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photos: Ed Bil



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STOP Enbridge Northern Gateway pipeline!

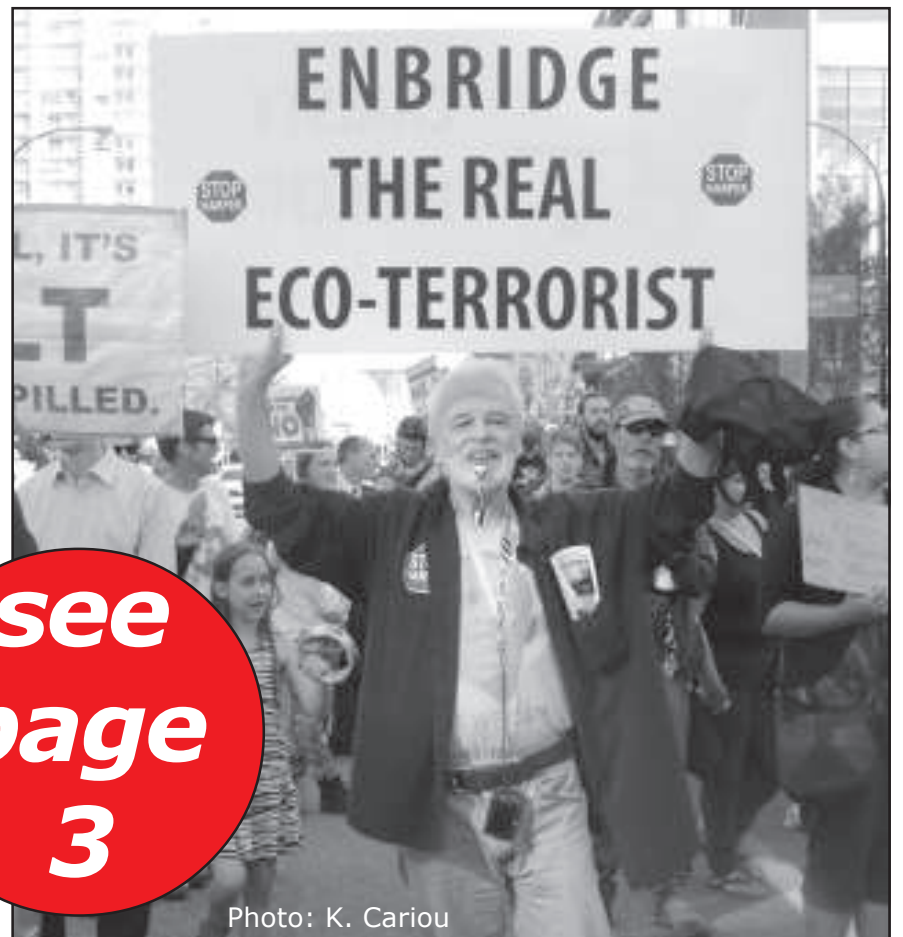


Photo: K. Cariou

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Anti-immigrant C-24

Despite strong opposition from immigrant groups, the legal profession and civil rights movements, the Harper Tories have passed a law creating two different categories of Canadian citizenship.

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Build a just world

Cuban leader Raul Castro speaks at the G77+China summit in Bolivia, calling for radical change to win a more just world.

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Railway strike

Railway workers across France conducted their biggest strike struggle in two decades during June, battling to stop the "socialist" government's rail privatization agenda.

C-24 expands Tory attack on human rights

By Kimball Cariou

Passed in June by the House of Commons, Bill C-24, the new "Strengthening Canadian Citizenship Act (SCCA)," imposes new requirements to obtain citizenship, and makes it easier for the government to revoke it.

Human rights groups are planning a legal challenge to the SCCA, which effectively creates two classes of Canadian citizens, each with very different sets of rights. The Bill allows the federal government to strip the Canadian citizenship from dual nationals convicted of some offences. The law could apply in cases where Canadians are convicted in foreign courts, and even to people born in Canada if they also have citizenship elsewhere, such as through their parents.

Amnesty International, the Canadian Association of Refugee Lawyers and the B.C. Civil Liberties Association say that giving the government the power to revoke people's citizenship is the same as banishing them into exile. They argue the legislation does not include enough safeguards to protect Canadians. Opposition MPs and other advocacy groups, including the Canadian Bar Association, have also objected to the bill.

The new revocation provisions

are "divisive and buy into and promote false and xenophobic narratives about 'true' Canadians and others, which equate foreignness with terrorism," says an analysis released by Amnesty International Canada.

The SCCA will also make it much more difficult, expensive and time-consuming to become a Canadian citizen. Among other provisions, the costly language and knowledge tests which immigrants must pass is extended to include those aged 14-64 (currently, only those aged 18-55 take the test), and the citizenship application fee price is tripled. Immigration officers are

given the authority to deny citizenship if an applicant even speculates that they may not reside in Canada in the future. The residency requirement during which an applicant must be in Canada as a Permanent Resident is lengthened from 3 to 4 years, and applicants are no longer allowed to count any time spent in Canada (as a student, a worker or a refugee) prior to obtaining permanent residency.

The right to appeal a negative decision is removed, along with the right to an oral hearing in front of a judge for those who are having their citizenship revoked. Citizenship can be removed from those who did not obtain citizenship by birth, if an official believes that the person never intended to live in Canada.

When C-24 was introduced last February, the Canadian Association of Refugee Lawyers (CARL) warned that "In Canada, citizenship has always been secure. Whether native-born or immigrant, once you are granted Canadian citizenship, you are secure. Under the current system, you cannot lose your citizenship unless you obtained it by fraud, and even then, a Federal Court judge must make that decision after a full court hearing. Under the current system, if you do not agree with the judge, you have a right of appeal. Under the new law, there will be several

ways to lose your citizenship. As well, the decision as to whether you lose your citizenship will be made by a government bureaucrat who will inform you in writing with no opportunity for a live hearing to defend yourself."

The changes will impose particular hardships on older immigrants, who often have more difficulty passing the language tests. Children and grandparents without documents to prove their language ability will have to pay to take the language test. Currently, applicants wait 4-6 years to become citizens due to government delays and inefficiency. With the new law, it could take eight to ten years in total to become a citizen from the date a person becomes a permanent resident.

The CARL says the new law divides Canadians into first class Canadians who hold no other citizenship, and second class "dual citizens" who can have their right to live in Canada taken away from them. Even those born in Canada are at risk, including those who may not know that they possess another citizenship. People who have a spouse, parent, or grandparent who is a citizen of another country may have a right to citizenship there without ever having applied for it. This allows the Immigration Minister to assert that they could possess or obtain another citizenship, making it easier to take away their Canadian citizenship, especially affecting those who study, work or reside in another country.

The changes could create a new class of naturalized Canadians who

have fewer rights than those born in the country, according to Zool Suleman, a Vancouver immigration lawyer, speaking to the Georgia Straight weekly paper.

Suleman continued, "There has always been a gradation between a citizen, a resident, and someone who is here on a temporary basis. But I think what is happening now is a cleavage is opening up where more and more people are being left in this indeterminate status."

The Canadian Bar Association says some of the proposed changes are "likely unconstitutional". A 31-page brief prepared by the CBA's national immigration law section states that the citizenship-revocation process outlined in Bill C-24 will "primarily be a paper one", wherein a hearing before a Federal Court judge will only be granted "in limited circumstances".

Lysane Blanchette-Lamothe, NDP critic for citizenship and immigration, takes issue with provisions that allow for the revocation of citizenship without avenues for remediation. "A lot of lawyers have argued against the constitutionality of this bill because there is no appeal process possible," she told the Straight.

Blanchette-Lamothe called attention to the potential for Bill C-24 to create a different set of rules for citizens new to Canada. "There should not be two tiers of citizens, where one citizen can have access to our judicial system and another one cannot because their parents are Egyptian, for example," she said. "That's a very dangerous path." ●



Migrant Workers call for "Immigration Not Deportation"

Migrant worker supporters gathered outside the offices of employer lobby group Restaurant Canada on June 19, calling for permanent status for low-skilled migrant workers in the country. Actions also took place in Montreal, Ottawa and Calgary, prior to Jason Kenney's announcement of changes to the Temporary Foreign Workers Program (TFWP).

"The feds continue to make knee-jerk policies by press release that do not include migrant worker voices or concerns," said Syed Hussan, coordinator of the Migrant Workers Alliance for Change (MWAC). "We need full immigration status for migrant workers in the low-skilled and agriculture streams immediately."

"Provincial and federal laws together that work to make migrants a second-class category of workers who are then pitted against unemployed citizens and permanent residents," explained Tzazna Miranda Leal, organizer with Justice for Migrant Workers, member organization of MWAC.

"The solution is to give migrant workers access to permanent immigration status and remove those exclusions from labour protections for all workers. That's what will make migrant workers and unemployed citizens allies in the fight for better jobs and stronger communities," Leal added.

Advocates are also concerned about the changes to TFWP are exacerbating an anti-immigrant backlash where migrant workers are being blamed for joblessness. Two members of anti-immigrant group Immigrant Watch Canada responsible for racist anti-Sikh flyers

in Brampton stood a block away holding anti-migrant worker signs.

"Workers across Canada are facing precarious, low-wage jobs and tough economic times," insisted Deena Ladd from the Workers Action Centre. "Let's not repeat history's mistakes of blaming immigrants for unemployment in times of economic downturn. We need a decent job agenda that raises standards for all workers, not an arbitrary exclusion of migrant workers."

The protest also made connections between TFWP, and creation of temporary immigration

streams for parents, grandparents and spouses as well as the drop in refugee acceptance numbers.

"We need to understand the expansion of TFWP as one part of a dangerous shift in Canadian immigration policy towards temporariness and exclusion," explained Perry Sorio, member of Migrant Canada, an MWAC member. "Permanency and stability are necessary to build healthy communities. We need to overhaul the entire immigration system and re-institute access to permanent status for immigrants in low-skilled occupations." ●

"5 Days to Free the Five"



The 3rd Annual "5 Days for the Cuban 5?" was held June 4-11 in Washington, D.C., hosted by the International Committee for the Freedom of the Cuban Five [www.thecuban5.org]. Voices from across the USA, Canada and other countries joined together to ask President Obama to change the unjust U.S. policy towards Cuba, and especially to find a solution to the case of the Cuban 5, prisoners held in the U.S. for over 15 years. Among the Canadian delegates was People's Voice supporter Carla Bernarda from Surrey, British Columbia (fourth from left in this photo).

July 5 rally in Surrey against Bill C-24

BC Lower Mainland opponents of Bill C-24 (see above) have called for a rally against the anti-immigrant legislation. Co-sponsored by Radical Desi magazine, Siraat, and People's Voice, the rally will take place on Saturday, July 5, starting 5 pm, at Surrey's Holland Park, close to the King George Highway and 100 Avenue. The organizers released the following short statement:

"The Conservative government has passed a controversial bill in the name of strengthening the citizenship which in reality gives absolute power to the immigration minister to revoke citizenship of new Canadians. It's a warning sign for those who have dual citizenships and therefore we need to raise our voice against such draconian law which is highly uncalled for. While on one hand this government has apologized for the Komagata Maru incident that happened 100 years ago, on the other it continues to attack the rights of the immigrants by making it harder for them to bring their parents and grandparents to Canada, by making citizenship test difficult and challenging and opening doors for temporary foreign workers - who are vulnerable to exploitation. All the progressive groups are invited to join us for the vigil."

For more information, call Radical Desi at 778-862-2454, or People's Voice at 604-255-2041. ●

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The struggle against Northern Gateway continues!

Statement from the BC Provincial Committee, Communist Party of Canada, June 21, 2014

The Harper Conservative government's June 17 approval of Enbridge's Northern Gateway project is not the end of the struggle against tar sands extraction and exports in western Canada, just the signal that the next stage has begun.

As the Communist Party said in our submission to the Joint Review Panel hearings into the Enbridge Northern Gateway (ENG) pipeline, this struggle represents "a historic clash between two different visions for the future of Canada."

Opposition to the ENG proposal brings together growing numbers of Aboriginal peoples, environmentalists, and working people, who understand the grave environmental, economic and social dangers posed by this project, including the global crisis of climate change fuelled by greenhouse gas emissions arising from fossil fuel consumption. Despite the overwhelming propaganda campaign by Enbridge, the majority of British Columbians and growing numbers of Albertans are opposed to tar sands expansion, new pipelines and expanded tanker traffic.

This project does not meet the criteria of being "required" and "in the public interest." Rather, it is intended to generate huge new profits for the oil and gas monopolies.

Aboriginal peoples along the pipeline corridors, many of whom have never ceded inherent indigenous title to their traditional lands and waters, call the ENG project a direct attack on their national rights. Instead of meeting legal and constitutional obligations to engage in meaningful consultations with First Nations,

the pipeline proponents and its political backers set up phony pro-pipeline groups and pay so-called aboriginal leaders to issue supportive statements. The response to these corrupt tactics has been to strengthen opposition by First Nations people across B.C.

