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people's VOICE

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of resistance...

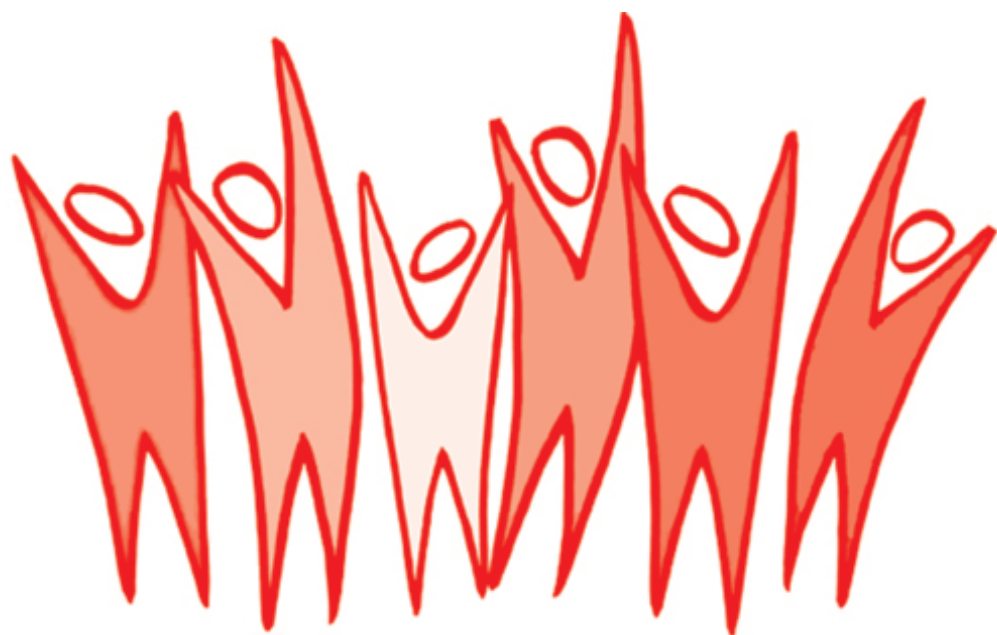
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The summer of discontent in Quebec

Exclusive
coverage
on pages
7 & 12



Push back the
bigots - extend
the struggle for
equality!

LGBTQ Pride 2012 greetings - see page 6

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Corner Brook crisis

The Newfoundland city of Corner Brook is facing a serious crisis as the owners of a major pulp and paper mill impose concessions on their employees, but refuse to guarantee the mill's future.

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Ontario budget drama

Labour and people's movements in Ontario watched this spring's budget battle at Queen's Park closely, but the real fight is just beginning.

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The pain in Spain

Will the European Union's "sado-monetarist" agenda of cutbacks, layoffs and savage austerity bring results in Spain? The answer depends on which class you belong to....

What really happened with the Ontario Budget

By Liz Rowley

Media watchers have been treated to high drama as Ontario Premier Dalton McGuinty and NDP leader Andrea Horwath duelled over the 2012 Ontario budget. At the last minute a snap election call was averted with new concessions by the NDP.

The labour and democratic movements took a deep breath. A mid-summer election likely to result in another minority (but what kind?) was not relished, and in any event the NDP was declaring victory.

In fact, this budget contains some of the most dangerous privatization legislation ever seen in Ontario. It also guts the Endangered Species Act, which is in the way of the some of the biggest and most profitable mining and forestry companies. On top of this, the budget makes deep cuts to social spending, including healthcare and education. Massive layoffs are coming, along with a promise of wage control legislation if public sector unions do not agree to a wage freeze and other concessions this fall.

For all these reasons, Budget Bill 55 was insupportable, no matter which way you look at it.

Inside the budget bill, Schedule 28 contains the power tools for the Liberal Cabinet to engineer the largest privatization of public services and assets in Ontario's history, without putting it to the Legislature or making it public. Schedule 28 gives Cabinet the authority to create a new "Minister of Privatization" whose powers would supercede all other laws and regulations that stand in the way of privatization. Under Section 10, they have the power to privatize all assets and services delivered by municipalities, school boards, post-secondary institutions and hospitals.

Yet the NDP it wasn't until CUPE Ontario rang the alarm,

supported by the Ontario Health Care Coalition and the Council of Canadians, that the NDP even mentioned Schedule 28.

In April, the Premier and Ms. Horwath shook hands on a deal to increase payments for those on the Ontario Disability Support Program by 1%, provide some funding for childcare, and levy a new wealth tax on those with incomes over \$500,000. However, the revenues generated from the new tax would only be used to pay down the deficit, and the wealth tax was to be eliminated along with the deficit in five years.

Pressure from the labour and social movements pushed the NDP to open up a fight on Schedule 28. They used legislative committee hearings on the budget to support Liberal amendments which started to limit the scope of Schedule 28. The Tories supported many of the same amendments, causing the Premier to scream bloody murder. The Tories voted with the NDP on

many amendments because they said the bill did not go far enough to cut, gut, privatize, and deregulate.

But when the legislative committee came to vote, the Tories supported the government and Schedule 28 passed with only the NDP dissenting.

The Liberals and Tories also defeated amendments to force the government to take any proposed privatization through the legislature and the Ontario Auditor General, and to subject the deal to the Ombudsman's oversight. So the Cabinet can still proceed with privatization "by stealth."

On the budget as a whole, the NDP abstained, leaving the Liberals to comfortably outvote the Tories.

Out of this, the NDP has declared itself the winner. The public is still unsure what has been won and lost, but the NDP claims the Trojan Horse of massive and secret privatization has been

defeated.

Natalie Mehra of the Ontario Health Coalition is calling on all those opposed to privatization to get ready to fight the government's plans as they appear at a hospital, school, municipality, or post-secondary institution near you very soon.

Last April, Horwath was booed at a demonstration of 15,000 of the "We are Ontario" coalition, at the heart of which is the Ontario Federation of Labour. Protesters were clearly of the view that the concessions won by the NDP were too few and too small, and that much more could be wrung from the Liberals with mass action by labour and its social and community allies.

Horwath also lost public support for making further concessions when McGuinty threatened an election.

The Communist Party has consistently opposed this austerity budget, and pushed for the NDP to work with the We Are Ontario

Coalition to demand significant concessions such as job creation, new social housing construction and rent controls, increased corporate and wealth taxes, tax relief for homeowners and tenants, a universal public childcare system in Ontario, and more.

We agree that the fight has just rekindled. It will require all hands on deck in the extra-parliamentary struggle, especially because of the weak fight inside the Legislature. Increasingly, the NDP are acting like Liberals, the Liberals like Tories, and the Tories like the barbarians they are.

In fact, the labour and people's movements will have to push both the NDP and the Liberals to focus on job creation, and to tax the wealthy and the corporations for the revenues desperately needed to fund services and job creation.

Things are sharpening up in Ontario-ari-ario.

(Rowley is the leader of the Communist Party-Ontario) •

Summer fundraisers boost People's Voice Fund Drive

With the mailing of this issue, the People's Voice editorial office in Vancouver will take a short vacation. But there won't be any holiday from the working class struggle for a better world. Nothing is settled in Europe, where the fightback against neoliberal austerity continues from Greece to Spain and beyond. Nothing is final in Paraguay, where ousted president Fernando Lugo and his supporters are mobilizing to reverse the "parliamentary coup" engineered by wealthy landowners. Certainly the struggle in Quebec over tuition fees and democracy is far from over, as our correspondents write in this copy of PV. Not least, the movement to win full social equality will be celebrated at LGBTQ Pride events across Canada this summer, despite the efforts of bigots like Toronto Mayor Rob Ford and his fellow Tories

in the Harper regime.

We'll return to work in mid-July, to prepare our August issue. In the meantime, we urge our supporters to keep building solidarity with our sisters and brothers on the front lines of all these resistance movements.

People's Voice will be visible this summer - at Pride Toronto on July 1, at the ongoing "casseroles" in solidarity with the Quebec students, at Moncada Day events in late July, and at picket lines and protests across the country. But to keep publishing and printing extra copies for our supporters to distribute, we still need your support.

As of June 23, our Fund Drive is past the seventy percent mark, with over \$35,000 raised towards our \$50,000 target. The remaining \$15,000 is always the hardest to achieve, but we do have several big

fundraisers coming up, and we haven't received the final results of the very successful annual PV BBQ held by the Davenport Club in Toronto. Thanks to the Davenport comrades for their wonderful effort!

The Sergio Montivero Club is up next, with a special Latin American dinner starting 7 pm on Saturday, July 7, at the CSE, 706 Clark Drive, Vancouver. The food and music will be incredible, and it costs just \$15; pay at the door, or get your tickets in advance by calling 604-254-9836.

Pledges are now being collected for the annual People's Voice Walk-A-Thon, taking place on Sunday, August 12 in Surrey's Bear Creek Park. As usual, the Walk around the park starts at 11 am sharp, from the picnic area near 140 St. and 88 Ave. A delicious south Asian lunch will be served at noon, followed by the

political and cultural program. Editor Kimball Cariou and PV Manager Sam Hammond look forward to seeing Lower Mainland supporters at the Walk-A-Thon, which is organized by Harjit Daudharia and other members and friends of the Lower Fraser Club.

Our next issue will include up-to-date figures on the Fund Drive. As already reported, Quebec has gone over its target, and Alberta and Ontario are close to their goals. The upcoming fundraisers will bring British Columbia past the 75% mark, but we still have to focus on finishing the Drive.

If you haven't sent your contribution yet, or if you can add to your donations, please help now. We must wrap up quickly! Thank you for your generous solidarity, and have a great summer! •



Some of our supporters at the Davenport Club's annual People's Voice BBQ held June 23 in Toronto. (Photo: Ed Bil)

Marking 90th anniversary of the working class press



The U.S. war against Vietnam escalated sharply in early 1965. This front page from the Canadian Tribune, dated April 15 of that year, reports on the U.S. bombing raids against the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, north of the 17th parallel. The bombings came as National Liberation Front forces were said to be in control of some 80 percent of the territory of U.S.-occupied South Vietnam. The Tribune also reported on growing anti-war protests on campuses, and the debates around proposals for "repatriation" of the Canadian constitution from Britain. Tribune Manager Misha Cohen gave details of several well-attended fundraisers for the paper across western Canada.

Here's my contribution to the PV Fund Drive!

Enclosed please find my donation of \$_____ to the 2012 People's Voice Press Fund Drive.

Name _____

Address _____

City/town _____

Prov. _____ Postal Code _____

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

Mill closure clouds Corner Brook's future

By Sean Burton

The last month has been a tense and angry one for workers at Corner Brook Pulp and Paper. It was revealed in May that Kruger, the Montreal-based owner of the mill, was planning another cost-cutting measure in the area of pension payments.

Kruger has repeatedly justified its cost-cutting on the grounds that the present-day newsprint industry is on the verge of collapse. Although it is certainly true that newsprint demand has declined somewhat in recent years, it is still a very widely used product around the world.

But for profit-driven corporations, paying more for energy and shipping costs while still paying good wages and benefits to unionized workers is naturally quite unappealing. Abitibi-Bowater, which operated paper mills in Stephenville and Grand Falls-Windsor, gave up entirely and shut down its operations in Newfoundland and Labrador within the last decade. Clearly that was an ominous signal to the mill in Corner Brook, one of the very few industrial centers outside of the St. John's area.

The recent anger over the pension restructuring has developed into a full-blown discussion of the mill's viability in the eyes of Kruger. Unionized workers at the mill rejected the plan, sparking talks between Kruger and the provincial

government. CEO Joseph Kruger himself travelled to St. John's to meet with Premier Kathy Dunderdale. Following the meeting, Dunderdale echoed earlier comments from Natural Resources Minister Jerome Kennedy to the effect that the mill was in a "grave situation" and the government would not get itself involved in the dispute beyond a vague suggestion of helping to maintain the mill's sustainability in the future.

