughter Olive.

Those were years of tumultuous activity by radical organizations, such as the Socialist Party of Canada, Socialist Labour Party, Social Democratic Federation, Industrial Workers of the World, and others. Tim joined the Socialist Party, which was home to many revolutionary-minded trade unionists. He was among those who saw the need for a broad, united struggle for social change, and the necessity for a solid Marxist analysis of capitalism. When World War One broke out, Tim and other left-wing Socialists knew that "this was just a predatory

war in which the great states were fighting for immediate material advantage.... all this talk about it being a war for democracy was deception."

The 1917 revolution in Russia had a decisive impact on these debates. By taking power under the leadership of the Bolsheviks, the workers, peasants and soldiers

formed the Communist Party of Canada, operating in public as the "Workers' Party", before emerging openly as the CPC in 1924. During the "Roaring Twenties," Tim Buck was leader of the Trade Union Educational League, which campaigned for policies of militant class struggle, industrial unionism, and mass action.

As the Communist Party of Canada begins its 90th anniversary year, we launch a series of articles on famous Canadian communists with the story of Tim Buck. Speaking to thousands of public meetings over five decades, Buck was a powerful "public tribune" for the Canadian working class during the critical struggles of the Depression and the post-war era.

of Russia pointed the way towards a revolutionary overthrow of the capitalist order. The Great October Socialist Revolution convinced socialists in Canada of the need for a united revolutionary party to challenge the domination of the Canadian ruling class.

In 1921, Tim Buck was among the delegates at the famous meeting in Guelph, Ontario, which

As the upsurge of 1917 temporarily waned, illusions emerged in the working class movement and the Communist Party. Some claimed that the expanding capitalist economy made the U.S. and Canada "immune" to serious crises. Others sided with the minority in the Bolshevik Party who claimed there was no realistic possibility of building socialism in the Soviet Union.

Tim Buck argued forcefully against the reformist "North American exceptionalism" concept, and supported the historic efforts of the Soviet working class to build socialism in their country. A complex series of events resulted in Buck being elected General Secretary in June 1929, followed by more sharp internal party struggles. The stock market crash in October 1929 proved that Buck and his supporters had been correct.

As the Depression deepened, the Conservative government of R.B. Bennett feared the potential for a major fightback. On August 11, 1931, the Communist Party offices were raided, and Tim Buck and other party leaders were charged with "sedition." They were imprisoned in Kingston Penitentiary, where Tim Buck was the target of an assassination attempt in his cell. A



Tim Buck (centre) with Manitoba MLA James Litterick (left, the first Communist elected to a Canadian legislature) and Sam Carr.

huge civil rights campaign ultimately won Buck's release, and Bennett's ban on the party was lifted. Riding a wave of popularity, Buck ran for Toronto Board of Control in 1937, winning 45,000 votes, losing by about 200 votes due to a frenzied anti-communist campaign by the media, the Church, and right-wing politicians.

The 1930s saw a wide range of important struggles led by the Communist Party: industrial organizing, the Onto Ottawa Trek, solidarity with the Spanish Republic against fascist aggression, and the struggle to block fascism and war.

Early in the Second World War, the Communist Party was banned again, this time by the Liberal government of Mackenzie King. Many communist leaders were interned, and Tim Buck was among those forced underground or into exile in the United States. But the Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union in June 1941 changed the situation, eventually leading to the release of the detainees, and the return of Buck from exile. Even so, to function legally the CPC had to reorganize as the "Labour Progressive Party," which built a membership of nearly 20,000.

The post-war period saw new anti-communist attacks, from blacklisting to the drive to expel left-led unions from the major labour federations. This campaign was a

key element of the strategy by the ruling class to profit from closer integration of the Canadian economy with U.S. imperialism.

Tim Buck was a vocal opponent of this sellout of Canada, a process which was later accelerated by the "free trade" deals. As he wrote in *Thirty Years: 1922-1952, The Story of the Communist Movement in Canada*: "Now the battle for Canadian independence does have to be fought again, but against a new form of servitude... Canada is being sold into United States control by 'her own' ruling class; the parasitic, speculative, Canadian manipulators of stock market deals, politics and governmental concessions, who are enriching themselves by trading the national future of Canada for junior partnerships in the United States monopolies."

Tim Buck retired as General Secretary in 1962, but remained active in the party's leadership until his death in March 1973, at the age of 82. His legacy is highly relevant to this day, particularly his contributions to struggles for militant trade unionism, for working class and democratic rights, and for defence of Canadian sovereignty.

Tim's focus on achieving theoretical clarity on the basis of Marxism-Leninism is his other historic contribution. As he said, "the Communist Party must be a revolutionary party or it will cease to be a Communist Party." This concept was critical to defeat attempts in 1929 and 1956 to liquidate the Communist Party. A similar struggle broke out again in the early 1990s, when much of the CPC's leadership succumbed to pressures to move in a reformist direction. The fact that the Communist Party is now celebrating its 90th anniversary is a tribute to Tim Buck, and to the party's membership which remembers his famous advice: "Keep your feet on the ground and your eyes on the stars." ●



Tim Buck



The Communist leaders arrested in 1931 and charged under Section 98 of the Criminal Code. From left: Matthew Popowich, Tom McEwen, Tom Hill, John Boychuk, Mike Golinsky, Sam Carr, Tom Cacic, and Tim Buck. Missing from this photo is Malcolm Bruce.

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