The Northern Gateway pipeline would be constructed across some 1,000 rivers, streams and bodies of water, bringing bitumen to load onto supertankers in the narrow Douglas Channel, one of the most environmentally fragile areas of the west coast. Despite its expensive greenwash propaganda, Enbridge's record of more than 800 leaks over the past decade proves that the only real question is the frequency and scale of more such disasters.

But the transnational energy monopolies and the federal and Alberta governments remain determined to proceed. The Harper Tories have used their parliamentary majority to remove key legal barriers to the rubber-stamping of controversial energy projects.

This is not a new debate in Canada. Natural resources such as fossil fuels, lumber, water and minerals could provide the material base for a publicly-owned "value-added" economic structure, focused on creating good jobs and meeting people's needs, without destroying the natural environment. Instead, starting with the colonial seizure of Aboriginal lands, vast resources within the borders of the Canadian state have been grabbed by transnational (especially U.S.) capital. Canada has become a key supplier of raw materials for the U.S. military-industrial war machine. "Free trade" sellouts ensure that the First Nations and the peoples of Quebec and the rest of Canada are still denied any genuine sovereignty over our economic future. The Enbridge project is another nail in

the coffin of Canada's declining domestic manufacturing base.

The ENG project, the twinning of the Kinder-Morgan pipeline to Burnaby, and massive natural gas fracking in northern BC, all feed into the global imperialist pattern of fossil fuel dependence and

domination. This relentless capitalist expansion not only threatens British Columbia's coastline, it has grave health consequences for human beings and wildlife, and contributes to the deadly spiral of global warming and climate change.



June 17 anti-pipeline rally in Vancouver. (Photo: K. Cariou)

The Communist Party opposes the policy of exporting unprocessed raw materials. Instead, we call for a People's Energy Plan, based on a sustainable, conservation-based economy; full respect for the inherent rights of First Nations over their traditional territories and resources; and public ownership of the energy industry, as the material basis to rebuild Canada's industrial and manufacturing sector and to create jobs.

Blocking the Northern Gateway pipeline and other forms of tar sands expansion will require more than legal actions or even civil disobedience, although such tactics will be part of a wider resistance strategy. Victory will require united, massive, and militant mobilizations. We urge the labour and democratic movements to build united solidarity with the Aboriginal peoples and environmentalists, both to kill this dangerous project, and to create a genuine people's alternative plan for economic development, based on the needs of people and the environment, not corporate greed! •

Exposing myths of "Made In Europe" label

An investigation by the Clean Clothes Campaign in ten eastern EU member states, including Romania, Bulgaria and Croatia, showed that working conditions are sometimes worse than in China and Indonesia, busting myths about the "Made in Europe" label.

Companies such as H&M, Zara, Hugo Boss, Adidas and Benetton pay their workers in Eastern Europe and Turkey the minimum legal wage, which is under the poverty threshold as defined by the European committee of social rights. Moldova and Ukraine have the lowest net minimum wage, reaching 71 and 80 euros monthly respectively. Croatia has the "highest" of the studied region with 308 euros per month, which is "still far below a living wage", the study showed.

In China, the minimum salary is 175 euros, and 196 euros in Malaysia.

"By profession I am an economist. But due to lack of job opportunities I have to sew. There, people work like robots. No rest. Nerves are ruined, eyes are spoiled," testifies an anonymous Bulgarian worker on the campaign's website.

Interviewed workers also complained about not being able to take days off work, or even get sick leave. Romanian workers admitted that despite the lowest minimum wage being so low, they still were not able to earn that sum, and were obliged to work overtime, the researchers write. These workers are often forced to work up to 200 hours a month, the investigation found. A Bulgarian worker even said having worked "up to 400 hours monthly".

"In practice, the legal minimum wage is often the ceiling instead of the bottom line for wages," according to the Clean Clothes Campaign.

The Clean Clothes Campaign,

made up of trade unions and NGOs in 16 European countries, found that formally and informally, three million workers are concerned by these dramatic working conditions. Considering the average of three persons per family in the region, this means that nine million people are dependent on the garment and shoe industry.

"Poverty wages in this sector do therefore have a direct impact on the livelihoods of these 9 million people and limit their chances to overcome poverty and poverty-related exclusion," the report highlights.

For women, the working conditions get even worse, the research found. On top of being often sexually harassed by their employers, a group of Turkish workers admitted having "signed a clause to not get pregnant in the next five years" in their contract with Hugo Boss.

"One of the interviewed workers stated that a colleague of hers decided to get an abortion because she feared losing her job due to the 'violation' of this contract," the study reads.

In many of those countries, women are the sole breadwinners in the family, having to take care of parents and their children in the same time. Many are also single mothers, and having a contract - any contract - is their only chance to get paid health insurance, as is the case in Macedonia.

"Testimonies of women show the triple squeeze, the triple burden they feel: having responsibility for the family in doing paid work, care-work and growing vegetables to subsidize their poverty wages," the Clean Clothes Campaign writes.

The high dependence of women on their jobs is an extra opportunity for these employers to pressure female workers to agree to the worst labour conditions, they conclude.

A survey on four Hugo Boss

production sites in Croatia and Turkey also showed that workers were denied the right to collective bargaining, workers were intimidated, and women were sexually harassed.

The company said it "rejects the allegation mentioned and a proof has never been shown to us. Hugo Boss is working with selected manufacturers, with whom the company has established trustful relationships for many years. For this reason, the companies are well-known to us. Compliance with our safety and social standards is monitored regularly in independent audits by external consultants as well as by our own Hugo Boss teams".

In most of these countries, laws were put in place to make it more difficult for unions to be accepted while the media spread anti-union sentiments and employers exerted anti-union pressure "always justified by the difficult situation in the sector and international competition".

"Unions are said to ruin companies and the government is interfering pro management," the researchers found.

The study also showed widespread "wage theft practices" throughout the region, such as stealing leave days, cash payments, non-payment of social contributions, misuse of probation periods and apprenticeship schemes, arbitrary deduction for various reasons. There was also pay discrimination and minorities, refugees and migrants.

The Clean Clothes Campaign is calling on governments and on EU institutions "to immediately raise the minimum wage to at least 60% of the national average wage and hold multinational companies accountable for their actions along the supply chains and to make sure that brands respect human and labour rights". •

Annual People's Voice BBQ



2-6 pm, Saturday, July 5
(Rain or Shine)

58 Albany Avenue, Toronto
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A fundraiser for People's Voice, the paper that fights for working people, for peace, equality, democracy and socialism!

Both meat and vegetarian dishes!

\$20/person, \$10 for students, low & unwaged, children under 12 free!



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EDITORIALS

News for profits, not people

These days that you can't turn on the TV, go out to a movie, or read a mainstream newspaper without getting blasted by energy industry propaganda. Big Oil is desperate to pummel Canadians with the idea that unless we build a bigger network of pipelines, the economy will soon collapse.

But it turns out that paid advertisements for the oil industry often masquerade as editorial content on corporate news websites - and the body in charge of regulating the industry apparently has no problem with this sleazy manipulation of public opinion. That is exactly what has happened with the Vancouver Sun and Regina Leader-Post, owned by the Postmedia "news" empire.

Environmental organization DeSmog Canada says it filed a complaint with Advertising Standards Canada on March 4, regarding a story published on the Vancouver Sun website on Dec. 4, 2013, with the headline "Born to the Challenge: Janet Holder's B.C. roots make her the perfect lead on Northern Gateway."

Everyone knows Janet Holder, our down home friend who rose to become Enbridge Corp.'s vice-president of Western Access. Holder is responsible for marketing the Northern Gateway oil tanker and pipeline project. In last December's story, Holder repeated her frequent claim that Canada is losing \$50 million a day due to limited export markets.

Economist Robyn Allan disagreed, and submitted an opinion piece in response. But Allan was told her article would not be used, since the "news article" was actually a paid advertisement. The original web page was set up to look like arms length reporting, which led Allan to ask: was it news or propaganda?

DeSmog's complaint to Advertising Standards Canada cited that body's rule against "Disguised Advertising Techniques," which states: "No advertisement shall be presented in a format or style that conceals its commercial intent." Two months later, ASC declined to issue a ruling against Postmedia.

And there you have it. "News" for profits, not for people.

C-24 fight not over yet

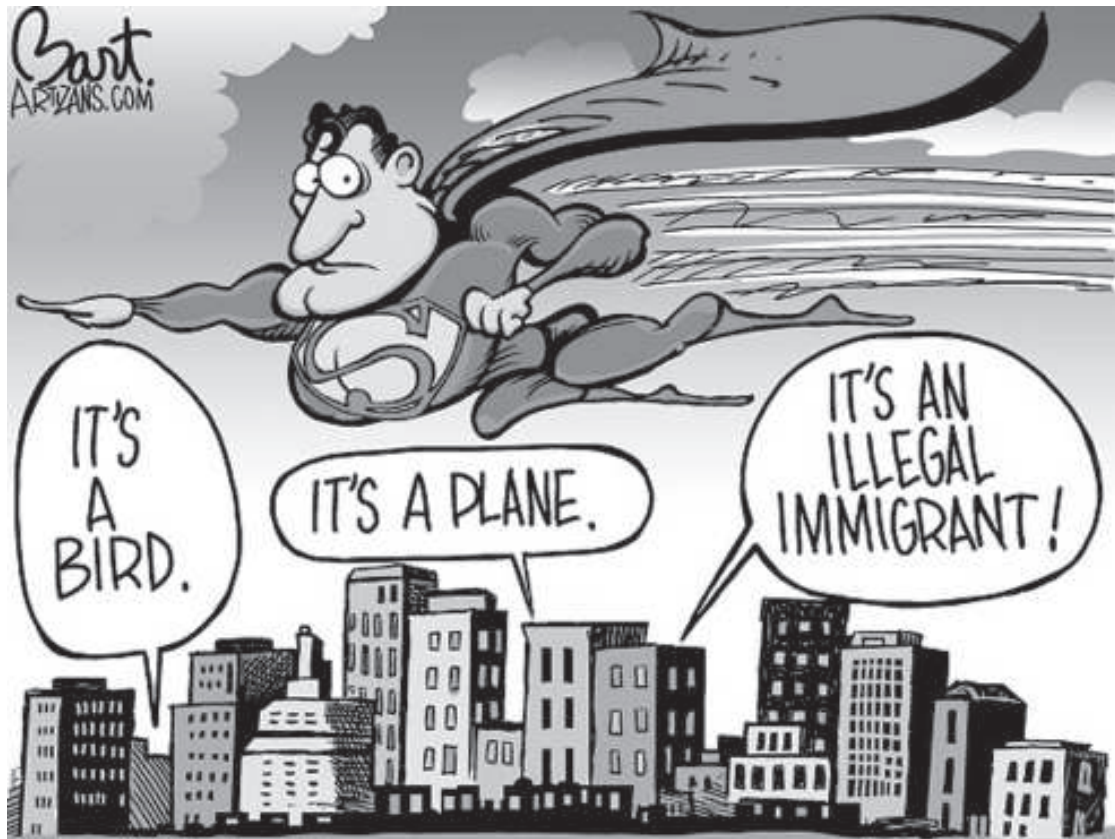
Last February, when the Harper government introduced Bill C-24, a wide range of democratically-minded people and organizations warned that this legislation extends shocking new powers to the federal Cabinet to strip Canadians of citizenship rights. The recent passage of this bill opens the door for politicians to turn the clock back to shameful periods when Canadian governments used racist and reactionary immigration and refugee policies to bar certain categories of people from entering the country, or to deport radical "trouble-makers".

Bill C-24 targets those who are citizens of both Canada and another country. Many thousands of people born here may be dual citizens without even understanding their status, since some countries automatically treat the children or grandchildren of their nationals as citizens, regardless of birthplace. As we noted in February, former child soldier and Guantanamo detainee Omar Khadr has been the target of a hateful slander campaign by the Harper government. Now serving an eight-year sentence in Canada after being framed up in a U.S. military court, Khadr was born in Toronto, but his late father was born in Egypt. He could well be among the first victims of Bill C-24.

But probably not the last. This government still harasses immigrants who are former members of El Salvador's FMLN liberation movement (now the government of that country), and often makes it difficult for diplomats from South Africa's ruling ANC to enter Canada. These examples prove that Tory immigration policies are wide open for abuse by cabinet ministers with a far-right agenda.

Just as significant, Bill C-24 makes it much more difficult, expensive and time-consuming for immigrants to become citizens. Such barriers have a particular impact on refugees who have suffered persecution and long years of deprivation.

Fortunately, protests continue against this appalling legislation, and civil rights groups are already preparing a legal challenge. The battle to stop C-24 is far from finished!