Realistically, Kruger and the government have very much been defining the situation in all-or-nothing terms. Minister Kennedy argued that the mill is on the verge of bankruptcy and would likely shut down if the workers do not accept the proposal. Kruger has also stirred the pot by writing a two-page letter to the mill workers insisting that wage-reductions are necessary for the company to remain competitive. The fate of the mill was solely in the workers' hands, he says, and a vote against the plan was a vote against the mill itself. Evidently the notion of using some of his own billion-dollar fortune to pitch in did not occur to Kruger, nor even the idea of further investment from the main company's coffers.

There is also conflict within the union on how to handle the proposal. National officials of the Communications, Energy, and Paperworks (CEP) union have been encouraging acceptance of the deal from the beginning,

describing it as the lesser evil. Many local workers have not heeded this advice, and are fed up with the company and concessions.

This resilience is actually somewhat useful to Kruger: along with its all-or-nothing demands, Kruger is trying to force the union to bear responsibility for whatever happens next. It is undeniably a cheap tactic to blame the union and the workers, but some people are liable to fall for it.

The outcome of the situation will not be known until late June. But is it not pathetic that after so many years we are speaking of "lesser evils" and "determining fate"? Corner Brook may have developed as a factory town, but there was no reason it had to be so dependent on a single industry and the whims of its corporate masters.

The smaller plants in the city opened in the post-confederation years are gone, and diversification has been small-scale at best. Companies in St. John's are awash with oil money, but the rest of the



Kruger-owned pulp and paper mill in Corner Brook

province seems stagnant or in decline. Economic planning is central, but such planning must be done by and for the working people, not at the hands of profit mongers and their cronies in government.

Under present circumstances, Corner Brook may very well end up as a retirement town supported mainly by big retail chains. These days, it is not far off from that even with the mill.

UPDATE, June 22: Machinists and a number of other skilled workers rejected the plan, but the majority of CEP locals have endorsed it. The new contract will take effect immediately although the nature of the wage cut is not yet known. The union will vote again in August regarding the pension changes. But Kruger has stated that even if everything is accepted by the union, it will continue to assess the mill's viability. ●

Manitoba tops B.C.'s child poverty rate

The child poverty rate in British Columbia dropped from 11.8 percent in 2009 to 10.5 percent in 2010, Statistics Canada reports. The latest BC rate was the second worst in Canada after 11.1 percent in Manitoba. Previously, the child poverty rate in BC was the highest of any province for eight consecutive years.

Meanwhile, the poverty rate for persons of all ages in BC fell slightly from 12.0 percent in 2009 to 11.5 percent in 2010. It was the worst poverty rate in Canada for 12 consecutive years. The number of poor persons dropped from 523,000 in 2009 to 510,000 in 2010, and the number of poor children was down from 98,000 to 87,000.

"The latest statistics show once

again the need for a comprehensive anti-poverty program in British Columbia, supported by every political party," said Adrienne Montani, provincial coordinator of First Call: BC Child and Youth Advocacy Coalition. "Poverty is costing children their health and limiting their ability to reach their full potential."

The BC Liberal government recently proposed modest anti-poverty initiatives, but refuses to make significant investments to fight poverty prior to the 2013 provincial election.

The New Democratic Party has a bill before the BC legislature to adopt an anti-poverty plan, but gives no idea how long it might take for an NDP government to put concrete

proposals into action.

"Children and families struggling with poverty need immediate relief," said Montani. "It's hard for parents to work if child care costs a small fortune and welfare rates are too low to support the nutritional needs of growing children."

The Coalition supports a significant increase in welfare rates and the indexing of both the minimum wage and welfare rates to the cost of living. It also calls on the province to invest in an affordable, high quality child care system, more social housing, improved access to coverage for dental care and prescription drugs, and easier access to post-secondary education without high student debt levels. ●



NIAGARA NEWS BULLETIN

People's Voice Niagara Bureau

* Veteran **Zehr's employees** in Niagara who are guaranteed at least 28 hours/week by UFCW agreement are losing even this minimum under the excuse that hours are being cut across the board, while full-time departments are seeing layoffs parallel with job fairs offering part-time work in the same stores.

* Under the excuse of "beautification", the **City of Niagara Falls ceded a right-of-way** in front of the Marineland amusement park which had been used by animal rights protesters. One city councillor opposed to the corporate giveaway said "Pretty soon, the public won't be sure where they can or can't walk"

* **High school students and alumni gathered almost 1000 signatures** in 5 days against the closing of their school in the West End of St. Catharines, which was pitted against a school in Thorold instead of just reducing class sizes. The school board voted to close St. Catharines, but the fight continues. As one activist put it, "I don't think this is a lost cause. We refuse to take this sitting down, and we won't be giving up - we're Warriors."

* The Ontario Special Investigations Unit will charge a Niagara Regional Police officer after **police injured and locked up a photographer** who had taken pictures of them on duty. A support group for the photographer had organized a protest earlier in front of police headquarters.

* 800 Welland residents signed a **petition to keep their bus route** from changing to a "trans-cab" service on to a transfer point with higher fares. City council defeated a motion to open the decision to consultation because of fears that rider input could change the decision, and instead will launch a "public education" campaign to accept austerity.

The Canadian Peace Congress condemns the repressive anti-protest law of the Charest government, Bill 78, and extends its full solidarity with the Quebec student strike.

By subjecting the right to protest to police permission and control, Bill 78 attacks the main vehicle for mobilization to stop the mounting imperialist wars and military spending of the Canadian government under Stephen Harper. The same police repression which uses rubber bullets, sound bombs, and mass arrests and detention against peaceful students was also used against anti-G20 protests in Toronto in 2010, and could be used next against the peace movement and other progressive forces. The student strike in Quebec has been winning broad support, including from the labour movement, to defeat this repression and prevent it from advancing to even further stages.

Bill 78 and the accompanying police violence are part of a deliberate and accelerating growth of militarism in Canada, a policy emanating from the Harper

Conservatives in Ottawa and echoed by many provincial and municipal governments.

These developments represent the interests of corporate Canada, who promote an increasingly aggressive foreign policy for Canada. The main vehicle for this international role is NATO, through which Canada participated in the wars on Afghanistan and Libya, and is driving toward new wars on Syria and Iran.

Corporate interests are also aggressively reflected in recent shifts in Canadian domestic policy. The Harper government has announced that part of its "anti-terrorism" strategy includes targeting Aboriginal and environmental groups who are opposed to the proposed Gateway and Keystone oil pipelines. Through this approach, the Conservative government intends to target and subdue those who work for environmental security, for the sovereignty of Aboriginal peoples, and for democratic control over the country's resources.

The repression of the Quebec student strike comes at the same time as the announcement that the

attacks on Libya cost at least \$350 million, seven times more than the originally stated cost. Yet when it comes to public services there is no such windfall spending. In terms of post-secondary education, the tuition rise demanded by the Charest government could be funded by reducing the order of F-35 jets by just one plane. The money and resources for a people's recovery do exist - getting it requires a rejection of the twin policies of militarism and austerity.

The issues of peace, withdrawal from Afghanistan and NATO, and slashing military spending and militarization, must be raised as part of the broader struggle against this repression. Defiance of Bill 78 is a test of strength: the movement developing around the Quebec student strike has the kind of unity and mobilization required to stop Canada's wars for imperialism. The Canadian Peace Congress calls on all peace organizations to bring attention to the dangers of Bill 78 so that it can be defeated, and to provide solidarity to the student strike in Quebec.

- Canadian Peace Congress Executive Council, June 2012 ●

EDITORIALS

Defeat the coup in Paraguay

The June 22 parliamentary coup in Paraguay has met with immediate rejection inside the country and across Latin America. Ousted President Fernando Lugo has declared that he will continue his fight as a common citizen, against the "new" President Federico Franco and the perpetrators of the illegal coup.

Faced with the threat of a bloody revolt backed by the big landowners and reactionary elements of the Church, Lugo reluctantly left office just nine months before the next scheduled elections. The excuse for his impeachment by the Paraguayan parliament was a recent clash in which ten landless peasants and seven police died. The privileged landowners who instigated this tragedy should be held responsible, not President Lugo.

Already, a National Front for Democracy has formed to oppose Lugo's eviction. Argentina has withdrawn its ambassador, and President Cristina Fernandez said her country will not support the coup, a practice, she said, "we believed long vanished from the region". Brazil condemned the summary impeachment of President Lugo, and also recalled its ambassador. "We cannot support manoeuvres with a legal cover", said Ecuador's President Correa in denouncing the coup. Even the right-wing government of Chilean President Sebastian Pinera has been sharply critical. Member countries of the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR) and the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR) are considering sanctions to be applied against the new Paraguayan regime.

As always, the puppet-master behind this fascist manoeuvre is U.S. imperialism, which is desperate to roll back the advances by left and democratic forces in many countries. We extend our full solidarity to the demand to reverse the eviction of President Lugo, and to all those who struggle for peace, justice, and social progress, and for the historic process of Latin American integration and sovereignty.

Setback at Rio+20

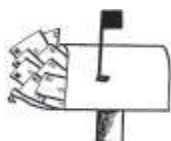
Hopes for tangible progress on the global environmental crisis were dashed by the United Nations Rio+20 conference. Despite its brave title, "The Future We Want", little of substance is in the document adopted by world leaders in Rio de Janeiro.

In the streets outside, 20,000 people marched for climate justice, capping a People's Summit which debated real solutions. The People's Summit was focused on genuine "green energy" approaches to tackle the environmental crisis on the basis of equity, such as providing access to power for 1.6 billion people who have none, and creating millions of decent "green" jobs instead of bailing out banks and subsidizing the fossil fuel industry.

Predictably, these proposals were ignored by Canada's Harper Conservatives, who are one of the most anti-science ruling parties on the planet, the King Canutes of the 21st century. The official summit saw most capitalist countries stubbornly refuse to address the sources of catastrophic climate change. Instead of binding commitments to slash greenhouse gas emissions, "The Future We Want" is full of pompous rhetoric and vague promises.

In his opening speech, UN General Secretary Ban Ki-Moon warned that the world must follow up on Rio+20 with "commitment and action." As Greenpeace International responded later, "People must take note of the failure in Rio, they need to join together in defence of the planet and for the future our children need. Unless we build a movement in the present like no other the world has ever seen, The Future We Want will remain a tented dream."

The clock keeps ticking. Instead of more "greenwashed capitalism," the planet needs policies to put people and the environment first, starting with an end to fossil fuel subsidies and imperialist wars.



Letters to the Editor

Tories loyal to corporations

The contemptuous treatment of Canadian farmers/citizens by the Harper Conservatives is unbelievable! It should make most who voted Tory cringe in shame.

Harper, Ritz & Anderson destroyed the Canadian Wheat Board which was operated by a board of farmers elected by farmers, paid for by farmers and worked on the behalf of all farmers. They reduced the role of the Canadian Grain Commission, which protected farmers from unscrupulous grading by grain companies.

They eliminated the Canadian Food Inspection Agency's role in protecting consumers from unsafe drugs and food products, false advertising, and enforcing food labelling, all for the benefit of

consumers.

More recently they cut the Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration which operates 85 Community Pastures, water management, grants for wells and dugouts and provides trees for farms, community development, municipal governments etc. These Pastures continually moved their bulls around, thus eliminating the need for farmers/ranchers buying expensive breeding bulls every few years.

Ritz had the gall to announce that the government was setting up a \$25 million grant to boost the amount of grain shipped through the Port of Churchill. Who will get this money - certainly not the farmers? It will go to the likes of Pioneer Grain (Richardson's) with terminal at Vancouver, Thunder

Bay and Prince Rupert: Alliance Grain Terminal (Vancouver & Thunder Bay); Parrish & Heimbecker (Vancouver & Thunder Bay); Cargill (Vancouver, Thunder Bay & Prince Rupert); Viterra (Vancouver, Thunder Bay & Prince Rupert); ADM (Thunder Bay) and OmniTrax Rail. Is anyone naive enough to think that these corporations will utilize Churchill when they already own terminals at other ports?