Solidarity with Ukraine communists: CP Ireland

Statement issued by the Communist Party of Ireland, <http://solidnet.org>

The Communist Party of Ireland wishes to express its solidarity with the Communist Party of Ukraine in its struggle against the imperialist coup d'état and in defence of the working class.

In the twenty years since the defeat of the Soviet Union the Ukrainian people have been governed by rival groups of thieves who have enriched themselves with no regard for the impoverishment and misery they were inflicting on the population. These oligarchs have no scruples about placing

themselves at the service of the imperialist powers, the European Union and the United States of America.

The imperialists have long experience in exploiting differences and creating division.

In Ukraine, people of Russian and Ukrainian ancestry are being set at each other's throats. Russian and Ukrainian chauvinism are equally opposed to the interests of the people of Ukraine, who have long lived together peacefully.

The imperial powers, not for the first time, have enlisted the services of openly fascist organisations. Indifferent to the consequences of their actions and

the atrocities committed, ignoring even the massacre at the Trade Union House in Odessa, they are concerned only with their expansionist project, the drive to the east. They think they can control the fascist gangs; they think they can create a civil war without consequences for themselves.

One hundred years after the outbreak of the inter-imperialist war of 1914-1918, the EU and the USA still use war as an instrument of policy. They are prepared to inflict even greater suffering on the people of Ukraine. They are prepared to risk an even wider war. The oligarchs and the fascists are happy to assist them in their plans.

The Communist Party of the Ukraine is at the centre of the resistance to the coup, to the fascist gangs, to the surrender to imperialism and to their war plans. The regime wishes to silence its voice and threatens to ban the party. It has suffered terrorist attacks and hooligan assaults, even in the parliament, where it is not allowed to function. It continues the struggle, against the oligarchy, against imperialist domination, against chauvinism, and for a peaceful and democratic Ukraine. ●



Communist Party of Canada condemns Bill C-36

Statement from the Central Executive Committee, Communist Party of Canada

In response to the Supreme Court's December 2013 ruling in the Bedford case, which struck down several key Criminal Code provisions regarding prostitution, the Harper Conservatives have introduced Bill C-36, the "Protection of Communities and Exploited Persons Act".

The Central Executive Committee of the Communist Party of Canada condemns Bill C-36, which gives police forces sweeping new powers, and creates Criminal Code provisions to make it more difficult and dangerous for those who sell sexual services to carry out their activities. While the government claims it wants to assist women to leave prostitution, the legislation allocates a pittance of \$20 million over five years for this purpose, at a time when governments are slashing spending and support for social programs. The Communist Party restates our longstanding demands for fundamental social reforms which would offer the best possible options to help those who wish to leave the sex trade, especially massive job creation programs, higher wages, free post-secondary education, affordable housing, free universal child care, and mental health supports, drug treatment and harm reduction programs for those facing addictions. The federal government should be taking decisive action to combat poverty, discrimination, racism and other factors which push people into the sex trade; instead, the Harper Tories are cynically using this important issue as a wedge tactic to seek votes in the next federal election. We therefore demand that this legislation be withdrawn immediately. ●

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The human cost of the FIFA World Cup

By T.J. Petrowski

As the world watches the 2014 FIFA World Cup, people are protesting the cost and the human rights violations being committed by police and security forces to protect this corporate investment.

Working people in Brazil are understandably frustrated with the public cost of the World Cup, an estimated \$14 billion. When compared to spending on social services, the cost of the World Cup is the equivalent of 61% of funding for education, or 30% of the funding for healthcare. Private companies, including those in the services and construction industries, will be the main beneficiaries of this public money. Adding to this cost is the forced evictions of the poor living in the favelas (slums) and the dispossession of indigenous people from their lands to build stadiums and parking lots.

Over one million people in Brazil have protested the cost of the World Cup, the cutbacks and increased costs of social services, forced evictions, and other human rights violations.

The state security services have cracked down viciously on all anti-FIFA demonstrations across the country. At least a dozen or more people have been killed and hundreds have been arrested. On

the first day of the World Cup, 47 people were arrested, and police shot rubber bullets at medics helping the wounded. The state security services have been accused of killing the poor and homeless, including children, to "clean up" the favelas prior to the start of the World Cup. To justify this violent response, the federal government has pushed to pass legislation that would criminalize all anti-FIFA protests as "terrorism", with 12 to 30 year prison sentences for those convicted.

The state has deployed more

than 200,000 troops, armed with such weapons as Israeli drones, German anti-aircraft tanks, and rooftop missile defense systems, to protect the World Cup from protestors. The infamous American mercenary company, Blackwater, known for its role in the U.S. occupation of Iraq, is allegedly in Brazil helping with security for the World Cup.

The financial and social cost of events like the World Cup and the Olympics to working people are enormous.

During the London 2012 Olympics, 10,000 police officers

and 13,000 troops, more than all British forces in Afghanistan, along with ships in the Thames, fighter jets, and surface-to-air missile defense systems, were deployed to protect the \$11 billion event. At a time when 2 million are unemployed, 27% of children live in poverty, and austerity budgets are being forced on working people, \$11 billion came at a significant cost to working people.

The Sochi Winter Olympics cost a staggering \$51 billion, even though 18 million Russians live in poverty and migrant workers were paid less than \$2/hour to build the necessary infrastructure.

In 2022 Qatar will host the FIFA World Cup, and already hundreds of migrant workers have died working on the World Cup infrastructure. Over 400 Nepalese and 700 Indian workers have been have already among the casualties. The conditions migrant workers are forced to work in have been compared to slavery. Robert Booth for the *Guardian* explains: "Workers described

forced labour in 50C (122F) heat, employers who retain salaries for several months and passports making it impossible for them to leave and being denied free drinking water. The investigation found sickness is endemic among workers living in overcrowded and insanitary conditions and hunger has been reported. Thirty Nepalese construction workers took refuge in the their country's embassy and subsequently left the country, after they claimed they received no pay." The International Trade Union Confederation estimates that 12 workers will die each week and around 4,000 will have died before the event starts.

The social and financial cost of these international corporate events should be fought by working people around the world at a time where millions are being forced into unemployment and are denied their basic needs, democracy is being eroded, the environment is being destroyed, and the threat of war is increasing. ●



COSATU responds to Zuma's State of the Nation speech

The Congress of South African Trade Unions has been sharply critical of President Jacob Zuma's State of the Nation Address delivered on June 17. Before the speech COSATU issued an expectations statement, calling for radical socio-economic transformation to change reality of the massive crisis of unemployment, poverty and inequality.

"Economic growth is at a snail's pace," said the statement, "and continues to concentrate the benefits disproportionately in the hands of the few. Unemployment and poverty remain far too high. Over 7.4 million people are now unemployed, one of the highest - as a percentage of the population - in the world, and this figure is on the rise again, after a small drop last year. It means more and more families are being forced into poverty. Inequality has got even worse, making us one of the most unequal societies on earth. A still mainly white and male elite own the biggest and most profitable companies and award themselves massive salaries, bonuses and perks, from wealth created by the workers who toil in often appalling conditions for poverty pay."

The statement called for the President to flesh out in more concrete detail how government is going to implement the commitment to a radical economic transformation backed by the recent ANC policy conference. It spelled measures necessary to achieve this, including:

industrialisation and development of the productive sector, beneficiation, and state procurement; the creation of decent sustainable jobs; a National Minimum Wage (NMW); mandatory centralised collective bargaining; social protection for the unemployed.

COSATU said it was concerned that the President's speech "failed to grasp the magnitude of the task of putting our economy on to a new growth path, to escape from the legacy we inherited from apartheid, of an economy dominated by the mining, finance and heavy chemical sectors, and the over-dependence on the export of raw materials, rather than rebuilding manufacturing industry, doing away with the apartheid wage structure, improving education, changing macro-economic policies and using state-owned companies to restructure the economy.... There was no mention of banning labour brokers or measures to strengthen collective bargaining."

On the NMW, President Zuma only promised that "we will investigate the possibility of a national minimum wage as one of the key mechanisms to reduce the income inequality".

The President said that the economic crisis of unemployment, poverty and unemployment must "take centre stage", that "the most effective weapon in the campaign against poverty, is the creation of

decent work, and that creating work requires faster economic growth".

But COSATU said, "He did not however explain how this will be achieved. We appreciate the assurance that the National Infrastructure Plan and Industrial Policy Action Plan will continue to be implemented, though he did not clarify how these developmental, state-led programmes will be reconciled with the National Development Plan (NDP), which is based on the failed economics of neo-liberalism and free-market capitalism, which are part of the cause of the crisis rather than a solution."

While the speech identified "the prolonged and at times violent strikes" as one cause of the economic stagnation, the President failed to mention the much more serious strike of capital by those employers sitting on R1.2 trillion in social surplus which they are refusing to invest in the economy.

COSATU welcomed the speech's emphasis on the expansion of the energy sector, which will be critical to a successful economic transition, but expressed "grave reservations about the potentially deadly use of nuclear energy, and the negative environmental impacts of fracking."

A labour/civil society conference convened by COSATU in October 2010 declared that "We need to move towards sustainable energy, to migrate the economy from one based on coal to a low carbon or possibly carbon-free economy", and it emphatically rejected nuclear power. ●

www.cosatu.org.za

Labour voices...

Thousands expected at Peoples' Social Forum

By Darrell Rankin, Winnipeg

Nearly 80 years after the 1935 On to Ottawa Trek which demanded work or wages for unemployed workers during the Great Depression, thousands of activists are expected to gather in Ottawa to discuss social change strategies, August 21-24.

This time, it is less likely that a Conservative government will be able to stop people from attending, like the Bennett Tories did by staging the "Regina Riot." Still, the people who attend will be Harper's worst nightmare.

It would be fair to say that the Peoples' Social Forum in Ottawa marks another stage in the long-awaited renewal of peoples' movements for social and national emancipation in Canada.

Veterans of Idle No More, Quebec's student strike, and the G8 protests in Toronto, the resistance to Corporate Canada's shackles, will meet in Ottawa August 21-24. Organizers are preparing to host thousands of people.

It is useful to compare these movements with the last large upsurge in the 1980s which were concerned with preventing nuclear war, free trade and wages, connected to a far higher level of strikes.

People today are beset by a perfect storm of problems, from justice for Aboriginal peoples to peace, from poverty to jobs, from energy to climate change.

Regardless of the level people have reached in understanding these crises, it is vital to awaken them to action for real change, translating the science of fundamental social change into the language of today.

The forum is expected to strengthen existing campaigns, spark new ones and promote unity and cooperation. Issues such as pipelines, treaty rights (nation to nation relations), and defeating the big business agenda will be part of the discussion.

Take Back the CLC activists will also be at the forum to strengthen the militant wing of the labour movement across Canada. Hassan Hussein's bid for president at the May CLC convention is clearly not the end of the TBC's contribution to organize the labour movement's growing militancy.

The large strike vote-mandates by Safeway and Superstore workers in Western Canada (99.7% and 98%) show that younger workers are fed up with low wages and part time jobs. Reflecting the deep crisis of youth unemployment and barriers to higher education, many activists will be on the younger side.

Organizations with decades-long experience will also be presenting workshops, such as the Canadian Peace Congress. The Congress will raise the discussion about Canada's role as an imperialist country.

Nearly every major city across Canada is preparing to send dozens of its best activists.

In Winnipeg, preparations include a Building a Peoples' Movement forum on July 5, with workshops on treaty rights, pipelines, job creation, defeating the Harper big business agenda, and defeating the neoliberal education model.

The Social Forum process is modeled after the World Social Forum which each year attracts thousands of people to discuss problems of social change. The world forums are a response to the narrow, selfish global corporate agenda which each year is honed at places like Davos, Switzerland.

You can reach the PSF at <http://www.peoplesocialforum.org> or a local organizing committee near you listed on the website. ●

Celebrate the summer of World Pride!

The Pride 2014 summer season is here, including World Pride in Toronto and hundreds of events in cities and towns right across Canada! This is a time to celebrate the gains by LGBTTTQ+ communities, and to reflect on the challenges we still face. The past year has seen some remarkable victories, but also ominous signals of a dangerous pushback from anti-equality forces. More and more countries are recognizing same-sex marriage and other fundamental LGBTTTQ+ rights. In Canada, the struggle to end discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender expression/identity has seen new progress.

The latest major victory was the adoption of an updated LGBTTTQ+ policy by the Vancouver School Board, after a vitriolic hate campaign was defeated by VSB trustees and the new, broad-based BC Safer Schools Coalition. In Ontario (beyond other political considerations), the election of Kathleen Wynne, Canada's first out lesbian Premier, indicates the growing public acceptance of LGBTTTQ+ leaders by voters.

The continued expansion of queer-positive environments in the popular media, the labour movement and other areas of society is particularly significant. In the arena of professional sports, the coming out by Michael Sam, drafted by the NFL's St. Louis Rams, and the overwhelming rejection of a few bigoted reactions, signals that yet another barrier is being shattered. The many legal, political and cultural victories of recent years are the hard-won results of decades of efforts by the LGBTTTQ+

community and our allies.

But fear and hatred have not disappeared, as seen by last year's anti-equality protests in France, the Russian Parliament's ban on so-called "propaganda of non-traditional sexual relations", and attempts to reverse same-sex marriage rights in some U.S. states.

Pride 2014 Statement from the Communist Party of Canada and the Young Communist League

On June 14, Ulrike Lunacek, Co-President of the LGBT group in the European Parliament, was assaulted by a bigot while being interviewed at the Vienna Pride

parade. In many countries, gays, lesbians, and trans* people still face threats, violence, imprisonment or even death. But the lie that equality rights can only be won in the wealthy capitalist west is shattered by progress in countries such as Cuba, Brazil, and South Africa, and by the reality that homophobic and racist views are being deliberately exported from North America and Europe.

This year's World Pride in Toronto will include events with Mariela Castro Espin, the director of Cuba's National Centre for Sex Education, who has led the movement for gay,

lesbian and trans* rights in Cuba, showing that "machismo" and other anti-equality ideologies can be overcome with the support of progressive governments.

Here in Canada, we cannot be complacent, as seen by attempts in British Columbia to reverse pro-LGBTTTQ+ policies at the school district level. Anti-equality forces have powerful friends in Harper's Conservative caucus, despite their hypocritical condemnation of Russia's anti-gay laws. For example, the Conservative-dominated Senate has still not given approval to Bill C-279, which amends the Canadian Human Rights Code by adding "gender identity" to hate-crime legislation provisions. Canada's corporate-driven "austerity" cuts to social spending, and the attacks on unions, heavily impact women, Aboriginal peoples, and racialized groups, and make it far more difficult to implement significant advances towards equality. The most marginalized members of the LGBTTTQ+ community, including trans*, two-spirited, racialized queers and young people, are those hardest-hit by the austerity cuts.

The trans* community is still struggling to achieve many equality rights. This is not a "marginal" issue; trans* people are 10% of the LGBTTTQ+ population, and face huge medical costs, higher unemployment, less access to housing, widespread intimidation at work, and lack of legal protections. Right-wing forces continue to scapegoat the LGBTTTQ+ community along with racialised groups and other minorities.

Homophobia and transphobia, just like racism, sexism, and national chauvinism, are weapons to divide working people in the struggle for a better world. Today, the ruling class uses the economic crisis, the so-called "war on terror",

and now Stephen Harper's Cold War anti-communism to justify the assault on workers' rights 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 gender expression, and gender identity.

This unity 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 movement to put people's needs before corporate greed. Our LGBTTTQ+ community must be a key player in a efforts to build a "People's Coalition" of labour, Aboriginal peoples, youth and students, women, seniors, farmers, immigrant and racialized communities, environmentalists, peace activists and many other allies.

Ultimately, mass resistance in our communities and workplaces, in the streets and at the ballot box, can defeat the Harper Tories and help open the door to a "people not profits" 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 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." ●

(NOTE: In this statement, the acronym LGBTTTQ+ refers to "lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans*, two-spirited, queer and others." The debate over this and other terms continues.)



Mariela Castro Espin, director of Cuba's National Centre for Sex Education, speaking at a June 22 event co-sponsored by People's Voice, the Rainbow-Sea of Red Coalition, and the Queer Commission of the Communist Party (Ontario). Photo: Ed Bil

Safer Schools Coalition wins major victory

PV Vancouver Bureau

Five months ahead of the November 2014 civic elections, a new coalition of pro-equality activists has won a major victory over right-wing forces attacking the Vancouver School Board. As reported in the June 16-30 issue of PV, at stake was a set of specific measures to make schools safer for trans* students. The "Proposed Policy Revision on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identities" had become the target of a group of homophobic Christian fundamentalists, looking for a "wedge" issue to attack the Board on allegedly "pro-family" grounds.

The policy update addresses serious harassment problems faced by a growing number of students who identify as trans*, gender creative, or gender non-conforming. Many such youth face threats or violence for attempting to use washroom facilities which match their own identity. The arbitrary gender division of some school activities has also created problems. Most of these issues have been dealt with in a compassionate and

understanding way by teachers and school staff over the past several years, and the policy update was developed by the VSB's Pride Committee to reflect this reality.

However, a small group of opponents immediately launched a disinformation campaign and a petition. Led by Conservative Party operative Cheryl Chang and two trustees with a track record of homophobic views, the group spread alarmist falsehoods about the policy. Much of the mainstream media initially fell for the group's claim that the policy was "racist" since it allegedly offended the cultural values of the Chinese-speaking community.

It was true that opposition was mobilized in some Chinese Christian fundamentalist churches. But some of the most homophobic speakers at VSB hearings were of European origin (including Chang herself). On the other hand, many supporters of the Safer Schools Coalition came from Asian cultural backgrounds, including several high school students and recent grads. Not a single student, Asian or non-Asian, spoke against the policy.

In the end, over 100 presenters

took part in the VSB hearings, making it the most comprehensive policy consultation in many years. Those in favour of the update included representatives of Vancouver Coastal Health Authority, the Vancouver high school student union, the UBC Faculty of Education, and many



others. Hardly a single organization opposed the update, other than a few front groups hastily formed by opponents.

After a flurry of media coverage, Chang's group was increasingly seen as hostile to the complex problems faced by students who do not fit the "binary" norm. By the end of the hearings, it was apparent that they did not represent

any "silent majority," just a very angry group of fundamentalists.

The final straw came on June 13, when the two Non-Partisan Association trustees opposed to the policy, Ken Denike and Sophia Woo, held a bizarre news conference to claim that unnamed real estate agents had warned them about the negative impact of the policy update. Within hours, they had been drummed out of the NPA's caucus of elected officials, and denied any possibility of a nomination in this fall's election. This will likely end Denike's three decade career on the Board, except for the 2002-2005 term when he lost to a COPE landslide. First elected in 2011, Woo has no chance of keeping her position as a single-issue independent candidate. NPA trustee Fraser Ballantyne endorsed the policy and kept his party's backing, but the episode has damaged the probusiness NPA's campaign.

The policy was adopted by a 7-2 vote on June 16, to wild applause from a room full of Safer Schools Coalition supporters, and angry booing from a handful of

opponents. Each of the seven in favour spoke about the crucial importance of the updated policy, turning the Board meeting into a celebration of human rights.

As Coalition supporters said afterwards, the struggle now will turn to implementation of the new policy. The renewed harassment of some trans* students during the extended public debate shows that much work lies ahead in Vancouver schools. This will be difficult, because the deep crisis of provincial underfunding makes it increasingly problematic for school boards to maintain non-classroom staff positions.

The Safer Schools Coalition is now considering its next steps. One priority may be to help defeat candidates backed by anti-equality forces. Another may be to pressure the province to mandate all school districts to go beyond the "anti-bullying" policies which the Premier touts, and implement programs to promote genuine inclusivity of all students. ●

For more information, visit www.bcsaferchools.com.

1914 -
2014

Komagata Maru Centenary

Brief history of the Komagata Maru episode

Abridged from an article in Radical Desi

East Indians began migrating to North America in the early 20th century. Many had served in the British army and came to the US and Canada as British subjects. Over 75 percent of them were Sikhs, and around fifty percent were ex-soldiers in the British army. They were predominantly peasants from rural Punjab, which was annexed by the British in 1849.

Most of these immigrants came to British Columbia for economic reasons and found jobs in the lumber industry, railway construction and canneries. Others moved to the US to work in farms. The hostility against these men mainly came from the white labourers, who believed that these people were being imported as cheap labour to weaken their bargaining power. Many employers used East Indians immigrants to keep wages low and weaken the workers' unions. The pressure was intense from labour groups who were not progressive as today and sought exclusion of the Hindus.

This hostility was also visible in the mainstream press as newspaper cartoons frequently mocked East Indian immigrants. After all, the 1867 speech in Parliament of the first Prime Minister, John A. Macdonald, proclaimed Canada to be a "white man's country", laying the foundation of an institutional racism.

The British Columbia government disfranchised East Indian voters on March 26, 1907. In an atmosphere charged with anti-Asian sentiments, race riots broke out across the US border. On September 4, 1907, a mob of white workers attacked and drove out over 250 South Asian workers from the lumber mills in Bellingham, Washington. Many were forced to take refuge in Vancouver. The municipal politicians used the episode to argue that South Asian immigration must stop.

The bitter experiences of racism and discrimination shaped their political views. In the light of these hostilities, the Khalsa Diwan Society was established in Vancouver in 1906.

Since the Sikhs dominated the group of East Indian immigrants, the society was formed to govern a Sikh temple that actually became a nerve center of secular political activities for Hindus and Muslims too. While the upper part of the temple was used for religious gatherings, the lower part of the building was used for public meetings every Sunday. One of the hotly debated issues was how to bring families to Canada. It is not surprising that East Indian immigrants were not allowed to bring their families in Canada to prevent permanent settlement of Asian men.

As if this was not enough, the Canadian government passed a controversial order-in-council or the Continuous Journey Law on January 8, 1908. It stated: "All immigrants must come to Canada via a through ticket and by continuous journey from their country of birth or citizenship". A tone for the Komagata Maru standoff was formally set as direct passage was virtually impossible for East Indians sailing to Canada.

There was also an attempt to

relocate East Indian immigrants to British Honduras. The official line was the Hindus were not suited for the climate of Canada. Community leaders resolutely challenged the plan and the conspiracy was foiled. A public meeting at the temple on October 6, 1908 resolved to send a petition to challenge attempts to relocate East Indians. The resolution was co-signed by Bhaag Singh who was the Secretary of the temple.

Bhaag Singh served the Khalsa Diwan Society in different capacities

It was a very radical action, as the Sikhs were largely known as pro-British and were used to suppress the first Ghadar or mutiny against the British in 1857. The Sikh landlords were duly honoured by the British government for their services.

Across the border too, the flames of rebellion were growing. An extremist group named Hindustan Association of the Pacific Coast of America that believed in an armed struggle against the British Empire

activists. Born in Delhi, he understood local languages of India. Before coming to Canada in 1907 or 1908 he served as a police inspector in Calcutta. He was hired by the Canadian government in 1909 as an immigration inspector and interpreter, but continued working for the Indian police. He also reported to the Deputy Minister of the Interior in Ottawa, the Agent of the Government of India in London, and shared intelligence with the American Immigration service.

Hopkinson had roped in 50-60 East Indian supporters who helped him in information gathering. This group was widely identified as a pro-British "Immigration faction". Bela Singh was the main leader of this group. Known as Hopkinson's tipster, he was on the government payroll for \$62.50 a month, identifying Ghadar activists whose names were to be sent to British officials to prevent mutiny in India.

It would be wrong to presume that the Ghadar activists did not exhaust other peaceful channels. A three-member delegation left for England to petition for the right to bring families in Canada, but British officials snubbed them. A separate deputation sent to Ottawa drew the attention of the authorities to their loyalty towards the British rulers.

As these skirmishes continued, a much bigger fight was about to begin which would not only change the course of the Canadian history but also galvanize the Ghadar movement.

The role of Gurdit Singh, who chartered Komagata Maru, a Japanese vessel that brought 376 East Indian passengers to Vancouver on May 23, 1914 remains debatable.

Some historians describe him a freedom fighter who challenged Canada's controversial Continuous Journey law. Others maintain that it was purely a business venture that eventually turned into an important chapter of the history of struggle against colonialism and racism due

to mistreatment meted out to those aboard the vessel, who came to Canada as British subjects.

The vessel picked up passengers from different countries before reaching Vancouver. Not surprisingly, there was an uproar in British Columbia when the ship arrived. Premier Richard McBride said, "To admit Orientals in large numbers would mean in the end the extinction of the white peoples and we have always in mind the necessity of keeping this a white man's country."