Add to this the thousands of people they have fired, the changes to the Employment Insurance, and increased eligibility for OAS from 65 to 67, they have proven, without a doubt that their loyalty lies with the corporate sector of the world and not the Canadian citizen. At the same time they have reduced the corporate tax rate from 21% (2007) to 15% (2012). Small wonder they have deficit budgets.

Joyce Neufeld, Waldeck, Sask.

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LETTERS

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

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How We See It: The U.S. and the Quebec student protests

By Darrell Rankin, Manitoba leader of the Communist Party of Canada

Do you wonder what the US war machine thinks about the Quebec student protests?

Usually I love it when top imperialists say what they actually think, except when the stakes are high and the ideas threaten actual violence of some sort.

An article by David T. Jones (Allowing student protests to continue threatens Quebec democracy, ca.news.yahoo.com, June 15, 2012) offers a glimpse into the thinking of the US military establishment about the Quebec student protests. Jones is a retired U.S. State Department senior officer who served the U.S. Army Chief of Staff.

Jones had a long career getting the ear of top US military officers and is an author and frequent commentator on US-Canada relations. His articles at the American Diplomacy blog cover issues such as the top level of the US general staff, ruptures in NATO, Quebec separatism, and the "good news" of Harper's election.

He tries to establish that there is a plan in Quebec for "seizure/displacement of power" - a union-backed coup d'etat that would protect Quebec's unions, for the wrong reasons. He believes that the unions are corrupt and up to no good, ignoring the actual source of the construction corruption

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Trade union support builds for Quebec student struggle

CUPW appeals for CLASSE legal defense fund

The following letter was sent on May 29 to all locals of the Canadian Union of Postal Workers by the union's leadership. CUPW is an affiliate of the Canadian Labour Congress and the FTQ.

A spectacular movement is underway in Quebec against rising tuition fees. Hundreds of thousands have marched in the streets in support of the students. Thousands have been arrested. Jean Charest has brought in draconian legislation to try to crush the movement. Bill 78 removes the right of peaceful assembly and imposes massive fines on student unions and individuals who participate in "illegal" demonstrations.

Despite intensifying police violence and legislative attacks, what began as a fight over student debt has grown into a popular struggle for equality, social justice and basic democratic rights, including the right to public assembly and dissent.

If Quebec students have lit the fire, what the government and ruling class fear the most is that the flames will spread across Canada. What's happening in the cities and towns of Quebec is happening in our own communities and workplaces. While corporations and the rich get increased tax breaks and government handouts, poor people, workers, and students are asked to foot the bill. It's one struggle. And the uprising in Quebec has reminded us that if we organize and fight back, we can win.

In response to the popular uprising, the Quebec government passed Bill 78, an incredibly repressive piece of legislation that violates basic freedoms of association, assembly, and expression.

Bill 78 puts tight controls on where, when, and how people can demonstrate, and imposes significant fines on people who come together to express dissent. Any demonstration not coordinated directly with the police is illegal, and any "leaders" or organizations taking part can face enormous fines, in some cases as high as two hundred and fifty thousand dollars. Further, any individual expressing support for a demonstration deemed in violation of Bill 78 can face a fine of \$35,000, with organizations facing fines of \$125,000.



CUPW National President Denis Lemelin

Support for the struggle continues to grow. On May 22nd, nearly 500,000 people marched in the streets of Montreal in solidarity with the Quebec student strike and in opposition to Bill 78. As the march was not approved by the police, and therefore illegal, the event has become known as the largest act of civil disobedience in Canadian history.

Bill 78 violates a number of sections of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and is already being challenged in court.

As the movement grows, so do the legal bills. There is an urgent need for legal defense money. We urge locals to contribute to CLASSE's legal committee to help cover these costs.

Send your donation directly to the order of: Association pour une solidarité syndicale étudiante, 2065 Parthenais Street, Suite 383, Montreal, QC H2K 3T1, noting 'CLASSE Legal Committee' in the memo line. ●

Congratulations to Quebec students from B.C. Federation of Labour

The following statement was issued on June 7 by the officers of the BC Federation of Labour. On June 20, the BCFL and the Canadian Federation of Students (BC) hosted two Quebec student leaders at a forum in Vancouver. More than 150 people gathered at the Vancouver Public Library to hear Martine Desjardins, President, and Yanick Gregoire, Vice-President of La Federation Etudiante Universitaire du Quebec (FEUQ), the largest student organization in the province. Desjardins and Gregoire told the crowd that the students were continuing to mobilize and will fight until they win a freeze or an election is called. The FEUQ leaders stressed the critical importance of united action by all the student organizations in Quebec, including the CLASSE.

The B.C. Federation of Labour commends the students and citizens of Quebec who refuse to follow the irresponsible path of other Canadian provinces to higher tuition fees and a system of education that is unaffordable for most young people.

At a time when it is universally recognized that ever higher levels of education and skills training are required for our nation to generate wealth and for young Canadians to fully participate in tomorrow's economy, it is unacceptable for any government to lower access to college and university.

Affordable and accessible education is one of the key tenets of a free and fair society, in which all have the opportunity to reach their full potential regardless of their family income or background.

In British Columbia in the last 10 years, we have witnessed first-hand the consequences of rising tuition fees. Young British Columbians from working and middle class families are saddled with a heavy burden of debt, or are being shut out of post-secondary education altogether. Many will not have the same opportunities their parents had.

It is not acceptable argument that because every other Canadian province has chosen a public policy path that undermines and undervalues public education and the equality of our society itself, that Quebec therefore must follow.

We join our Sisters and Brothers across Canada in congratulating the students of Quebec for standing up for what's right, and urge the government of Quebec to negotiate with Quebec students to end this strike, while keeping education in Quebec accessible and affordable for all.

In response to the effectiveness of the protests of Quebec students, the Quebec government has passed legislation that restricts the rights of Quebec citizens to freely assemble and to protest. We condemn this action and call on the government of Quebec to immediately repeal Bill 78 and its unconstitutional restrictions on freedom of assembly. ●

Public Services International to Charest: stop violating democracy, restore the right to education

Public Services International is a global trade union federation representing 20 million working women and men who deliver vital public services in 150 countries. PSI champions human rights, advocates for social justice and promotes universal access to quality public services. PSI works with the United Nations system and in partnership with labour, civil society and other organisations.

1 June 2012 - Public Services International supports the struggle of Quebec students. Members of the Public Services International executive committee from all four corners of the world, in Geneva for their annual meeting, have expressed support for the students of Quebec.

The students are in struggle because they are unable and unwilling to pay more for access to education, but their struggle has much wider significance. Increases in the cost of education are driven by the same agenda that is making poor people poorer by making them pay for public services. It is also about ensuring that education remains a universal right.

Legislation adopted by the Quebec government not only restricts the rights of association and peaceful assembly but subjects the right to demonstrate to police controls. Even if the government was willing to ensure access to education, nothing would justify suspending the fundamental democratic rights of the people of Quebec.

Yesterday evening [May 31], by declaring a deadlock and breaking off negotiations, the Charest government made Quebec's social crisis even worse.

Education and public services are of great importance for society, because they allow the redistribution of wealth and the achievement of social justice for all. The Public Services International affirms that public services are a public good, created in the interest of all and financed for the good of all. We value and defend public services because they are at the heart of democratic societies based on human rights, the rule of law and social solidarity.

The Public Services International demands that the government of Quebec immediately stops violating the fundamental rights of the population and restores the right to education. ●



CUPE Ontario: "Solidarity With the Quebec Student Movement"

Posted on the CUPE Ontario website, June 21, 2012

Sisters and Brothers:

We are proud that the members of CUPE Ontario are known for their principled positions and actions when it comes to solidarity. From supporting the struggles of workers in other unions, the unorganized, anti-poverty groups, community organization and the student movement, our members know that the struggle for fairness, equality and a better world does not stop at the borders of our union or our province.

At our recent convention, members donated thousands of dollars from their own Locals in support of the current student strike in Quebec. These donations were made because we know that these struggles cannot continue on words alone.

The students in Quebec are fighting a valiant struggle for an

accessible public post-secondary education system. This struggle has brought the best aspects of popular, grass-roots movements to the streets and into the hearts of the people not just of Quebec, but around the world. These students and their allies in Quebec are an inspiration to the union movement and must be supported.

Since the passing of Law 78 - a law that seeks to criminalize the basic right to strike and picket and has been condemned by the UN for its breach of basic charter rights - the movement has grown into a broader popular struggle to defend democratic rights.

Without mobilizing fierce opposition to this law, it will likely be replicated and used as a model against striking workers, in other provinces, as well.

There has been a cost to those on the front-lines of this struggle. With over 3000 arrests of demonstrators, the legal costs are

being used as a weapon against the students and their organizations leading the fight.

The Quebec student movement has been a reminder that we can and must be united. It is with great pride that CUPE Ontario members continue their support for students facing legal costs as well as providing the resources needed to continue mobilizing to defend our rights. We urge Locals to continue their financial solidarity to CLASSE's legal defense committee to cover these costs and challenge the legitimacy of Law 78.

Send your donation directly to the order of: Association pour une solidarité syndicale étudiante, 2065 Parthenais Street, Suite 383 Montreal, QC H2K 3T1 noting "CLASSE Legal Committee" in the memo line.

In Solidarity, Fred Hahn, President; Candace Rennick, Secretary-Treasurer ●

Push back the bigots - extend the struggle for equality!

Pride 2012 statement from the Communist Party of Canada and the Young Communist League

Pride 2012 events across Canada this summer will celebrate impressive achievements by the LGBTQ communities and their allies. The Communist Party of Canada and the Young Communist League send warmest greetings and solidarity to Pride participants, and to the ongoing struggles for full equality. But this is also a time to push back against the bigots and right-wing politicians who want to roll back our gains. The corporate-driven "austerity" cuts to social programs and education have the sharpest negative impact on the most marginalized members of the LGBTQ community, including trans, two-spirited, racialized queers and young people. The cuts heavily impact women, Aboriginal peoples, and racialized groups, and make it far more difficult to implement significant advances towards equality.

The past year has seen important struggles to dismantle the barriers of transphobia and homophobia. The continued expansion of queer-positive environments in the mass media, the labour movement, and public schools is particularly welcome. Even in the traditionally homophobic arena of male professional sports, the "you can play" campaign is sending a powerful message that gay athletes must be treated with respect.

The growing acceptance of marriage equality, the increase of gay-straight alliances, the vote by the Ontario Legislature to enshrine "gender identity" and "gender expression" in the provincial Human Rights code, the defeat of attempts to deny civic funding to Pride Toronto, and other legal, political and cultural victories are the hard-won results of decades of efforts by the LGBTQ community and our allies.

But those who spread fear and bigotry will not give up, and they have powerful friends in the Conservative caucus of Stephen Harper. These are the forces behind the shameful attack on LGBTQ and queer-positive candidates in last fall's school board elections in British Columbia, and the persistent attempts to block gay-straight alliances in Ontario Catholic schools.

Queer bashing is on the rise. According to Statistics Canada, police-reported hate crimes motivated by sexual orientation remained far higher during 2010 than a few years previously. Two-thirds of this category of crimes are considered violent, yet prosecutors are often unwilling to treat gay-bashings as hate crimes. Despite the "It Gets Better" campaign and anti-bullying initiatives, most LGBTQ students still report feeling unsafe at school.

A law to extend protections to trans people under the Canadian Human Rights Act has passed second reading in the House of Commons. However, to gain the support of a few Conservatives,

Bill C-279 was weakened by removing "gender expression" and by adding a definition for "gender identity," amendments which will narrow the potential scope of legal protections.