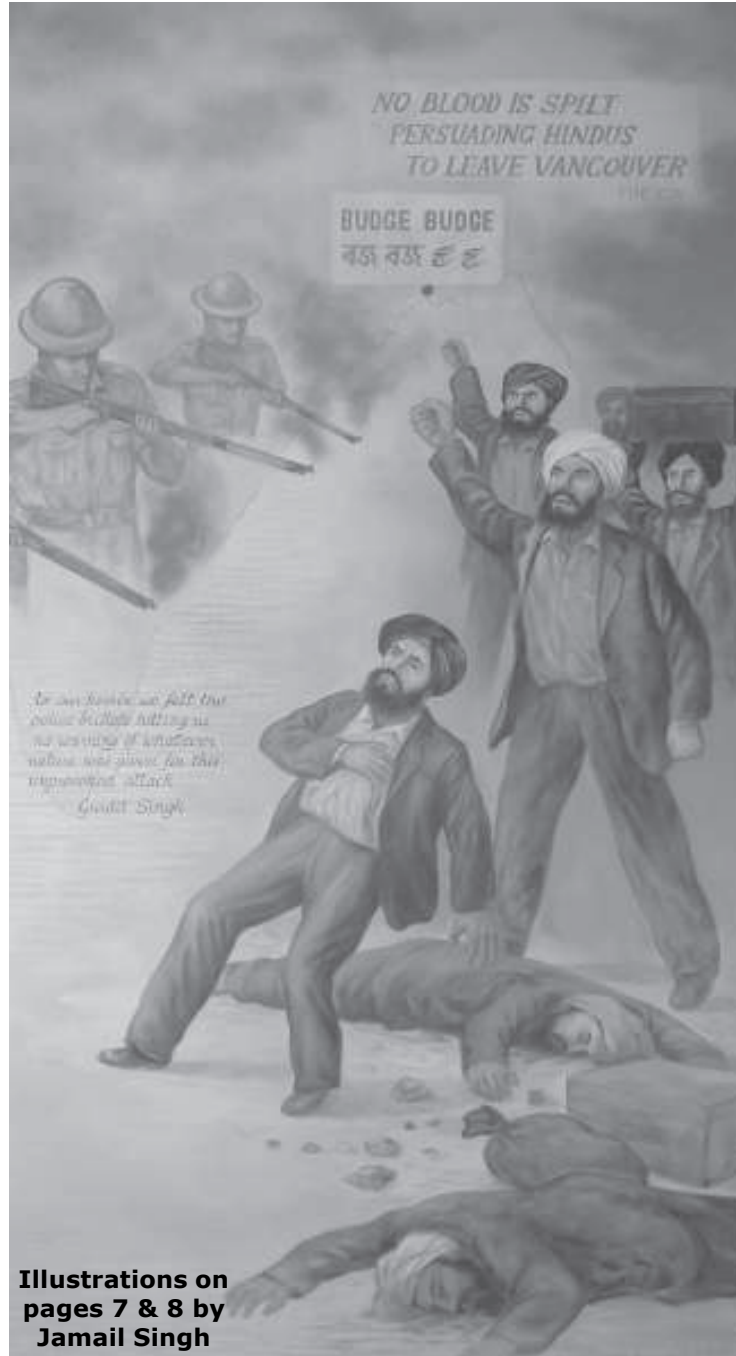
The Khalsa Diwan Society came to the rescue of the passengers. It hired Edward Bird, a white lawyer associated with Socialist Party of Canada, to challenge the government in court. Bird had to endure threats and intimidations from white supremacists.

Minutes of a public meeting held in Dominion Hall, Vancouver on June 23, 1914 give an insight of the anti-Asian mood that prevailed in British Columbia. H.H. Stevens pulled no punches: "I hold, and I think I hold it in common with every member from British Columbia, that the Government of Canada - the Parliament of Canada - should pass legislation of a distinct and definite type, excluding Orientals (applause)."

In the end, the Komagata Maru was forced to return on July 23, 1914. But this did not happen smoothly. On July 19, the police and immigration officials tried to siege the vessel with help of a tugboat named "Sea Lion". The fight that ensued left about 20 people injured, according to the official version of the story. One of the bricks thrown by irate passengers on the officials is now preserved at the Vancouver Museum.

In the meantime, Bhaag Singh was arrested along with two more accomplices in the US where he went to buy weapons for the ship

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Illustrations on pages 7 & 8 by Jamail Singh

and became its president in 1910. He came to Canada in 1906. He had earlier served in the British Army's cavalry. He was indoctrinated by at least two prominent and well-read radical leaders of the Indian freedom struggle: Taraknath Dass and G.D. Kumar. Das published the first East Indian newspaper, *Free Hindustan*, from Vancouver, and Kumar was instrumental in publishing the first Punjabi newspaper of Canada, *Swadesh Sewak*.

Bhaag Singh also became a member of G.D. Kumar's Hindustan Association, and the United India League formed by Husain Rahim. Rahim consistently opposed the anti-immigration laws and was arrested for defying the ban on East Indians from voting during the March 1912 provincial election.

Bhaag Singh was instrumental in encouraging ex-soldiers to burn their medals and uniforms and sever all ties with the British Empire. On October 3, 1909, he consigned his own uniform and an honourable discharge certificate to the flames.

was formed. The association soon came to be known as the Ghadar Party after its newsletter, *Ghadar*, was launched on November 1, 1913 from San Francisco. The Ghadar literature clearly reflects that it was not just a war against imperialism, but a resistance against racial discrimination too. While the Ghadar members were predominantly Sikhs, the party asked them to keep their religious beliefs out of the party affairs.

Bhaag Singh openly helped the Ghadar Party in fundraising and inspired many in Vancouver to join the movement. Soon, their activities came to the notice of the authorities. On December 30, 1913 the Dominion Immigration Inspector for British Columbia, Malcolm Robert James Reid wrote a confidential letter to H.H. Stevens, a Member of Parliament from Vancouver, providing him with translations of the Ghadar newspaper.

William Charles Hopkinson was another immigration inspector who kept a watchful eye on the Ghadar

People's Voice salute to Komagata Maru centenary

This issue includes a special two-page section marking the 100th anniversary of a major event in the history of Canada and India, prepared in cooperation with our friends at Radical Desi magazine.

The anti-Asian hysteria of the early 20th century was carefully fanned by politicians and newspapers of the day, as part of an employer strategy to divide workers along the lines of ethnic origin, language, or religion. Immigrants from the British Isles were encouraged to consider themselves "superior," pitted against their class brothers and sisters from other parts of Europe, and especially against Aboriginal peoples and migrants from China and India. Such racist attitudes helped imperialism to recruit cannon fodder across Canada during the slaughter known as the First World War, and later to try and block the drive to organize workers into industrial trade unions.

For the bosses, the arrival of the Komagata Maru, carrying 376 South Asian migrants, was an occasion to whip up racist sentiments. Socialists were challenged to put loyalty to their own class over "the King and Empire". For the emerging South Asian community, the Komagata Maru exclusion fuelled the development of radical, anti-imperialist ideas. Eventually, this ferment moved in the direction of working class unity, as thousands of workers of Chinese and South Asian origin joined the communist-led International Woodworkers of America and other progressive trade unions.

Today, a deep understanding of the racist and colonialist origins of the Canadian state is essential to help smash the myth that Canada is a land of equality and freedom. We support the call for meaningful recognition of the heroes of this episode, including the demand to rename a downtown Vancouver street for Gurdit Singh, the visionary who chartered the Komagata Maru's voyage. We condemn the Harper government's anti-immigrant Bill C-24, which creates two categories of citizenship. We urge all workers to reject racism and divisions, and to unite around our common interests and struggles! ●

Komagata Maru rebel Baba Gurdit Singh speaks

From Radical Desi, July 2014

Even though Canadian authorities have apologized for the Komagata Maru episode, Baba Gurdit Singh, who chartered the vessel, is still looked upon with suspicion.

A few commentators have described him as somebody involved in human smuggling. His act is still considered by many as unlawful. The people who question Gurdit Singh's role and challenge his integrity should also examine the intentions of the Canadian establishment of the time.

They should find the real reasons behind the continuous journey law. Wasn't that law racist? Wasn't it aimed at keeping Canada white? Wasn't it discriminatory against a particular ethnic group?

In that context, we should remember that certain laws did not allow women to vote in Canada. Women were not even considered persons in the past. Can those who challenged these types of blatant discrimination really be called criminals?

There were segregation laws in the U.S. that kept blacks and whites apart. Rosa Parks challenged one such law by refusing to vacate a seat on the bus for a white passenger. She was arrested for doing so. Her action galvanized the civil rights movement that brought an end to America's segregation laws. Will history recognize her as a criminal?

Gurdit Singh's act may be criminal for some people, but the Canadian establishment was the biggest criminal for enacting laws that were shamefully unfair to people of colour. This episode transformed Gurdit Singh and the other ship passengers into rebels against the British government that ruled India. Like Rosa Parks, Gurdit Singh will always be respected by people who

really care for social justice.

On the occasion of the Komagata Maru centenary, People's Voice/Radical Desi would like to present here selected excerpts from the book Baba Gurdit Singh wrote, "Zulmi Katha" or "Tale of Tyranny" gives his perspective of the ugly events of 1914. It enables us to understand what he really stood for and what was in his mind when he chartered the vessel, to set the record straight.

These selected excerpts are translated from Punjabi. We do not claim that these excerpts meet the standards of professional translation. The purpose is a small attempt to present an alternative viewpoint of the history. These excerpts might help in understanding the Komagata Maru episode as an act of political resistance by Gurdit Singh, who wanted to challenge the discriminatory laws. Anyone who wants to read the whole book can either contact a public library, or its publisher, Unistar Books in Chandigarh, India.

"The economical situation of India continues to deteriorate. The (British) government of India lacks will to enable its subjects to enhance their education and expertise, so we need to venture out to other countries to acquire necessary skills to make more money..."

"Being British subjects we have every right to enter Canada, but if the Canadian government does not let us in, we can proceed to Brazil where economical opportunities are no less than in Canada..."

"If need be we will follow the Gandhian ways of peaceful civil disobedience. We will use similar tactics that were applied by Gandhi to fight for unarmed and oppressed Indians..."

"If I propose to register a shipping company and deposit money in a Canadian bank to support our passengers in case of unemployment



or illness without becoming a burden on Canadians will such proposition be acceptable?"

"A resolution was passed to start a shipping company and it was

agreed upon after deliberations that we hold the right to enter Canada."

"We are after all loyal subjects of the British Empire. Whenever the Empire needed our services (during wars), we Indians particularly the Sikhs were ready to die."

"British authorities often take us to other countries either to work as indentured labour or as cannon fodder for wars, there is no reason therefore that the British Empire will not let us land in another country to do business and if at all it does that it would lose our respect..."

"I inscribed the verses from the holy Guru Granth Sahib (the Sikh scripture) on the company flyers which imply that we need to break the chains of slavery rather than suffering insults..."

"Why I started Guru Nanak Navigation Company? My answer is that only a person with self respect can feel the pain of watching helplessly when 1,900,000 Indian children are forcibly sent to other British colonies to work as indentured labour like animals and there is no justice. Indian women are forced to live among men and bear sexual abuse..."

"We never charted our ship with intent to enter Canada stealthily. We being British subjects wanted to improve our lives with the help of the Empire, or compel the British government to admit that they treat us like slaves..."

"We always wished to seek justice

through courts if ever the need arose... We never believed in seeking our rights through any other means..."

"I did this because when I visited Hong Kong in January 1914 I saw many Vancouver bound passengers killing their time in a Sikh temple and suffering economic hardships. I could not bear their pain and decided to take them to Vancouver..."

"The way we were subjected to oppression wouldn't such oppression on any other ethnic group, like Japanese had sparked war? It's true that the foreign government in India was determined to destroy us..."

"If I had broken any law, the Canadian government could have tried me in the courts to get me punished. The very fact that they did not do so proves I never broke any law in the first place."

"If the British government in India can open its doors for foreign investment and let its grain, dairy product, leather and even carcasses of dead animal go outside then why it considers it a crime for Indians to go abroad to work?"

"It was resolved that instead of dying in the sea away from the public sight it would be much wiser to die at Canada's doorstep so that the world could see..."

"It was resolved that in case of military attack we will fight back with sticks..."

"...If need be we will burn down the ship by putting the coal in the lower berth on fire...the ship will be burnt down right at the doorstep of Canada so that the blot on the history of Canada and the Empire remains for ever"

"Somebody from the shores would often communicate with us through gestures..."

"... It was conveyed to us that the Indians have decided to burn down the Vancouver city if at all Guru Nanak ship was on fire.... I was deeply saddened to learn this. If at all we gain martyrdom because of the repression of British Empire there was nothing to regret as it would bring a bad name to the government. But if Vancouver is burnt down because of us and results in the killings of women and children, it would bring a bad name to Indians who are known for their compassion...So we revoked our resolution to burn the ship."

"British government was worried that if we go outside to do business in a free environment it would help us in improving our lives as humans. When one becomes human it is hard to accept slavery and the government did not want us to liberate ourselves."

"Our religious divisions are big bottleneck in our way to self rule. Until Sikhs, Hindus and Muslims start living like brothers it will be a foolishness to think of an uprising..."

"For the sake of freedom, progress and unity a gurdwara (Sikh church) was built on the Guru Nanak ship, besides Muslims and Hindus were allowed to have rooms for mosque and temple..."

"British Indian government did not want Indians to go abroad and earn well. To keep them under their thumb, it conspired with the Canadian government to expel them." ●

Brief history of Komagata Maru....

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passengers. These leaders were thinking of sending arms to India for a mutiny. Mewa Singh also accompanied these men, as he confessed in a statement after his arrest for carrying concealed weapons. He admitted that they went to Sumas on July 16, and purchased four revolvers the next morning. Coming back to Canada with one revolver and three boxes of ammunition, Mewa Singh was arrested. He stated, "...from what I could understand it was the intention of these people to try and convoy these weapons to the Komagata Maru."

Bhaag Singh was released a week after the Komagata Maru departed. What added fuel to the fire was a shootout near Calcutta, that left 22 people dead, including a British police official after the ship reached there in September 1914. The trouble started when the police tried to forcibly send these passengers to Punjab through a special train waiting at the Budge Budge rail station. The authorities suspected that the men were Ghadar activists.

The whole episode coincided with World War I. Thinking that it was the right time to strike against the British Empire which was now engaged in a conflict with Germany, the Ghadar leaders gave a call for rebellion, provoking many to return to India. Over 14 Ghadar activists from Canada alone were killed during the uprising after returning to their home country.

Tension filled the air in

Vancouver as soon as the Komagata Maru departed. A confidential report reveals that the Ghadar activists were seeking revenge against Reid and Hopkinson. A document dated July 8, 1914 reported a controversial conversation between Husain Rahim and two other men, Sohan Lal and Mohamed Akbar, in which a possibility of harming Reid and Hopkinson was discussed.

Merely five days before Komagata Maru's departure, Rahim was attacked with a sword by Bela Singh's supporter. Though Rahim survived the assault it started a wave of murders. Two supporters of Bela Singh were murdered. Harnam Singh was found murdered with throat cut on August 31, while Arjan Singh was shot to death on September 3.

On September 5, Bela Singh went to the Vancouver Sikh temple and pumped bullets into the bodies of Bhaag Singh and Badan Singh. Badan Singh, who participated in different campaigns led by Bhaag Singh, was shot when he tried to resist. The two men succumbed to their injuries the next day.

Both Bhaag Singh and Badan Singh in their deathbed dispositions charged Bela Singh with the shooting, while those injured also supported the allegation.

These bloody events took a shocking turn when Hopkinson was shot dead on October 21 in the provincial courthouse by Mewa Singh. The Sun headline screamed, "Fifth Local Victim of Komagata Insp. Hopkinson Added to List".

The police suspected a larger

conspiracy behind the murder. They arrested three people including Husain Rahim on October 23. Rahim was accused of inciting Mewa Singh to murder Hopkinson, but was later acquitted for lack of evidence. Following Hopkinson's murder, Reid was transferred to the East as the federal government felt that his life was in danger.

Meanwhile Mewa Singh openly admitted his crime, revealing that he could not bear the personal tragedy of two small children of Bhaag Singh who were left orphaned with his death. Bhaag Singh's wife passed away early that year. He squarely blamed Reid and Hopkinson for these incidents, and claimed that Bela Singh and Hopkinson were intimidating him to implicate Bhaag Singh and others after his arrest for bringing weapons from the US.

As Mewa Singh awaited his death sentence, Bela Singh was acquitted by a jury on November 18, 1914. Bela Singh claimed that he fired in self-defence. Several witnesses testified that members of the other faction were having a meeting inside the temple where the killings of Reid and Hopkinson were advocated. The judge pointed out to the jury that Bela Singh was one of the men who stood for law and order in the community.

Mewa Singh was hanged on Jan. 11, 1915. He chanted prayers when he was taken to the scaffold inside the New Westminster jail. Outside the prison a small group of Sikhs gathered, while over four hundred showed up at the temple. ●

Indo Canadian Workers' Association to hold Komagata Maru events

The Indo Canadian Workers' Association is organizing events to mark 100 years of the Komagata Maru episode. A seminar will be held at Surrey Dogwood Hall on July 26, and a big public rally at Surrey Millennium Park on July 27. The ICWA issued a calendar dedicated to the Komagata Maru centenary early this year, and will also release a souvenir at the July 26 event. For more information call Surinder Sangha at 604-543-9865.



GLOBAL CLASS STRUGGLE

Swiss TNC punishes unionists

Swiss-based multinational Georg Fischer has vindictively punished Lastik-Is trade union members for organizing workers at its Turkish subsidiary called Georg Fischer Hakan Plastik. The company is a market leading manufacturer of piping, automotive supply-chain, and machinery.

Members of Lastik-Is, the Petroleum, Chemical and Rubber Industry Workers' Union of Turkey, member of DISK national center, have had their core labour rights trampled by Georg Fischer. Local management sacked 37 key trade unionists simply for exercising their right to freedom of association.

Now workers are called in one by one to meet management. In these meetings members are intimidated into rescinding their Lastik-Is membership. This is in spite of the union receiving official certification from the Turkish Ministry of Labour and Social Security. Lastik-Is represents over half the workforce required to become the employer's bargaining partner.

Georg Fischer has refused every attempt for dialogue at the international level.

Korean teachers under attack

A progressive teachers' union in South Korea says it will not comply with a government order for union members to return to school, despite a court ruling revoking the union's 14-year-old legal status. Instead, the union declared on June 22 it will launch an "all-out struggle" against the government. The education ministry warned of a stern punishment against what it called an "illegal collective action," heightening tension with the union.

The Korean Teacher and Education Workers Union (KTU) said its decision was reached with unanimous consent at a closed-door meeting of union representatives. It came two days after a local court ruled that the KTU is not a legitimate labour group because it allows

membership to dismissed teachers.

The education ministry quickly ordered the union's 78 full-time staff members to return to their teaching jobs. Should the June 19 ruling be upheld by the top court, the KTU would be prohibited from using the title "labour union" and from engaging in negotiations with school authorities.

"We decided to fully reject the education ministry's follow-up measures," the KTU said in a press release. "All full-time staff members of the union will not go back to school."

The KTU also vowed to launch an all-out struggle against the court



decision, starting with a partial walkout of teachers on June 27. Unionized teachers will collectively take an early leave to participate in a protest rally in Seoul. It is the first time in eight years that the teachers will take part in a collective action.

On June 28, teachers will take part in a protest rally organized by the Korea Confederation of Trade Unions (KCTU), the more militant of the nation's two umbrella unions. More than 10,000 teachers will assemble for a meeting in Seoul on July 12 and actively express their opinions on various pending educational issues, the union said.

"The decision to turn the KTU into an outsider union is an anti-labour act of violence that revives the ghosts from when (past military-led governments ordered) to dismantle trade unions and is an anti-democratic brutality that set back the clock of South Korea's democracy to before 1987," the union said in a statement. "We will fight for the KTU until the end against forces denying and oppressing it," it said.

The KTU had filed a petition with the Seoul Administrative Court in October against a government decision to outlaw the union due to its repeated refusal to deny membership to fired teachers. Among the 60,000-strong KTU members are 22 teachers who were sacked for signing statements against the former Lee Myung-bak government in 2009.

Founded in 1998, the KTU has grown into the country's second-largest teachers' union.

Bahraini workers face deportations

As many as 2,000 workers at a Bahrain factory face deportation over an illegal strike action. Workers at a Riffa garment factory were given an ultimatum to return to work by the country's Labour Ministry, according to a report on Gulf Daily News.

Workers at MRS Fashions, which manufactures clothing for worldwide brands such as Macy's, GAP, JC Penney and Walmart, staged a mass walk-out in mid-June after allegations of withheld salaries, unfair deportations, poor working conditions and mistreatment. An estimated 2,000 Indian and Bangladeshi workers trashed the company's factory in Hajiyat and submitted a set of 12 demands, including calls for a pay rise and better food and medical care, before they will return to work.

The Labour Ministry have issued a written warning that legal action would be taken, including deportation, if the workers did not return to work. "This strike is illegal and we have issued a warning to the workers," Labour Ministry inspection and labour unions director Ahmed Al Haiki told the Gulf Daily News. "I personally went and spoke to them, but they refused to negotiate and are adamant that they would only go back to work if their demands are met."

The workers are demanding a \$397 monthly salary, up from the current salary which is as little as \$145 a month.

News of the strike comes as union leaders in Bahrain claim they are close to launching an official organisation to help protect the rights of more than 120,000 expatriate labourers. Vice-president of Bahrain Free Labour Union Federation (BFLUF), which is establishing the new union, Bassem Kuwaitan, said that members - expected to be mostly construction workers - would be provided with legal assistance and help with improving their living conditions and gaining health insurance. Members of the new group would be charged a nominal fee of about \$3 per year.

Cambodian box workers strike

About 80 workers protesting against a Japanese-owned factory in Phnom Penh that produces cardboard boxes blocked the gates on June 20 after managers refused to hold a meeting with employees. Workers burned tires in front of the Harta Packaging factory, where they have been protesting since

February, demanding seniority wages retroactive to the beginning of 2014. A six-day strike in February was ended by a court injunction, after which the factory fired 285 workers, according to union representatives.

"Today at the protest we saw the workers block the gate, but we didn't crack down because we are waiting to see if the factory reaches a resolution with the workers," said Yin Kea, a deputy director of the Pur Senchey district administration.

Phnom Penh prosecutor Keo Socheat received a complaint from the factory over the protest, which was preventing workers from entering or leaving the factory, and told workers he would charge representatives if they refused to leave.

"The prosecutor blames the workers for an illegal protest but the factory isn't following the Arbitration Council ruling," said Puth Sovann, president of the Trade Union of Federation for Workers. The Arbitration Council issued a non-binding order on May 30 saying the workers had to be given seniority pay, Sovann said.

Protester Hong Nang said the threats from the prosecutor would do little to deter her.

"I will still protest until I get my seniority wage, even if the protest is cracked down on by the authorities," she said. "We haven't detained anyone. We just don't want the factory to transport materials or goods out of the factory until we have been paid."

NFL cheerleaders may organize

As more members of NFL cheerleading squads take a stand

against alleged wage violations, the effort could soon go to the next level. A former member of the Buffalo Bills says that the league's cheerleading squads soon may attempt to unionize.

"We're looking into possibly developing some type of union for girls going forward," the former Bills cheerleader named Maria said in an interview. "So we're not doing this to benefit ourselves... This is for the future of the team, the future of these girls."

Having the threat of a union along with enough employees who are willing to pursue litigation could prompt all teams to treat the cheerleaders fairly and legally. The Bills, Raiders, Bengals, Buccaneers, and Jets currently face allegations of wage violations. To date, some teams have preyed on the reality that, given the competitive nature of the job, the candidates will suffer a variety of indignities, including getting paid less than minimum wage or not getting paid at all.

"[D]oes it make it right?" a former Raiderette named Lacy said regarding the fact that many others happily would tolerate those conditions. "Tons of people would love to be a reporter. Does that mean you don't deserve to be paid for your talent, for your time, for your hard work?"

The NFL continues to decline to address the situation. In an era where the NFL attracts female fans by allowing the colour pink to infiltrate in October the otherwise sacrosanct NFL uniform, evidence that female employees are being exploited and mistreated could alienate members of their gender. Whether through litigation, legislation, or unionization, the time has come for change.

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

Join 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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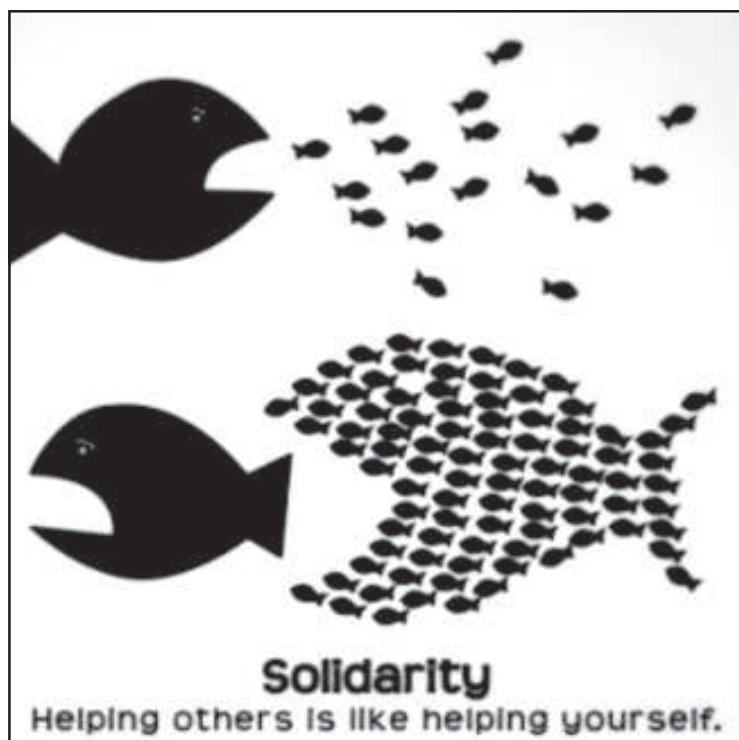
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"A new international financial and monetary order must be demanded"

Speech presented by Cuban President Raul Castro Ruz, during the Group of 77 + China Summit in Bolivia

I thank companero Evo Morales Ayma, President and illustrious representative of the original peoples of our region, for convoking this important Summit.