The cost of delaying full equality for trans people would be tragic. This is not a "marginal" issue; trans people are 10.3% of the LGBTQ population, and face huge medical costs, higher unemployment, less access to housing, widespread intimidation at work, and lack of legal protections.

We urge you to join the Communist Party and the Young Communist League to achieve a liberated society in which, as Karl Marx said, "the freedom of each is the condition for the freedom of all."

Despite attempts to hide their destructive social agenda, the Harper Tories now aim not only to reverse queer rights but also the decades of hard-fought gender equality gains by women. Right-wing forces continue to scapegoat the LGBTQ community and racialized groups, to divide working class resistance against finance capital, corporate bailouts and global environmental plunder.

And now Bill C-31, adopted by the Harper government, will insure that many gay asylum seekers are rejected and quickly deported. By designating so-called "safe" countries of origin, the legislation makes the process of entering

Canada far more complex and difficult for refugees who are fleeing homophobic and transphobic threats and attacks.

Globally, the struggle to end the criminalization of sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression faces stubborn resistance. Violent expressions of homophobia are on the rise in many countries. Working class queer people suffer discrimination, along with women and racialized communities who bear the brunt of neoliberal economic and social policies.

ILGA, the global association of 900 lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, intersexed groups, reports that 78 United Nations member states still criminalize consensual same-sex acts among adults. In five countries, punishment for homosexuality still includes the death penalty.

On the positive side, the United Nations Human Rights Council has passed the first UN resolution on human rights violations based on sexual orientation and gender identity. The resolution affirms the universality of human rights, and condemns acts of violence and discrimination, sending an important signal of support to human rights defenders. As the ILGA notes, considerable progress has been made on recognition of LGBTI rights in recent years, but the pace remains too slow, and there have been reversals in some countries.

Of course the myth that queer rights can only be won in wealthy capitalist countries is shattered by

advances in countries such as Cuba, Brazil, and South Africa, and by the reality that homophobic and racist concepts are deliberately exported from North America and Europe.

Homophobia and transphobia are weapons to divide working people; just like racism, sexism, and national chauvinism. Today, those in charge of our economy, the ruling class, use the economic crisis and the so-called "war on terror" to justify their assault on workers and social equality. But "an injury to one is an injury to all." Our unity will be strengthened by adopting full legal and political protections for sexual orientation and expression, and gender identity.

This demand is a vital element of the broad democratic and social resistance against the corporate agenda of austerity and war. Together, we must build a powerful coalition around a genuine people's alternative to put people's needs before corporate greed - a common front of labour,

Aboriginal peoples, youth and students, women, seniors, farmers, immigrant and racialized communities, environmentalists, peace activists, our LGBTQ community, and many other allies.

Ultimately, this struggle in our communities and workplaces, in the streets and at the ballot box, can defeat the Harper Tories and open the door to a people's coalition government. The goal of the Communist Party is to win fuller social equality and genuine people's power in a socialist Canada, where our economy and resources will be socially owned and democratically controlled. This historic advance will make it possible to eradicate the intersecting forms of exploitation and oppression which we all face today. We urge you to join the Communist Party and the Young Communist League to achieve a liberated society in which, as Karl Marx said, "the freedom of each is the condition for the freedom of all." •



UFCW welcomes UN resolution on sexual orientation

From the United Food and Commercial Workers-Canada

In a groundbreaking achievement for upholding the principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), the United Nations Human Rights Council has passed a resolution on human rights violations based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

The resolution is the first-ever UN resolution to bring specific focus to human rights violations based on sexual orientation and gender identity, and it affirms the universality of human rights, and notes concern about acts of violence and discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity. This commitment of the Human Rights Council sends an important signal of support to human rights defenders working on these issues, and recognizes the legitimacy of their work.

"This is a monumental decision for the human rights movement, and Canadians can be very proud of the role we played in helping to achieve this watershed for global rights and greater equality," says UFCW Canada National President Wayne Hanley.

"From the coordinated efforts of leading organizations like Egale Canada to the individual efforts of

UFCW Canada members and other community members who lobbied their MPs, this milestone is a direct result of the combined efforts of activists and a great example of the good that can happen when we have direct conversations with our elected representatives," adds Hanley, who adds that "we must remain diligent in our solidarity so that the essence of the resolution is a reality for our LGBT brothers and sisters."

The resolution also requests the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights to prepare a study on violence and discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity, and calls for a panel discussion to be held at the Human Rights Council to discuss the findings of the study in a constructive and transparent manner, and to consider appropriate follow-up.

"Now, our work is just beginning," said Kim Vance of ARC International, a global organization for advancing LGBT rights. "We look forward to the High Commissioner's report and the plenary panel next March, as well as to further dialogue with, and support from, those States which did not yet feel able to support the resolution, but which share the concern of the international community at these systemic human rights abuses." •

CUPE celebrates Pride 2012

Pride 2012 statement. Canadian Union of Public Employees

The season for Pride celebrations is upon us! Pride parades, Pride weeks and other Pride events are an important symbol of strength and solidarity for the LGBTTI (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual, transgender, intersex) community.

Every summer, LGBTTI CUPE members and supporters come together during Pride events to celebrate diversity in gender identity and sexual orientation.

CUPE is a proud advocate for LGBTTI rights and freedoms. Our commitment is to fight against discrimination and hate in our workplaces and in our communities. Through the work of our Pink Triangle Committee and with our coalition partners, we've helped make strides for LGBTTI people in Canada and internationally. We've pushed for anti-bullying programs in our workplaces and schools. With new workshops for our members and a new anti-bullying brochure, we're continuing our work to stop this discrimination.

We've worked with organizations like Egale to support LGBTTI people who face violence and sometimes death in their communities at home and abroad.

We continue to fight for the inclusion of gender identity and gender expression in human rights legislation across the country. Transgender and transsexual are among the most at-risk groups to suffer violence and discrimination. We supported legislation recently passed by the Ontario government that will include "gender identity" and "gender expression" in the human rights code. Similar legislation is expected to pass in Manitoba soon, and a federal bill in the House of Commons has passed second reading. It is imperative that these rights be recognized.

And we work everyday to ensure our LGBTTI members can work in a discrimination and harassment-free environment.

CUPE is proud to support and participate in Pride. We encourage all of our members to participate in Pride events in their communities, and we wish all participants a very happy celebration. •

Québec's summer of student discontent

By Johan Boyden, Montreal

School is out of session. Young people are in summer jobs, or searching for employment, as the youth jobless rate in Québec is still one of the highest in Canada. So the English-language corporate media has a new line about what they've mislabelled the student "boycott." The spoilt brats have surrendered. The resistance is melting away.

Anyone who believes that line was in for a rude awakening on June 22. That's when another major demonstration rocked the streets in Montreal, a rumbling, noisy human river running through the downtown. At the same time, the largest mobilization Québec City has seen during this five-month struggle swept through the streets of the historic capital.

Estimates placed the Montreal protest at over 30,000 people. Organizers in the *la CLASSE* student union strike coalition suggested the "manif" was even larger. As temperatures reached 30 degrees, street repair workers cheered the protestors, misting them in cool fresh water. The Québec City *manif* stretched over four kilometers from the National Assembly.

Such numbers were no small achievement on the Friday before the St. John Baptiste Day long weekend, the national holiday of Québec. Imagine planning two mass simultaneous demonstrations on the eve of Canada Day!

The *manif* in Québec City was particularly important because of a new restrictive bylaw, echoing law 78. Laval students and community groups denounced this municipal regulation and organized a protest at City Council chambers. In video broadcast by news network RDI, the Mayor's chief in staff shoves a protestor. The young man angrily storms out, bumping into a city councillor on his way. The police charged him with assault.

Later police arrested 20 more demonstrators outside city hall. The bylaw not only requires people to inform police of the place, time and route of any demonstration, but also forbids the presence of a crowd on public property between 11 pm and 5 am.

La CLASSE, correctly in the view of many left and progressive groups including the Communist Party of Québec (PCQ) and the

Young Communist League (LJC), is openly defying these measures and their pioneer, the repressive Law 78. The militant student union central has refused to bend under this anti-democratic law. In August, students will return to campuses where all strike action - even symbolic, like a poster - is subject to fines as high as hundreds of thousands of dollars.

Labour's support

Resisting Law 78 also means refusing to submit protest routes to the police. In this sense, the June 22 demonstrations were another mass outpouring of civil disobedience. Judging from the labour flags in the Montreal protest, this view is held by more than a few trade unionists. Sadly, most of the top labour leadership refused to promote the two demos because of their brazen defiance of Law 78.

When the Québec Federation of University Students (FEUQ) called on the government to "stop making [anti-student] TV commercials and agree to meet with students and a mediator," the president of the Québec Federation of Labour (QFL) Michel Arsenault quickly added "it is in the interest of all students, their parents and the general population to now find common ground before the conflict resumes with even greater intensity at the end of the summer."

In a leaked letter to Canadian Labour Congress president Ken Georgetti, Arsenault was even more direct. The "radical wings are calling for a social strike and we do not believe this is THE [sic] strategy to be promoted for the moment," he wrote in a message forwarded to affiliates by the CLC.

These QFL/CLC letters are attempting to stop financial and political support for *la CLASSE* outside of Québec. The letters show how two strategies - broad popular mobilization and a class struggle approach, vs. a narrow electoralist and nationalist route (ie. voting for the Parti Québécois) - have come into sharp relief.

It also shows the growing support for a general strike among labour activists. Québec's other major trade union central, the CSN, is now considering calling an *Estates General* - a mass all-Labour conference - to debate the tactic of a general social and political strike.

Legal battle begins

The student unions have also launched a legal challenge against Bill 78, supported by seventy labour, social, environmental and community organizations. Their first motion in the court was to "request a stay of execution" meaning until certain provisions of the law are studied in detail, it would not be enforced.

The students' lawyer also argued that the government considers student organizations and their leaders to be like trade unions, attributing to them the same responsibilities toward their members, while denying them the same rights - i.e. the right to strike.

The law continues to be explosive politically. Even an elected member of the far-right CAQ party quit its ranks in protest of the CAQ's aggressive support of the law. On the streets, reports are that police are only occasionally charging protestors under law 78. But the police are acting as if they are enforcing a political mandate. Just consider these reports.

In early June, Mathieu Girard had the heart-wrenching experience of discovering his sister's body, after she committed suicide. Girard's mother had heard rumours just a week before that the police wanted her son - a well-known activist at his school - for allegedly releasing a smoke "bomb" in the subway. She even phoned the station, but nothing came of it.

Instead, Québec police swooped down on 19 year-old Girard with his mother and brother on Highway 20, en route to his sister's funeral in Chicoutimi. Letting the others proceed to the funeral, they dragged Mathieu back to Montreal and charged him with mischief.

This kind of "psychological warfare" is accompanied by direct violence. Online broadcasters like Concordia TV have repeatedly captured police brazenly hurting students. One YouTube with over 200,000 hits shows a Montreal cop firing a rubber bullet at a protester and shouting: "There! Right in the ass, y' little shit."

A pacifist philosophy professor responded to this violence by joining the protests in a giant panda suit. Now he has also been charged - for wearing a mask, an illegal act according to a new Montreal bylaw. "The panda costume allows me to do things that I couldn't do otherwise, like hug police officers, for example," the professor told reporters, saying the costume helped calm tense situations.

During the Grand Prix, there were reports of 14-year-olds arrested and held for hours without their parents being told, and young people insulted, manhandled, handcuffed and kept in the sun for hours just for wearing the red square. One young woman was photographed, detained and finally arrested for reading George Orwell's *1984* on the subway.

"What we are witnessing is the replay of the same police techniques [during the 2010 G20 meeting in Toronto]," the Canadian Civil Liberties Association said in a statement. "This conduct is excessive and illegal."