At the conclusion of the United Nations First Conference on Trade and Development, in June of 1964, a group of developing countries, conscious of the enormous challenge they would be obliged to face, decided to march forward together to confront a world economic system which has shown itself to be inequitable and unjust.

This group was responsible for the preparation, negotiation and approval, on May 1, 1974, 40 years ago now, of one of the most important programmatic documents in the struggle against underdevelopment and for the achievement of international economic justice: the Declaration and Action Plan for the Establishment of a New International Order, "based on equity, sovereign equality, interdependence, mutual interest and cooperation among all states, whatever their economic and social systems may be, which will allow inequalities to be corrected and current injustices righted; growing disparities between developed and developing countries eliminated; and present and future generation guaranteed accelerating economic and social development in peace, and with justice..."

Shortly thereafter, approval was won for the Charter of Economic Rights and Responsibilities of States, which establishes the sovereign right of states to administer natural resources and economic activity in their territory.

These important documents remain absolutely germane, but the great paradox is that, today, no one wants to talk about them. They are described as "backward" or "left behind by events."

Yet the gap between the North and the South is now widening, and the global economic crisis has become the longest and most difficult of the last 80 years, as a result of the irreversible failure of neoliberalism imposed by the principal centers of power, with a devastating impact on our countries.

As the timeline for accomplishment of the Development Goals, agreed upon at the 2000 Millennium Summit, is almost concluded:

- A total of 1.2 billion people live in extreme poverty. In Sub-Saharan Africa, the number of poor has increased non-stop, growing from 290 million in 1990, to 414 million in 2010.

- One of every eight persons worldwide faces chronic hunger.

- Forty-five percent of children who do not reach five years of age die of malnutrition.

- External debt has reached unprecedented levels, despite the enormous interest payments we have made.

- Climate change is being aggravated, fundamentally by the patterns of production and consumption in industrialized countries, which, if they are maintained, will require, by 2030,



Cuba's President Raul Castro (L), Bolivian President Evo Morales, and Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro (R), at a ceremony for delegates of the G77+ China Summit, June 14, 2014

the equivalent of two planets' natural resources.

Faced with these realities, the principle of common, but differentiated responsibility in addressing climate change and other environmental challenges remains fully applicable.

As companero Fidel Castro Ruz has said, "The resources exist to finance development. What is lacking is political will on the part of governments in developed countries."

A new international financial and monetary order must be demanded, as well as fair trade conditions for producers and importers, from the guardians of capital, concentrated in the International Monetary Fund and World Bank; and from the defenders of neoliberalism within the World Trade Organization which attempt to divide us.

Only unity will allow us to ensure that our broad majority prevails.

This is how we must do it, if we want the post-2015 Development Agenda, which should include the Goals for Sustainable Development, to offer answers to the structural problems of our national economies; to generate changes which allow for sustainable development; to be universally applicable and respond to the needs of different levels of development.

At this time, the sovereignty of states is being violated, the principles of international law and postulates of the New International Economic Order are being openly trampled; concepts are being imposed which attempt to legalize intervention; force is used and the threat of its use is made with impunity; the media is used to promote division. Still resounding in our ears is the threat by United States President George W. Bush

against "60 or more dark corners of the world," obviously all members of the Group of 77.

We must exercise our solidarity with those who are threatened with aggression. Today, the clearest case is that of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, against which the most sophisticated means of subversion and destabilization are being used, including attempted coups d'etat, in accordance with the precepts of non-conventional war which the United States is now implementing to overthrow governments, to subvert and destabilize societies.

For more than 50 years, we have been victims of a genocidal U.S. blockade; of terrorist attacks which have taken the lives of thousands of our citizens, and caused significant material damage. The absurd inclusion of Cuba on the list of State Sponsors of International Terrorism is an affront to our people.

As we have denounced, the promotion of illegal, undercover, subversive actions is growing, as well as the use of cyberspace to destabilize our countries, not just Cuba, but any country whose government does not accept intervention or tutelage. In this way, any nation can be the target of cyber-attacks directed toward fomenting mistrust, destabilization and potential conflicts.

Over the years, we have always been accompanied by the strong solidarity of the Group of 77 member countries and China, for which I thank you, in the name of the Cuban people.

Let us take advantage of this 50th anniversary of the G-77 to renew our common commitment to join forces and close ranks to build a much more just world.

Thank you very much. (Applause)

<http://www.granma.cu> •



The Fifth of the Month to Free the Five

Join in the worldwide action 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.canadianetworkoncuba.ca



MUSIC NOTES

By Wally Brooker

Historic solidarity concert in Toronto

Toronto's Common Thread Community Chorus joined forces on May 31 with local Chilean musical ensemble Proyecto Altiplano for two performances of the Cantata Santa Maria de Iquique by the composer Luis Advis (1935-2004). The 1969 work, composed for the renowned Chilean group Quilapayun, uses classical forms and indigenous folkloric traditions to tell the story of a nitrate miners' strike in the northern Chilean province of Iquique in 1907. The dispute led to the massacre, by the Chilean army, of more than 2,000 workers. In preparing for the concerts the organizers worked closely with the Mining Injustice Solidarity Network and Mining Watch Canada. Approximately 75% of the global mining industry is based in Canada, so it is fitting that speakers from these groups were invited to address the audience. Congratulations to all of the participants for an inspiring use of culture to build awareness and solidarity with exploited communities throughout the world. For info on mining justice visit www.solidarityresponse.net/ and www.miningwatch.ca/

Musicians unite to save Alaska salmon

The campaign to protect Alaska's salmon fisheries from the devastating effects of the proposed Pebble Mine has achieved real success in the past year. Notably, on Feb. 28, the Environmental Protection Agency announced that it will protect Bristol Bay, using its authority under the Clean Water Act. A significant role in achieving these positive results has been played by Musicians United to Protect Bristol Bay (MUPBB), a resourceful solidarity group whose public face is the American folksinger and organizer, Si Kahn. This spring MUPBB released its annual report. It's an inspiring catalogue of movement tactics, including: booking concerts and workshops by members at all Alaska folk festivals; organizing booths and workshops at national and regional folk festivals; soliciting and publishing songs on the struggle; recording and promoting Si Kahn's best-selling Cd "Bristol Bay"; sponsoring a contestant in the 975-mile "Mushing for Bristol Bay" wilderness race; plus numerous TV and radio appearances and print media stories. More than 400 musicians have joined the campaign including two well-known artists from western Canada: Connie Kaldor and Maria Dunn. The fight to protect Bristol Bay is being won, but it's not over. Unless it's declared a federally protected area, the EPA decision can be undermined by a future federal administration. For more info visit <http://musiciansunited.info/>.

Anti-Flag on Justice for Cecily McMillan

Justin Sane, co-founder and lead singer of the popular punk rock band Anti-Flag, has released a YouTube statement in defence of activist Cecily McMillan. McMillan, 25, was arrested at an Occupy Wall Street protest at Zuccotti Park on March 17, 2012. She was accused of elbowing a police officer who, she claimed, had grabbed her breasts from behind while police were clearing the park of protesters. The farcical trial resulted in McMillan being sentenced to 90 days in prison and a five-year probation for giving the officer "a black eye." She was also ordered to undergo mandatory mental health evaluation and treatment. Since the altercation McMillan, a socialist activist with a demonstrated commitment to non-violence, has lost not only her freedom, but school, work, friends, and family. Justin Sane, in his statement, noted that her case highlights the problem of police brutality and the injustice of a legal system that is set up "to protect the powers that be and trample on the rights of anyone that questions their authority." It illustrates, he adds, "the way in which the police, and those who command them, use intimidation to create a chilling effect." For more info on the Cecily McMillan case visit www.justiceforcocily.com.

Seeger's FBI files to be released

The death of Pete Seeger on January 27 was followed by a flood of requests for his FBI files from journalists, researchers, and the general public. Thanks to the sheer volume of Freedom of Information Act applications, the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) has announced that thousands of Seeger files will be released online. NARA spokesperson Miriam Kleinman said in a May 27 interview that the archive is waiting for a review to be completed, adding that it will publish the documents "as soon as possible." As is usually the case with Freedom of Information requests, documents will be screened for information that is "exempt from disclosure" (i.e. redacted). NARA was initially going to release individual files on request, for a hefty and prohibitive "administration fee" of \$2000. FBI and CIA files on Pete Seeger go back to the 1940s and never really stopped. Redacted or not, it should be interesting to find out what nefarious behaviour the FBI snoops were monitoring. So far, my own search of the NARA website has not come up with any FBI documents on Pete Seeger. For the source of this story visit www.america.aljazeera.com.

"Fête Nationale" greetings from PCQ

For the enjoyment of our readers who are fluent in French - and as a teaching exercise for Anglophone readers who studied French in school - we reprint here the greetings published on Québec's June 24 "Fête Nationale" by the Parti Communiste du Québec and the Young Communist League of Québec.

Le Parti communiste du Québec et la Ligue de la jeunesse communiste du Québec offrent leurs vœux de solidarité les plus chaleureux aux travailleuses et aux travailleurs du Québec à l'occasion de leur fête nationale.

Le peuple du Québec constitue une nation dont les droits sont niés au sein du Canada depuis la conquête de la Nouvelle-France par l'Angleterre en 1763, d'abord par les colonialistes britanniques et ensuite par la classe capitaliste canadienne. Comme la nation acadienne, les minorités canadiennes françaises des autres provinces, la nation métis, les Premières Nations et Inuit, la nation québécoise subit l'oppression nationale dans ce pays.

L'oppression nationale est intimement liée au développement du capitalisme au Canada.

La classe capitaliste canadienne est la seule bénéficiaire de cette oppression. En attisant artificiellement les antagonismes entre les nations du Canada, elle réussit à diviser et affaiblir la classe ouvrière multinationale canadienne et s'assure ainsi de se maintenir aux commandes du pays bien qu'elle ne constitue qu'une petite minorité de la population.

Cette oppression se manifeste de plusieurs façons: racisme, discrimination, négation des droits linguistiques, culturels ou territoriaux, inégalité économique entraînant des taux de chômage plus élevés, des salaires et des niveaux de vie inférieurs. Parmi les nations opprimées, se sont les Premières Nations, Inuit et métis qui en subissent les manifestations les plus aiguës, tandis que toutes se voient refusé le droit de s'autodéterminer politiquement et de choisir librement la forme de souveraineté qu'elles souhaiteraient, soit l'autonomie, l'indépendance, ou une véritable confédération de nations égales en droit.

Cette négation du droit à l'autodétermination est l'essence de l'oppression nationale que subit le Québec. Cela soulève l'indignation du peuple québécois et a engendré depuis les années 60 le mouvement souverainiste dirigé par la classe capitaliste québécoise.

La nation québécoise dispose déjà d'une certaine autonomie politique à travers les pouvoirs provinciaux qui lui sont dévolus dans le cadre fédéral actuel. Historiquement, la bourgeoisie québécoise, c'est-à-dire la classe capitaliste et dominante du Québec, s'est appuyée sur ces pouvoirs pour se développer. Aujourd'hui, elle contrôle la majeure partie des capitaux de la province et certains de ses représentants disposent d'importants investissements et

exploitent de la main-d'œuvre ailleurs au Canada et à l'étranger. Le Québec a une économie développée et fait partie du cercle restreint des puissances impérialistes dans le monde. Malgré cela, la bourgeoisie québécoise est partagée quant à l'avenir de sa relation avec le reste du Canada, une partie d'elle étant disposée à se satisfaire de l'autonomie provinciale actuelle, l'autre souhaitant jouir de la plénitude des pouvoirs d'un état indépendant.

Le Parti Libéral du Québec et la Coalition Avenir Québec sont l'expression politique de la partie fédéraliste-autonome de cette bourgeoisie et le Parti Québécois est celle de la partie souverainiste-indépendantiste. Le Parti Québécois essaie d'attiser les ressentiments nationalistes pour gagner le soutien de la classe ouvrière et des couches populaires du Québec à son projet de constitution d'un nouvel état capitaliste où seraient essentiellement maintenues l'oppression et l'exploitation de la classe ouvrière par la bourgeoisie. Mais jusqu'à présent, il n'est pas parvenu à gagner ce soutien de la majorité de la population.

Aussi, depuis maintenant quatre



décennies, le PQ et les Libéraux se partagent le pouvoir provincial en alternance, en faisant au peuple durant les campagnes électorales des promesses qu'ils s'empressent de trahir sitôt élus.

Pendant longtemps, le projet péquiste trouvait écho parmi les forces progressistes réformistes au sein de la classe ouvrière et des couches populaires du Québec. Celles-ci étaient disposées à soutenir le PQ en taisant les revendications et les aspirations de la classe ouvrière pour ne pas compromettre l'objectif de la souveraineté, qu'elles conçoivent comme une étape préalable à toute émancipation sociale. Mais à force de trahison de la part du PQ, de plus en plus de gens parmi ces forces réformistes s'en détachent et veulent se doter désormais d'un véhicule politique qui leur soit propre, qui allie la souveraineté politique du Québec avec le progrès social. Malheureusement, ils conçoivent et limitent ce progrès à des réformes dans le cadre du système capitaliste.

Pourtant, la nécessité d'en finir avec le système capitaliste qui est responsable des malheurs et des difficultés que vit le peuple travailleur du Québec s'impose de plus en plus comme une évidence. Sans compter les menaces que ce système fait peser sur l'environnement et la paix à travers le monde, les conditions de vie des travailleuses et des travailleurs ne cessent de reculer tandis que les profits des entreprises bondissent.

Tous les paliers de gouvernement, tant fédéral, provincial que municipaux, restent déterminés à faire payer davantage la classe ouvrière et à lui enlever ses acquis: réduction de services publics, chômage croissant, gel ou réduction salariale, précarité en emploi, offensive contre les régimes de retraite, etc., tout y passe.

Les communistes refusent de s'allier à la bourgeoisie québécoise pour faire un État capitaliste séparé, parce que cela implique nécessairement de reléguer au second plan et de laisser sur la glace la lutte qui correspond véritablement aux intérêts de la classe ouvrière, la lutte pour le socialisme c'est-à-dire une société dirigée directement par la classe ouvrière pour le bénéfice de la grande majorité du peuple travailleur.

Or, cette lutte pour le socialisme exige que la classe ouvrière, composée de diverses nationalités au Canada, soit unie face à son ennemie, la classe des capitalistes, tant canadiens que québécois et qu'étrangers, pour lui arracher le pouvoir d'État à la grandeur du pays. Lutter pour faire l'indépendance du Québec aujourd'hui, implique non seulement de différer et d'affaiblir la lutte pour le socialisme, mais sa réalisation contribuerait même à renforcer la domination de l'impérialisme américain sur le Québec et sur le reste du Canada.

C'est pour promouvoir cette unité nécessaire que les communistes militent activement au sein de la classe ouvrière multinationale du Canada en proposant un programme de réformes démocratiques et

constitutionnelles qui garantiraient la pleine égalité de toutes les nations du Canada, notamment, une nouvelle constitution basée sur un partenariat égal et volontaire du Québec et du Canada anglophone, et garantissant les droits nationaux des Premières Nations et Inuit, des nations métis et acadienne, et de toutes les minorités nationales.

Vive la classe ouvrière du Québec! Vive la lutte pour le socialisme! ●

News for people, not for profits!



Have you sent a donation for our 2014 PV Fund Drive?

What's Left

Nanaimo, BC

Moncada Day Picnic, Sat., July 26, 4-7 pm, Salmon BBQ \$10 per plate, live music, raffle draw. 530 Wakesiah Avenue. For info, Gilberto 250-754-4277 or Alan 250-760-0252. Proceeds to People's Voice.

Surrey, BC

Rally against Bill C-24, Harper's anti-immigrant legislation, vigil 5 pm, Sat., July 5, at Holland Park, King George Highway & 100 Ave. Sponsored by Radical Desi magazine, Siraat, and People's Voice. Ph. 604-255-2041 for info, or see page 2.

Komagata Maru centenary events, organized by the Indo Canadian Workers' Association, meeting at Dogwood Hall on July 26, and rally at Millennium Park on July 27. For details call Surinder Sangha, 604-543-9865.

People's Voice Walk-A-Thon, Sunday, August 10, at Bear Creek Park (picnic area at 140 St. & 88 Ave.), meet 11 am for walk around the park, 12 noon delicious lunch, 1 pm cultural & political program. For info, call Harjit, 604-543-7179.

Toronto, ON

Annual People's Voice BBQ, 2-5 pm, Sat., July 5 (rain or shine), 58 Albany Ave. (one street east of Bathurst, north of Bloor). Meat and vegetarian dishes, \$20/person (\$10 for students, low- and unwaged), children under 12 free. Sponsored by Davenport Club CPC, RSVP to 416-536-6771 or omayasim@sympatico.ca.

Salsa on the City Square!, 19th Annual Toronto-Cuba Friendship Day, Nathan Phillips Square, 2-8 pm, Sat., August 23, free admission. Direct from Cuba: 8 piece band Grupo Moncada, and Toronto's Pablo Terry and Sol de Cuba. Cuban flag raising 3 pm. Cuban food, sugar cane juice, beer garden, 2015 Pan American Games display, display tables, photo exhibition. Sponsored by the Canadian-Cuban Friendship Association Toronto, www.ccfatoronto.ca.

Save Canada Post

People's Voice deadlines

August 1-31 issue: Thursday, July 17

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

A whirlwind trip to Chiapas

By Darcy Robinson, Kamloops

I took a recent whirlwind trip to Chiapas, with a Volkswagen that I rented in the white wealth inspired tourist area of Cancun. The drive, while long and exhausting, gave a good comparative analysis of southern Mexico and the Chiapas and Zapatista region. I had studied the Zapatistas years ago in university, but nothing would compare to even a short visit to this amazing place.

The week before I arrived, Sub-commandante Marcos had officially stepped down as spokesperson for the Zapatistas. He felt his image had become too much of a focus in the struggle, and a new leadership and voice needed to be developed. On May 26, 2014, following the 20th anniversary of the Zapatista uprising "The voice of the Zapatista National Liberation Army [EZLN] will no longer come from my voice... Marcos no longer exists."

I drove directly through the alto (high) zone where Zapatistas still control about a third of the territory of Chiapas. The road was extremely bad and patchy throughout. A group of Zapatistas came out with a rope gate and demanded a small toll of 20 pesos, which I gladly paid. There were no guard rails, as I drove high in the mountains nearly 11,000 feet above sea level. This ancient Mayan road was only paved in the 1980s to provide for a Mexican military base, not for the benefit of the Mayan people. The drive was stunning and terrifying.

The immediate difference was the sense of dignity that I felt in the area. People were very focused on what they were doing. Children seemed to be everywhere with their parents or friends, and they seemed dignified in a way I haven't experienced in indigenous communities enough.

I arrived in San Cristobal, the most refreshing place I have ever been in Mexico. The liveliness and diversity was amazing. It had the cheapest and best kept hotels, the food was fresher than anywhere else in Mexico. At a free medical clinic, the sign was in English so I assumed it was free for all people.

Growing up in Canada, it is hard to find indigenous people as a vast majority in any environment. What separates the Zapatistas from many modern socialist movements is the component of "liberty and recognition of indigenous culture." I had never experienced indigenous people as the vast majority in this way before. In Canada the language is being wiped out daily, while most Mayans still speak their native tongue as a first language. Despite genocide and colonization, indigenous people of America will never go away, but will live forever. ●

French rail workers on the frontline against privatisation

By Adrien Welsh, PV correspondent in France

The last two elections in France were catastrophic for progressive people and workers. The right and the ultra-right obtained the highest votes, reflecting anger against the austerity agenda of the Socialist Party.

In the Euro elections held in May, the FN (National Front), an ultra-right and xenophobic party, gained almost 25% of the votes, electing the largest French group to the EU Parliament. The right (UMP) came second with just less than 21%.

In municipal elections, the right won almost 46% of popular support, and the ultra-right around 7%. The right won about half the cities of more than 9 000 inhabitants, while the ultra-right now rules 9 cities and elected around 1200 councillors. Over one-third (36.45%) of French voters did not vote in the municipal elections, for which the population is usually the most mobilised.

With just 15% of popular support, Hollande now has nothing to lose by implementing anti-social policies. Following the municipal elections, he named Manuel Valls, a representative of the "right" of the Socialist Party, as Prime Minister to succeed Jean-Marc Ayrault. Valls is also known for



representative of social democracy. The project aims to gather all progressive forces unhappy with the Socialist Party's policies into a broad "left" front, like in Greece with Syriza or in Germany with Die Linke. A first meeting was convened on June 7, to which all the political forces that supported Hollande's election in 2012 were invited. That large spectrum starts from the centre party led by Francois Bayrou, the MoDem, over to the Communist Party.

The struggle against Socialist policies, however, goes beyond

Paris East, the rate exceeded 80%, a historical high, especially since some unions like UNSA and CFDT (a supporter of the reform and linked to the Socialist Party) opposed the strike.

The reason for this movement is to be found in the anti-people orientation of the Socialist Party. This reform is a step towards the privatisation of SNCF, the national corporation of railways of France, a public monopoly since 1936 when the Popular Front government was elected following massive mobilisations and strikes. Railway privatisation began in 1997 with the split of SNCF into two different entities: the passenger transportation side, which was open to privatisation; and another publicly owned side of SNCF infrastructures. The totality of SNCF's debt was then transferred to the latter. This move was part of the global strategy of privatising profits and nationalising losses. Then in 2006, freight transportation was privatised and subcontracted.

It is worth noting that since 2000, i.e. since the application of these reforms, around 30,000 jobs were lost within SNCF.

The new reform is presented by the corporate media as a reunification of the two entities. It is actually an attempt to "reunify in order to better separate". The government presents the creation of a new public structure overseeing the two railway organisms, a cynical manoeuvre

since it is totally incompatible with European Union directives to be followed by the Socialists. The public structure will be eliminated as soon as it is created! The two establishments will be totally independent in juridical and financial terms.

The goal of this reform is to break the railworkers union to help achieve SNCF's total privatisation by 2019, as required by European Union directives on opening markets—another example showing the impossibility of "reforming" the EU. The government's proposal is to force rail workers to sign a collective agreement for each branch. But railway workers are not fooled. They know that what they sign now with the State will be null and void.

Politically, this move is at the core of Hollande's anti-social policies to fulfill European Union requirements. The right (UMP) globally supports the project. A UMP deputy urged his colleagues to vote for the text "as is" in order not to complicate the task of the government and to end the strike movement quickly.

The reform also aims to isolate one of the most combative sections of working class, just like Thatcher did with miners, by breaking their unique status.

The right was never able to go so far in privatisation measures. The government tested the reaction of labour unions several times, waiting until June to introduce this measure, just before vacations.

Indeed, this strike was far from being spontaneous. The labour movement has been trying to negotiate with Guillaume Pepy, SNCF's director, and Frederic Cuvillier, Minister of Transport, as well as with President Hollande and Prime Ministers Ayrault and Valls. Several one-day strikes, rallies and actions, were called, one of which gathered about 22,000 rail workers.

The movement is much more powerful than estimated by the government and the ruling class.

Their representatives urged strikers to go back to work, and tries to turn the population against the rail workers through demagoguery such as declaring that "because of the strike", national exams for high school students were in danger; or by saying that the rail reform is necessary for economic recovery.

The French population and especially the rail workers are not fools. They know that the reform will not create more jobs nor provide better service. In England, where the privatisation of railway industry is at the most advanced stage in Europe, problems were not solved. Since 1996, the situation is even worse than in France. Users have to pay twice as much for a poor service (an average of one train out of six is late) with lax security (the Landgrove Broke accident in 1999, where 31 people died and about 500 others were injured, is a tragic example). The UK rail service debt is 40% higher than in France, since the privatisation of the industry.

The struggle of French rail workers is closely linked to the global capitalist crisis, which is used as a pretext by the bourgeoisie to sharpen its attacks on the people by dismantling social outcomes and public services, just like Canada Post is doing in our country.

It is easy to find similar examples in the rail industry. Capitalist South Korea's government had to deal last winter with one of the country's longest strikes (22 days) against the further privatisation of the railways. The movement was supported by 45% of Korean rail workers, and more specifically by young people (60%). A one day general strike organised by the KCTU union was violently repressed by the authorities, and a 78 year-old woman was killed.

In Sweden, often cited as an example of social democracy, the rail workers are engaged in a lengthy strike against the French corporation Veolia, the main operator in the southern part of the country. After the first attempts to split the public monopoly in 1988, there are now eight subsidiaries, some of which are privatised. However, 70% of the Swedish population is in favour of a public monopoly.

In France, more localised struggles arose in recent months, especially in the postal and health sectors.

All this shows the importance of the fight for the SNCF's integrity, and to protect the unique status of rail workers. French railworkers are not alone. Maintaining public services and assets is in the interest of the people. The government however is more and more isolated. ●



his expulsion policies towards Roma people in the country. This indicated that the Government would not take any left turn, but would stay on the path of austerity policies, such as the territorial reform and the Railway Reform.

We are seeing a recomposition of the left, with the so-called left wing of the Socialist Party, led by Arnaud Montebourg, as the main

political manoeuvres. On June 10, railway workers began a two-week long national strike, the biggest since 1995, against the "Railway Reform" put forward by the government. More than 50% of workers responded positively to the strike call of the CGT (the union historically linked to the Communist Party) and SUD trade unions. In some sectors like in

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