The Inter-American Court of Human Rights and Navi Pillay, the United Nations High

Commissioner for Human Rights, have also taken up the issue. At the opening of a Special Session of the Human Rights Council in Geneva in June, Pillay said she was "disappointed by the new legislation passed in Québec that restricts their rights to freedom of association and of peaceful assembly."

Meanwhile, the NDP's continued silence keeps getting louder. On June 20, the Harper government moved that "This House recognizes the duly elected National Assembly of Québec's right to pass legislation, such as Bill 78, within its areas of jurisdiction and in conformity with both the Canadian and Québec Charter of rights and freedoms."

To proceed, the Tories needed unanimous consent - which some Bloc Québécois MPs and Elizabeth May from the Green Party denied. Did the NDP speak up? Yes, said at least one NDP back-bencher's twitter - but that was rapidly corrected or, rather, muzzled. Then CBC's Kady O'Malley quoted a high-ranking NDP MP saying his party helped to write the motion!

But sneakily using the national question as a pretext to trump solidarity between working people is a distortion of the principle of equality of nations and internationalism.

Red square alert

In Québec, supporting the red square seems to continually get people in trouble. When Fred Pellerin - an internationally known

storyteller, poet and songwriter - was awarded the Order of Québec he politely turned it down.

While "touched, to say the least," he said in an open letter, "They were going to pin a bit of brilliance to my jacket, in the name of the Québec people. My people. But [...] I could not forgive myself if I were to celebrate and toast the honour of this people in the present context, while the very foundations of our democracy are being shaken."

Minister of Culture Christine St-Pierre replied that by wearing the red square Pellerin was associating himself with "intimidation [and] violence." Within days, over 2000 key players in Québec's cultural milieu demanded a public apology from the Minister.

On the other side of the National Assembly, the opposition PQ have been emboldened after winning the Liberal stronghold of Argenteuil for the first time since the riding's creation in 1962. In the polls, they are in a tight race with the Liberals.

But when surveys ask about Charest's ability to establish peace and order, his rating goes up to 50%. "Having lost any moral authority, Charest has fuelled the student conflict so he can step in and be the saviour of social peace," one commentator said recently.

For student leaders this suspicion was confirmed when the Québec Liberals' electoral strategy became public.

"In light of recent Liberal

see SUMMER, page 11

This fight can be won!

By Miguel Figueroa, leader of the Communist Party of Canada

Despite the desperate measures of the Charest government, police violence, anti-democratic laws, and an unprecedented propaganda campaign by the bourgeois media, the "Battle of Quebec" continues to deepen. Thanks to their unity and determination, the Quebec students have moved from opposition to massive tuition increases into a much broader fight to defend democratic rights and to oppose the anti-people, austerity agenda of monopoly capital. This just struggle deserves the unflagging support of workers, progressives and democratic-minded Canadians.

In the heat of this battle, there should be no space for timidity or hesitation, much less capitulation. The silence/refusal of the right-wing leadership of the NDP and among some in trade union movement to support the students' struggle renders a disservice to their own members and to the Canadian people in general. Pathetic pleas for "social peace" in the midst of an all-sided capitalist offensive against the social rights and conditions of youth and working people are inexcusable. We must use every opening, every possibility to extend our solidarity, and to link it with other fronts of struggle against capitalist barbarity, imperialist aggression and war across Canada and internationally. This is everyone's fight. With unity and solidarity, it can be won! •

Peoples' Voice Forum: "The Attack on Immigrants and Refugees - The Corporate Agenda"

Hear speakers on the Harper government's attack on our rights, wages and living standards

Sunday, July 15, 3-5 pm

**Brampton Soccer Centre Room #1
1495 Sandalwood Parkway East,
Brampton, Ontario**

Refreshments available.

For info, call Harinder at 647-818-6880.

Annual People's Voice Walk-A-Thon

**Bear Creek Park, Surrey, BC
Sunday, August 12**

Meet at the picnic area near the 140 St. parking lot, just south of 88 Ave.



11 am - Walk around beautiful Bear Creek Park
12 noon - Enjoy an international potluck lunch
1 pm - Relax and watch our speakers and performers



GLOBAL CLASS STRUGGLE

Argentina deploys military in fuel strike

Argentina's government sent military police to take control of fuel plants and get trucks back on the road on June 20, the first day of a truckers' pay strike that could cause widespread shortages in Latin America's third-biggest economy. The powerful truck drivers union defied a government order and launched the three-day protest, disrupting fuel distribution throughout the country, a leading exporter of grains.

The government initiated a criminal complaint over the strike. Hugo Moyano, who heads the CGT labour federation and whose son runs the truckers union, criticised the move by President Cristina Fernandez.

"I'm announcing a nationwide truckers strike," Moyano told local television. "Tomorrow we'll define the scope of this and I'm certain other unions will join us."

The truckers union represents workers who transport cash, garbage and farm products, in addition to fuel and other goods. Labour disputes are common in Argentina due to double-digit inflation, but the Labour Ministry normally intervenes to avoid major disruption to the economy. In this case, the truckers ignored the ministry's order for compulsory conciliation.

"The president has ordered us to deploy all the state's forces to be able to quickly solve the (fuel) shortages they want to impose on the country," Security Secretary Sergio Berni told local television. "Those people who try through force and violence to block the trucks from leaving (plants) will have to explain that in court," he added.

No return for airline workers

Turkish Airlines Chair Hamdi Topcu says the national flag carrier will not re-hire 305 workers sacked in early June without a court decision. However, Labour Minister Faruk Celik says he will meet with Topcu in a bid to resolve the issue. Employees were laid off after a labour action against a new law that bans aviation strikes.

Topcu says those who participated in the protest at Ataturk Airport were marked by surveillance cameras. "We have high definition images. Ones who joined the walkout inhibited those who wanted to work. They are all identified with surveillance camera images clearly," he said.

"Turkish Airlines is a private company with its 51 percent of its stakes publicly traded. The laid-off people can only return to their jobs on a judicial ruling," the daily Hurriyet newspaper quoted him as saying.

However, the Labour Minister told journalists that he would meet with Topcu to discuss the condition of the sacked workers. "Our aim is to act as a sound mediator and settle the matter," he said, adding that the issue was also discussed at the International Labor

Organization meeting in Geneva earlier in June.

Hava-Is members conducted a slowdown strike May 29, protesting a draft law banning strikes and lockouts in the aviation industry. But the draft was approved by the parliament and the law went into effect on June 3. Topcu said he took the issue of re-hiring sacked workers to the airline's board because the president of the trade union had insisted. No member of the board voted to revoke the lay-off decision, he added.



Qatar breaks consultation pledge

Qatar has broken its promise to consult with international labour experts over the introduction of a new labour law. The move came a week after the government pledged to consult with the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC).

The authorities are rushing through plans for a government "committee to represent workers" instead of allowing the huge migrant workforce to form their own trade unions, in a move that will only entrench worker exploitation and abuse.

Sharan Burrow, ITUC General Secretary, said on June 19, "One week ago Qatar's Labour Minister promised to discuss their draft law with us, but now they are rushing through their government committee plan without any regard for the rights of their workforce. Nobody should be fooled by this, least of all FIFA, who have pledged to support real labour standards in building the 2022 World Cup. The international trade union movement will now move ahead with its global campaign - No World Cup Without Workers' Rights."

On June 11 Burrow met with a high-level government delegation from Qatar, including the Acting Labour Minister, at the ILO. The ITUC expressed deep concern that the current labour law did not allow freedom of association and warned that a new proposed law establishing workers' committees, as described in media reports, would do nothing to bring Qatar's laws into conformance with international labour standards. The government agreed to share the proposed law with the ITUC and allow it to provide comments, which the government would then consider. However, four days later, Gulf media reported that the proposed law had just been

approved by the cabinet and merely awaited the Emir's signature.

Troubles for migrant female workers

Twenty-five-year-old Nazma Begum, who left Bangladesh for Abu Dhabi in quest of a better life in 2004, ended up being a sex worker when her employer left no other options for her. The sad tale of Nazma is one of many recorded by a women empowerment organisation. Thousands of other female migrant workers from South Asia suffer similar fates.

Nazma's story was one of the case studies discussed at a June 19 press conference held by the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) in Dhaka.

UN Women organised the event to unveil its report on "Migration of women workers from South Asia to the Gulf." Speakers stressed the need for concerted efforts by the South Asian countries to promote migration policies and alleviate the woes of the migrant workers.

"For ensuring a smooth migration system, the government must be aware of whom it is sending abroad and where," said Dr. Zafar Ahmed Khan, secretary of expatriates' welfare and overseas employment ministry.

Sushma Kapoor, deputy regional programme director of UN Women's South Asia sub-regional office, said, "Over 2.5 million Asian workers annually leave their countries to work abroad. The contribution of migrant workers in the form of remittances is an important contribution, especially in case of Bangladesh."

Bulgarian workers fear plant closure

Employees of the troubled Lead and Zinc Complex in Bulgaria's Kardzhali are considering civil disobedience due to the uncertain future of the plant.

In mid-June, OTZK staff called on Prime Minister Boyko Borisov to come up with a plan for solving the company's problems, threatening to stage roadblocks at main road arteries in Kardzhali if their demands remained unheard.

The Lead and Zinc Complex, the largest Bulgarian producer of non-ferrous metals, stopped functioning at the end of 2011. The owner, Valentin Zahariev, owes four months' salaries to the 519 workers, according to reports by Bulgarian National Television.

The decision about whether to launch civil disobedience was to be taken at a general meeting of OTZK metallurgists, but the workers say their patience has been exhausted.

Prime Minister Borisov claimed that OTZK's case would be resolved by end-April but the deadline was repeatedly postponed.

Trade union representatives say the plant's creditor banks are taking steps to freeze company property, causing the workers to fear they will not get their salaries.

Trade unionists say the time is ripe for new protests. The Polish consortium Silesia was recently said to be the only investor still interested in renting the plant, after two other candidates withdrew.

Retirement age debate in China

Chinese authorities have said the country has no immediate plans to defer the retirement age.

"We are indeed studying the deferment of the retirement age but it does not mean we would change the current retirement policy right now," an official with the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security was quoted by the *People's Daily*.

The ministry said that the country would introduce a policy at the "proper time" and it would start related deliberations later this year.

Currently in China, the retirement age for female workers is 50, female government officials, 55, and male workers, 60. The policy was enacted some 60 years ago when life expectancy was comparatively low. Now, Chinese people have an average life expectancy of 73.5 years.

Tang Jun, a social policy researcher with the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, said white-collar workers and those in the creative sector such as college professors, doctors and technicians might welcome the deferment of the retirement age but manual workers might not.

Tang also warned that a retirement age deferment would hurt younger people, especially college graduates seeking work. China creates 10 to 12 million new

jobs every year, more than 30 percent of which are openings when workers retire. If the retirement age was deferred, every year 3 to 4 million job vacancies would disappear.

Update on Iran's jailed activists

On June 15, sixty members of Iran's Coordinating Committee to Help Form Workers' Organisations and other labour activists were arrested in the city of Karaj. The detainees were transferred to Rajai Shahr prison. Some were soon released, others were held without charge.

According to the Coordinating Committee, authorities have transferred some of the Karaj detainees to the Intelligence Office in the city of Rasht, in the northern province of Gilan. Five of the detainees are residents of Rasht.

The arrestees were delegates from different provinces, who had gone to Karaj for the annual general membership meeting of the "Coordinating Committee". The Committee is a well-known independent labour organization, formed in 2005 with the support and signatures of thousands of workers. It is not a clandestine group; many of its members are nationally and internationally well-known, like veteran labour activist Mahmoud Salehi (who was beaten viciously during the raid).

The raid and arrests by the agents of the Islamic Republic of Iran are seen as a part of the overall strategy to repress workers' struggles against ever-increasing poverty, mass unemployment, discrimination, and the government's austerity and neo-liberal policies.

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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Austerity, greed and the pain in Spain

Conn Hallinan, Information Clearing House

Nobel Laureate economist Joseph Stiglitz characterises the Spanish bank bailout as “voodoo economics” that is certain to “fail.” *New York Times* economic analyst Andrew Ross Sorkin agrees: “By now it should be apparent that the bailout has failed - or at least on its way to failing.” And columnist and Nobel Prize-winning economist Paul Krugman bemoans that Europe (and the US) “are repeating ancient mistakes” and asks, “why does no one learn from them?”

Indeed, at first glance, the European Union’s response to the economic chaos gripping the continent does seem a combination of profound delusion, and what a British reporter called “sado-monetarism” - endless cutbacks, savage austerity, and widespread layoffs.

But whether something “works” or not depends on what you do for a living.

If you work at a regular job, you are in deep trouble. Spanish unemployment is at 25 percent - much higher in the country’s southern regions - and 50 percent among young people. In one way or another, those figures - albeit not quite as high - are replicated across the Euro Zone, particularly in those countries that have sipped from Circe’s bailout cup: Ireland, Portugal, and Greece.

But if you are Josef Ackermann heading up the Deutsche Bank, you earned an 8 million Euro bonus in 2012, because you successfully manipulated the past four years of economic meltdown to make the bank bigger and more powerful

than it was before the 2008 crash. In 2009, when people were losing their jobs, their homes, and their pensions, Deutsche Bank’s profits soared 67 percent, eventually raking in almost 8 billion Euros for 2011. The bank took a hit in 2012, but the Spanish bailout will help recoup Deutsche Bank’s losses from its gambling spree in Spanish real estate.

And, just in case you thought irony was dead, it was the Spanish housing bubble that tanked that country’s economy - at the time Madrid’s debt was among the lowest in the Euro Zone - and German banks (as well as Dutch, French, British and Austrian) financed that bubble. German banks also financed the real estate bubble that crashed Ireland’s economy. Some 60 percent of Deutsche Bank’s income is foreign based.

Consider this figure: in 1997 real estate loans in Ireland were 5 billion Euros. By 2007 they were 96.2 billion Euros, a jump of 1,730 percent. Real estate prices rose 500 percent, the same amount that Spanish housing prices increased. The banks didn’t know they were pumping up a bubble? Of course they knew, but they were making money hand over fist.

When the American financial industry self-destructed in 2008, the Irish and Spanish bubbles popped, and who got the bill? Irish taxpayers shelled out US\$30 billion to bail out the Anglo-Irish Bank - essentially the country’s total tax revenues for 2009 - and in return got a 15 percent unemployment rate, huge cuts in the minimum wage, pension reductions, and social service cutbacks. Spain is headed in the

same direction.

As Spanish economist and London School of Economics professor Luis Garicano told the *New York Times*, “Unfortunately, Spain did not manage to reach one of its main goals in the negotiations [over the bailout], which was to have Europe bear part of the risk

democracy on the continent. People could then elect any one they pleased, but no national government would have any say over economic policy. Want to do a bit of pump priming to get the jobless rate down and tax revenues up? Nope. But feel free to paint park benches any colour you like.



of rescuing the financial sector, without letting it fall instead directly onto the shoulders of the Spanish taxpayers.”

Garicano went on to complain, “Those who lent to our financial system were the banks and the insurance companies of Northern Europe, which should bear the consequences of these decisions.” But of course they will not. Instead, the banks got to go to the casino, gamble other people’s money, and get repaid for their losses. That’s sweet work if you can get it.

However, the “sado-monetarism” strategy is about more than just bailing out the banks at the expense of the vast majority of European taxpayers. It cloaks its long-term designs in coded language: “rigid labour market,” “internal devaluation,” “pension reform,” “common budgetary process,” “political union.”

A quick translation. “Rigid labour market” means getting rid of contracts that guarantee decent wages, working conditions and benefits, all won through a long process of negotiations and industrial action. As the *New York Times* put it, the current rightwing Spanish government is attempting to “loosen collective bargaining agreements.”

The drive to scrap union contracts is coupled with “internal devaluation,” which, as Krugman points out, “basically means cutting wages”. If the working class can be forced to accept lower wages and slimmer benefits - and there is no better disciplinarian in these regards than a high unemployment rate - profits will go up. Sure, the vast majority will be poorer, but not the people who run Deutsche Bank.

“Pension reform” simply means impoverishing old people, who had nothing to do with the real estate bubbles that brought down Ireland and Spain. But again, someone has to sacrifice, and old people don’t have all that much time left anyhow. Oh, for ice floes to put them on.

“Common budgetary process” and “political union” means giving up national sovereignty in the service of keeping the banks solvent - in essence, the end of

The 100 billion Euro (US\$125 billion) Spanish bailout will fail for the average Spaniard, as bailouts have already failed the Irish, Portuguese and Greeks, and it will lock Spain into generations of debt. Italy is next (not counting the small fry like Cyprus and several Eastern European countries that may fall before Rome is finally sacked). The Euro Zone’s economies are predicted to contract 0.1 percent for all of 2012, and the jobless rate for the 17-country bloc is 11 percent, higher than at any time since the Euro was established in 1999.

Spain’s right-wing prime minister, Mariano Rajoy, has tried to argue that the bailout was not as onerous as those imposed on Ireland, Portugal and Greece, but the Germans soon set him straight: “There will be a troika [the European Union, European Central Bank, and International

Monetary Fund] and it will make sure the program is being implemented,” German Finance Minister Wolfgang Schaube told the *Financial Times*.

It is not unlikely that the Euro will fall sometime in the next year, but of course the debts will remain. The dead hand of the past will lie on the brow of the living for a long, long time to come.

Financier George Soros puts much of the blame for the current crisis on Germany - indeed he accuses Chancellor Angela Merkel of trying to establish a “German Empire” - but that is simplistic. Germany has certainly led the “sado-monetarism” charge, but this strategy is not just about unleashing the austerity Panzers to establish a Fourth Reich. All over the world, capital is on the march, with the goal of rolling back the social programs of the post-World War II period and returning to the Gilded Age when the rich did pretty much as they pleased.

Weakening unions is central to this, as is privatising everything capital can get its hands on, and the economic crisis is the perfect cover to try an accomplish this. For a fascinating analogy, pick up Indian journalist P. Sainath’s brilliant “Everyone Loves A Good Drought” that exposed how wealthy landlords in India manipulated a natural crisis to increase their grip over agriculture.

Former Deutsche Bank head Ackermann recently prattled on about the “social time bomb” of economic inequality, but so far he has not offered to share his 8.8 million Euro bonus. In the meantime, according to the International Labor Organisation, global youth unemployment will reach 12.7 percent this year and stay there for at least four years, creating a “lost generation” of workers.

So, the answer to Krugman’s question, “why are they repeating ancient mistakes?”

Because they are making out like bandits. ●

Deadly toll for environmental activists

PV Vancouver Bureau

The struggle for natural resources is becoming more murderous, according to a report which reveals that environmental activists were killed at the rate of one a week in 2011.

The death toll of campaigners, community leaders and journalists involved in the protection of forests, rivers and land has risen dramatically in the past three years, says Global Witness.

Brazil, the host of the Rio+20 conference on sustainable development, has seen the deaths of more than 365 defenders over the last decade, said the briefing, released on the eve of the Summit in Rio de Janeiro.

The group called on global leaders to counter the rising violence, which in many cases involves governments and foreign corporations, and to reduce the consumption pressures that are driving development into remote areas.

The Global Witness report is incomplete and skewed towards certain countries because information is fragmented and often missing. For example, the findings did not include deaths related to cross-border conflicts prompted by competition for natural resources, and fighting over gas and oil.

Killings in Brazil are often connected to illegal forest clearance by loggers and farmers in the Amazon and other remote areas, often described as the “wild west”. Among the recent cases were the murders last year of high-profile Amazon activists, José Claudio Ribeiro da Silva and Maria do Espirito Santo. Dozens of other activists are now under state protection.

Unlike most countries on the list, the number of killings in Brazil declined slightly last year, perhaps because the government is making a greater effort to intervene in deforestation cases.

The reverse trend is apparent in the Philippines, where four activists were killed during May, prompting the Kalikasan People’s Network for Environment to talk of “bloody May”.

Last December, the UN special rapporteur on human rights noted: “Defenders working on land and environmental issues in connection with extractive industries and construction and development projects in the Americas ... face the highest risk of death as result of their human rights activities.” ●

CODIR condemns arrests in Iran

The arbitrary arrest of 60 members of a committee dedicated to upholding workers rights has been condemned by the major UK solidarity organisation campaigning for human rights in Iran.

The Committee for the Defence of the Iranian People’s Rights (CODIR) has been informed that on June 15, 60 members of the Coordinating Committee to Help Form Workers’ Organisations and a number of other labour activists, were arrested by government agents acting without arrest warrants in the Iranian city of Karaj.

Reports from Iran indicate that the detainees were transferred to Rajai Shahr prison in Karaj. Although some of those detained were subsequently released, others were held without charge in what is seen as a bid to frighten trade unionists and their leaders.

CODIR Assistant General Secretary Jamshid Ahmadi

condemned the arrests and warned that further similar actions are likely to take place in the build up to the presidential election in June 2013.

“Ever since the stolen election of 2009 the regime in Iran has been running scared of any opposition because they know how much anger there is beneath the surface of society. Workers merely attempting to organise to improve their terms and conditions, a basic human right in any democracy, are seen as a challenge to the regime,” said Ahmadi. “We have grave fears that this sort of action will only increase as the regime attempts to intensify the climate of fear in the country.”

CODIR has demanded the immediate release of all trade union activists and a halt to the arbitrary arrest of any workers. It calls for respect for trade union rights in Iran and supports trade unions in protesting against the actions of the Iranian government. ●

CPI (Marxist) to celebrate Ghadar Party centenary

By Gurpreet Singh

The Communist Party of India (Marxist) has resolved to celebrate the Ghadar Party centenary next year, according to Surinder Dhesi, a party delegate from Vancouver who recently returned from the CPI(M) congress in India.

Dhesi said that the motion was moved by the party delegates from Canada and UK and was later adopted by the CPI(M) politbureau.

The Ghadar Party was a group of Indian revolutionaries that was established in US in 1913 and believed in an armed resistance against the British occupation of India. The group had a big following in Canada, where it also organized Indian immigrants against racism and anti-immigration policies. Many of these activists returned to India in pursuit of freedom, but faced the gallows and life imprisonments. Some of its prominent members were based in Vancouver. Though

the Ghadar Party members were predominantly Sikhs, the party remained secular in character and kept politics and religion apart. The majority of the Ghadar leaders were leftists.

The CPI(M) has decided to hold country wide events to mark the 100 years of the party, according to Dhesi. He also said that similar

events will also be held across Canada by the secular groups, including the CPI(M) offshoot, Indo Canadian Workers' Association which has been organizing yearly events in memory of Ghadarites. The Association has decided to bring out a special souvenir on the occasion. •



Sikh Temple in Stockton, California, 1912, one of the centres of Ghadar activities

Fourth International Festival of Poetry of Resistance

Dear poets, friends and supporters:

The 4th International Festival of Poetry of Resistance Against State Terror (4th IFPOR) has been scheduled for October 12-14, 2012, in Toronto, Ontario. The Festival this year is focusing on raising awareness of state terror perpetrated against people and nations all over the globe. Our world is economically and socially dominated by large multi-national corporations whose unbridled greed has resulted in misery, poverty and suffering for billions of people on the planet. Defending those corporations and their imperialist/capitalist system in a time of global interdependence has allowed the most powerful governments in the world to bring about aggressive terror activity into the lives of vulnerable people and states.

The Occupy movements in the world defending life, well-being, freedom, equal opportunity, and democracy are one of today's most obvious manifestations of resistance. It is there, but not exclusively so, that poetry, art, drama, music and culture have a

revolutionary role and IFPOR is dedicated to nurturing this role through cultural events that emphasize struggle against the power of the fewer than one per cent that represent the multi-national corporations and against the state terror that they perpetrate. The focus of our upcoming Fourth IFPOR is "Against State Terror."

State terror may be in the form of war but also in secret or individual acts organized, paid for and perpetrated by governments against those they wish to subdue or subvert. One of the prime examples is the immunity meted to death squads working in many countries to get rid of activists. The acknowledgment by the U.S. Embassy in Bogota that 257 089 victims are registered as having been killed by right-wing paramilitary squads in that country speaks to this situation. Another example is the manipulation of a justice system bent to fit political ends by the imprisonment of the Cuban Five who, except for one released on parole, are in the U.S. serving out egregiously long sentences for fighting terrorism.

Other examples of state terror

are aboriginal peoples having their communities assaulted/destroyed/subdued by states working with corporations; the toxification of their environments; people fighting for their self-determination and defending their sovereignty in the face of obstructionist meddling by bigger powers through coups and/or more surreptitious means by which countries might be destabilized. IFPOR focuses on these issues through cultural events to help make people become more aware of the reality of the globalized community we live in.

The Festival provides a place where poets seeking justice and peace may find a home for their poems. We suggest that persons new to IFPOR go to our website: poetryofresistance.org and check our Aims and Goals. Poetry workshops are also offered as well as cultural events, panel discussions, poetry presentations, and we are open to further suggestions. If you would like to head a workshop, do presentations or organize an event of your choosing please let us know and we will be happy to accommodate requests as part of the Festival programme. All are invited to attend the Festival and are welcome to take part. Please let us know of your intentions as soon as you can...

For further information please go to our website (www.poetryofresistance.org/) or email: resistancepoetryfest@gmail.com.

We look forward to hearing from you about your commitment to attend and to participate! Please feel free to disseminate this information to persons who might be interested in this event. Many thanks to all those who have supported us through the years and we look forward to hearing from you and from newcomers to this exciting event.

In solidarity, IFPOR Executive, Patrick Connors and Jeannine Pitas (Co-chairs of 4th IFPOR), Carlos Angulo, Osaze Dolabaille, Roghyeh Ghanbaralizadeh, Jose Gonzalez, Lisa Makarchuk, Steve O'Brien, Charles Roach •



The Fifth of the Month to Free the Five

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

E-mail: president@whitehouse.gov

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

Phone 1-202-456-1111

Fax 1-202-456-2461

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

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



MUSIC NOTES

By Wally Brooker

Reflections on Les Manifs Casseroles

Last month People's Voice published an excellent piece by Johan Boyden on the *manifs casseroles* protests that have electrified Quebec, as demonstrators beat pots and pans in solidarity with the struggle of the students. Readers curious about the roots of the casseroles will find some answers in an essay by McGill scholar Jonathan Sterne on the old francophone tradition of *charivaris*. Sterne describes how *charivaris* (protests with pots and pans) were a tactic employed by 17th century French peasants and artisans oppressed by royal tax collectors, as well as by masked patriotes during the 1837 uprising in Quebec, who banged pots and pans and shouted "Vive la liberté" in protest against English oppression. More recently Sterne notes the use of the term by popular hip-hop band Loco Locass, who called for *charivaris* against Charest in their 2005 hit song "Libérez-nous des libéraux." Quebec's casseroles: on participation, percussion and protest is published on the blog "Sounding Out!" Visit <http://soundstudiesblog.com/>.

Occupy This Album

A vast treasury of contemporary U.S. protest music in support of the Occupy movement is now available. "Occupy This Album" can be purchased as a four-disc boxed set or in a 99-song downloadable format. Both are affordably priced at \$9.99 with proceeds going to the movement. In the words of producer and OWS activist Jason Samuel, the compilation seeks to "invigorate and reinvent protest music." The genre has come a long way from the days when it was almost exclusively associated with guitar-playing folksingers. While "Occupy This Album" does present acoustic singer-songwriters, it also contains a wide array of bands working in styles such as indie rock, hip-hop, electronica, punk and reggae. Listeners may not like everything they hear, just as they might not agree with all of the opinions heard in a radically decentralized movement like Occupy, but there is plenty for everyone and much to discover. While there are many contributions by celebrity musicians, there are even more by relative unknowns. Check it out at <http://musicforoccupy.org>

CBC cuts target regional music

CBC management, faced with three-year funding cuts of more than \$200 million, has opted to decommission recording studios in St. John's, Ottawa, Winnipeg, Regina, Calgary and Edmonton, reduce mobile recording facilities by 50% and cut up to two-thirds of live concert services. CBC recording centres will henceforth exist only in Halifax, Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver. Early attention by CBC regional radio has helped to propel the careers of countless artists, particularly those following their own muse rather than aiming for the Top 40 market. Musicians are not the only cultural workers hit by Harper's budget. The Conservatives have targeted the CBC, the NFB and Telefilm, three powerful platforms for Canadian culture. One group resisting this onslaught is the Friends of Canadian Broadcasting. Check it out at www.friends.ca.

16th Cubadisco International Festival

The Cubadisco International Festival is an opportunity for lovers of Cuban music to catch up on the socialist island's vibrant music scene. This year's festival in Havana was paid tribute to renowned classical guitarist, composer and educator Leo Brouwer. The 12-day event was dedicated to the guitar, but the winners of the two biggest prizes were pianists. Jazz pianist and composer Ernan Lopez Nussa, founder of the group AfroCuba, won the Grand Prize for his "Veinte pianos" album, a work that combines tracks from different stages of his career with interpretations of his work by a host of pianists. The Extraordinary Award went to pianist Chucho Valdes and his band The Afro-Cuban Messengers for their album "Chucho's Steps." Popular Puerto Rican band Calle 13 received the International award for their album "Entren Los Que Quieran."

Doc Watson: 1923-2012

Traditional guitarist and singer Arthel "Doc" Watson died May 29th near his home in Deep Gap, North Carolina. Watson's nimble guitar picking was a transformative influence on the folk revival in the sixties and beyond, as thousands of aspiring guitar players listened to his recordings and studied transcriptions of his style. Blind since infancy, Doc Watson was born on a farm in North Carolina and grew up in the Blue Ridge Mountains, an Appalachian region steeped in traditional music from the British Isles as well as African-American blues and gospel. After a stint in the fifties playing with country & western bands, Doc joined neighbour Clarence Ashley, an elderly old-time banjo player, on a series of Folkways recordings that showcased his brilliant flatpicking guitar technique. Before Doc Watson the guitar was mostly a backup instrument in American folk music. He demonstrated its capacity and remained an outstanding musician and beloved figure in American music for the rest of his life. For more info visit www.smithsonian.com. •

Quebec's summer of discontent...

continued from page 7

documents that have surfaced, it would appear that the Premier's strategy was to maintain tensions and encourage the spread of chaos all along" a statement by the FEUQ said. Charest "never wanted to resolve the crisis, but only to divide and conquer, at any cost."

The accusations weren't dispelled by the revelation that the Liberals are trying to block a Québec Elections proposal to set up voting stations on campuses.

A ticking time-bomb also exists for the Liberals with the Charbonneau Commission on corruption. But after hearing damning testimony of government links with organized crime, the Commission has recessed for the summer.

In response to the Liberal's "Teflon" resilience, some progressive nationalist voices have proposed an alliance of the PQ with a smaller nationalist break-away party Option Nationale, and Québec Solidaire (QS). That strategy has been turned down by QS.

"The student and social crisis that we've now been living for several months is an eloquent example of the ambiguities and contradictions in which the Parti Québécois is enclosed", QS spokesperson Amir Khadir and Francois

David wrote in reply, noting the PQ's ambiguous and inconsistent stance towards the students and neo-liberalism in general.

In fact, Pauline Marois, leader of the PQ, took the occasion of the June 24 *Fete nationale* holiday to remove her red square and call for unity and harmony of Québec society.

"The meaning of this political awakening and of this ongoing social metamorphosis resides, in our opinion, in the massive rejection of a system controlled by a minority that does not stop getting richer on the backs of the 99%" the leaders of QS wrote, adding that their party "is also convinced that only a social project can henceforth carry the national project" [and] "political propositions must be in synch with the progressive social movements."

The letter is a welcome sign from a party that has increasingly seemed to put the question of independence before class struggle.

La Presse writer Patrick Lagace goes further, saying that "The tectonic plates of Québec society are shifting. Since the sixties, the dividing line was always that sovereigntist-federalist axis [...] This spring, a new dividing line is under construction, right under our eyes. The Canada-Québec axis is being erased, a new one, a left-right axis, is taking its place."

What's shaping up is clearly "a student strike, a people's struggle". As writer Rick Salutin has noted, "any argument you can make against accessible post-secondary schooling, would apply in exactly the same way to high schools and elementary." In other words, access to education is a class demand.

"In fact, during the last Depression, when high school still wasn't widely available," Salutin adds, "there were the same arguments you hear now about how we couldn't afford it."

What the government can clearly afford is fighting the students. By then end of May the Charest government had spent over \$800,000 to promote its position on tuition fees. Then there are the additional police costs. Figures compiled by the FEUQ place the cost of the strike at \$104,000 per hour, which includes teacher pay, the costs of demonstrations to the city of Montreal, and additional expenditures on policing. These costs far outweigh the revenue generated by the tuition increase.

Meanwhile, the first student who won an injunction to break the strike in his department and force his fellow students back to school has quit his class, ironically saying that he needs to spend more time working and saving up... for school.

For their part, the student federations have announced their summer mobilizations will aim to turn the "malaise of Québeckers" against the Liberals in key ridings and summer festivals. The CLASSE has called a series of conferences across Québec starting July 18 to discuss the way forward, and win students to continuing the strike in August.

So as summer heat's up, it's not the progressive students who seem to be tiring. As la CLASSE spokesperson Gabriel Nadeau-Dubois wrote recently, "Against all expectations, Québec's youth - hundreds of thousands of us - have accepted an historic challenge: defending social justice. It's hard not to be optimistic." ●

U.S. view of student protests...

continued from page 4

scandal under investigation in Quebec.

In fact Jones presents the tuition struggle as a "red herring." He says the real "stake" in the struggle is "the legitimacy of Quebec's governing authority" and "radical students, supported by union funding and presumably organizers, are seeking to force the resignation of the Charest government and early elections."

His greater worry is that "students elsewhere (may) determine Quebec has provided a learning experience." The common reactionary interest of the corporate ruling class in both Quebec and Washington is fully expressed by Jones, especially against the spread of protest movements that take aim at corporate greed and support democratic aims.

Most alarmingly, he offers free advice to the Charest government: "If you want to end demonstrations/wars, you need overwhelming force with mass arrests, quick trials (no "catch and release" policy), and jail sentences..." Jones is very critical of Charest's "feckless" efforts.

The article is actually a call or alarm for Washington to help Charest hold

Quebec feminists...

continued from page 12

now is that not only do the police seem to target certain student protests and feminist groups, but so does the extreme right.

For example, on neo-fascist websites, we see direct violent intimidation against young rebels who join in the Quebec student demonstrations, forming contingents of young women. Some activists are photographed, identified and put up on the web for intimidation by these ultra-right forces. The new third co-spokesperson for the CLASSE, radical feminist Camille Robert, was personally targeted on these web sites. Clearly, the joint work of feminists and young women with students deeply troubles the right-wing and the ruling class. ●

In memory of Scott Milsom

With great sadness, the Comrades of Nova Scotia announce the passing of Scott Milsom, 59, of Halifax on June 14, 2012. A memorial was held at the Atlantica Hotel on June 20, where speakers recalled with laughter and tears the life of a great socialist who stood for social justice and who had run as a

candidate in Halifax for the Communist Party of Canada in 1979, at a crucial time for the party. Lifelong friend, Gary Burrill, spoke of working with Scott on *New Maritimes* which became an award-winning Atlantic leftist publication which was published for fourteen years. Scott later was the editor for Coastal Communities News which united fishing communities as it informed the public about the struggles during the cod moratorium, the TAGS programs difficulties, FISHNET (women workers in fishing communities) and many other issues. He was an author of *Voice of Nova Scotia Community: A Written Democracy* (2003). Recently, Scott was again working with Garry Burrill in the constituency office for Colchester-Musquodoboit Valley.

Scott's sisters, Sally and Peggy, recalled what a great uncle Scott was to all his nieces and nephews, what a great nature lover he was, especially as an avid bird watcher, and Scott's fascination with the correct use of grammar, which could explain his excellent editorial abilities. The sisters shared many humorous stories and also spoke of supporting their brother on his political path. Sally ended with "Long Live Socialism!" to the applause and respect of those attending. The last piece of music played at the gathering was Monty Python's *Always Look on the Bright Side of Life*, which everyone joined in singing and whistling as they left.

Scott leaves his wife, Jeannie Kwan, his Sisters, Sally and Peggy, his brother, Doug, his step-children, Wendy and Kenny and his little dog, Yoshi. He was predeceased by his mother, Kathryn; his father, David; brother, Bruce; and niece, Sarah. ●

REDS ON THE WEB

www.comunist-party.ca
www.peoplesvoice.ca
www.ycl-ljc.ca
www.solidnet.org

What's Left

Nanaimo, BC

Moncada Day Celebration, Sunday, July 29, 3 pm, at 530 Wakesia, salmon BBQ, call Grace at 250-741-7411 for information.

Vancouver, BC

Take a Stand Against Militarism, Sunday, July 1, meet 12 noon at Waves, 1198 E. Pender, for anti-militarism walk through Canada Day celebrations. Organized by StopWar Coalition.

Latin American Dinner, proceeds to PV Fund Drive, 7 pm, Sat., July 7, \$15, organized by Sergio Montivero Club CPC, call 604-254-9836 for tickets.

Socialist Youth Conference, Sat., July 28, at the CSE, 706 Clark Drive. For info and to register, email YCL(BC), ycl-bcctte@gmail.com.

Moncada Day Celebration, Sunday, July 29, Chilean Cop, 3390 School Ave., sponsored by Canada-Cuba Friendship Assoc., for details call Ray, 604-254-1350.

La Pena Latinoamericana, 8 pm, Friday, July 27, and last Friday each month, 706 Clark Drive, \$10, all welcome, organized by La Trova Nuestra.

Surrey, BC

People's Voice Walk-A-Thon, Sunday, Aug. 12, Bear Creek Park (picnic area near parking

at 140 St. & 88 Ave.). Gather 11 am for walk, delicious lunch 12 noon, program 1 pm. For details, call Harjit, 604-543-7179.

Brampton, ON

"The Attack on Immigrants and Refugees - The Corporate Agenda". People's Voice Forum, speakers on the Harper government's attack on our rights, wages and living standards, Sunday, July 15, 3-5 pm, Brampton Soccer Centre Room #1, 1495 Sandalwood Parkway East. For info, call Harinder at 647-818-6880.

Toronto, ON

Honouring the Moncada: July 26th Cuban Event and Celebrating the 35th Anniversary of the CCF. Toronto, Sunday, July 29, 11 am-3 pm, buffet brunch, salsa dance lessons, live band & more. Tickets \$26 advance, \$35 at door, Lula Lounge, 1585 Dundas St. West. For info call Liz 416-654-7105 or Sharon 905-951-8499. Sponsored by Canadian-Cuban Friendship Association Toronto, visit www.ccfatoronto.ca.

Montreal, QC

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

LATIN AMERICAN DINNER



**Centre for Socialist Education
706 Clark Drive, Vancouver, BC**

Saturday, July 7

Doors open 7:00 pm

Cost: \$15



Organized by Sergio Montivero Club,
Communist Party of Canada

People's Voice deadlines

August 1-31 issue: Thursday, July 19

Sept. 1-15 issue: Thursday, August 16

**Send submissions to PV Editorial Office,
706 Clark Drive, Vancouver, V5L 3J1**

<pvoice@telus.net>

Join us for Pride 2012

The Communist Party & YCL will have a contingent in the Pride Toronto march, and you're invited!

Sunday, July 1

Meet at 1:15 pm outside the Sherbourne Subway Station and look for our red banners!

Fight for Full Equality, Peace & Socialism!

Students and feminists rise up in Quebec strike

By Marianne Breton
Fontaine, Montreal

At the beginning of the Quebec student strike, the movement did not merely demand increased accessibility through a reduction in tuition fees. There was, from the outset, a principled opposition to the policies of user fees and privatization. But there is also a direction to this movement which is profoundly anti-oppressive and pro-feminist.

After all, in practice the increase in tuition fees would affect women, and especially working class women, more severely than most other sections of society. Now, the student struggle in itself has become a platform to promote feminist debate.

Sale hausse sexiste

As People's Voice has mentioned before, the increase in tuition will affect women severely on women, and marginalized populations, because women are still poorer than men.

According to Statistics Canada, women earn on average only 83% of the hourly rate of men. With the 75% increase in tuition fees, women will work harder than men to pay the same fees and longer to pay the same debt. On the other hand, access to education is a path that inevitably allows women to access the public sphere beyond the home, to participate fully in civic life, and to improve their living conditions. The increase in fees is, to borrow a slogan from the students, *Sale hausse sexiste* or a dirty, sexist increase.

Feminist groups join the movement

Many women's groups have enthusiastically joined voices with the students. Groups such as the Help Center which fights against

sexual assault; the Quebec Committee of the World March of Women (which itself brings together fifty feminist groups who organize an annual march for women's rights in Quebec and globally); the Young RebElles; the Shelter for Abused Women and Women in Difficulty and well-

The struggle against rising tuition combined with the fight against patriarchy has also given birth to the maNUfestation at the Grande Prix of Montreal - the now famous demonstrations of naked youth ("nu" is naked in French) that caught the attention of tourists and the media.

The first manifestation of naked youth was made in a spirit of derision: Charest wants to put us naked in the street with his rising tuition! And, in a remix of that famous Communist Manifesto quote "Unite, we have nothing to lose but our clothes"!

But after derogatory comments of Anne Sutherland, a journalist at the English-language *Gazette* newspaper, this action has taken quite a different character.

Sutherland published photographs of partially nude protesters over the *Gazette* blog and twitter, commenting on the protesters' bodies - they were just too hairy, too fat, unattractive, unworthy to pose in *Playboy*. She even

mockingly asked them to get dressed because they were too ugly and yucky.

The reactions were very fast. Sutherland and her employer quickly issued a public apology. This reopened the debate about the cult of the body and the distorted image that advertising and the media give us.

Then came the Montreal Grand Prix. This event generates economic benefits especially for luxury hotels, "pimps" and strip clubs, and economic lobbies close to the government.

What's more macho than sexualized young women, presented as objects on the arm of a rich man with his big racing car? The event, sexist and elitist and very expensive, has nothing really to do with most people and was perfect for another naked protest.

So again the students chanted,



"No to the increase"

known the Federation des femmes du Québec.

Moreover, during the second conference of the Estates General of feminist activists and researchers, the feminist movement also took a position supporting the fight against rising student tuition, and opposing privatization of public services in general. In short, all over Quebec, women's groups have supported not only the student strike but also its broader claims.

Down with stereotypes!

Several feminist groups came on board in the student movement in the street. The CLASSE also made it a point of honor to talk about the feminist perspective in the student strike in its conferences, workshops and popular education.

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13/11

Down with stereotypes! As the call to the protest declared: "By getting rid of our clothes, we reject the social pressure and ideology imposed on us by the consumer society [...] Our goal is to raise awareness of the Grand Prix which presents itself as a charitable and positive spectacle. Yet behind the shiny cars, the intoxicating speed and the presentation of women in eroticized ways, hide values that are sexist, not environmentally sustainable, elitist and for-profit."

Repression and violence

In another example of women's struggle, on April 27 the CLASSE and various women's groups called for a pro-feminist protest against rising tuition fees in front of the Quebec National Assembly. About 150 people gathered in afternoon. The crowd was diverse, with pro-feminist women, students, teachers, young and old. There were strollers and walkers. Everything was calm.

Nevertheless, the police decided to aggressively break the demonstration. The result was over 80 arrests, detentions and stiff fines under the highway code. The police justified this excessive muscle power by saying that the event did not follow the route that they demanded.

Providing your protest route (eight hours in advance and with all the transportation used and other details) and submitting to any changes or redirections is now the law under Bill 78. However,

this attack took place before the bill had even been drafted.

As the arrests took place, the protesters in the street and onlookers were scandalized. The protesters did not understand what was happening - everything was fine until police suddenly blocked the Grande Allée (the main street in front of the Parliament) and trapped the protest.

This is another example of the mass arrests criticized by human rights groups like Amnesty International.

Rather than being ticketed on the spot, the 81 people arrested had to wait almost two hours in the cold before being processed by the police. Detained on the grass before being shuttled on a public bus to the central police station, they became a spectacle for the corporate media. After another hour of waiting, they finally received a fine of almost \$500.

The offense that justified all this repression? Walking down the street, or obstructing police officers - that is to say protesting. Many wondered if this political repression was to scare away social movements, including the feminist movement, from joining the students on the street. Do we see again here that the police forces have a totally anti-women approach to law enforcement?

The ploy of bullying, however, hasn't worked. More pro-feminist events have been held and more women have joined the movement. But what worries the movement

see QUEBEC, page 11

Quebec student activists tour Ontario

A massive student struggle is rocking Quebec, bringing hundreds of thousands into the streets for accessible education, democracy and a life with a future. The pots and pans are banging, the chant has been heard around the world - Student strike, people's struggle! Join us for a panel discussion about the Quebec students, featuring activists with CLASSE and other student militants. What can students and their allies do in Ontario?

* NINE-CITY TOUR ACROSS ONTARIO, JULY 12-20 *

OTTAWA - Thursday, July 12

KINGSTON - Friday, July 13

HAMILTON - Sat. July 14

WINDSOR - Monday, July 16

LONDON - Tuesday, July 17

GUELPH - Tuesday, July 17

YORK U - Wednesday, July 18

NIAGARA - Wed., July 18

TORONTO - Thursday, July 19

PETERBOROUGH - Fri., July 20

Times, locations & more info will be posted at:

www.solidaritytour.tumblr.com

SPEAKERS:

JEREMIE BEDARD-WIEN is a member of the Executive Committee of la CLASSE, the main Quebec student union central which has helped lead the campaign for accessible, quality, public and free post-secondary education in Quebec. He brings several years of political and organizational experience working with Quebec student unions to coordinate, reinforce and build the movement.

AUDREY DEVEAULT is the Chairperson of the Students' Union at Cégep Dawson. Born and raised in Montreal, she became active in her student union at 17 and has participated in many campaigns, protests and occupations. An outspoken voice for accessible education, Audrey brings grassroots experience of debating with fellow students and mobilizing on a largely Anglophone campus. She also sits on the National Executive of the Canadian Federation of Students as the Quebec representative.

MARIANNE BRETON FONTAINE is a former executive member of the student union at Cégep du Vieux Montréal and is currently studying at UQAM. Editor of *Jeunesse Militante* magazine and Quebec correspondent for Vancouver's Co-op Radio morning news show, she has written about the student struggle from a feminist and class perspective in the context of the global economic crisis. Marianne is also a candidate for Quebec Solidaire, a left-wing party in the National Assembly which has been an outspoken defender of the student strike and proponent of free education.

Tour sponsored by CFS (Ontario), Canadian Union of Postal Workers, Jeunesse Militante, and Central Student Association-Guelph University.