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people's VOICE

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Greetings**

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US, EU & CANADA
YOUR SANCTIONS
ARE **KILLING**
INNOCENT SYRIAN
CIVILIANS



Photo: Ed Bil

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With over 350 union members locked out by one of the world's biggest transnationals, the Teamsters Local 213 calls for a boycott of the new IKEA store in Richmond, British Columbia.

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The U.S. President's trip to South Africa won't get any welcome signs from a coalition of labour and progressive movements.

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Over 30,000 people are counted as "street homeless" across Canada. But that number is just a fraction of the total numbers facing serious housing need in this wealthy country.

“Unite, strike, occupy, win” - UK People's Assembly

From reports in the Morning Star (UK)

UNITE union leader Len McCluskey has called for a mass campaign of direct action, strikes and occupations to stop the British government's vicious public spending cuts.

He told the inaugural People's Assembly in London that the labour movement should put itself “at the heart of this coalition of resistance” against the coalition's assault on the public sector.

“We need to demonstrate, protest and lobby, and we need to do more - take direct action to let the elite know we are here,” he said.

Over 4,000 people crammed into Westminster Central Hall on June 22 for a day of workshops and events aimed at stopping the Con-Dems' ideologically driven austerity programme. McCluskey said local People's Assemblies

should become a mobilising force against the cuts. He was just one of a series of union leaders who called for mass strikes.

“Stop evictions, occupy services marked for closure, stand up for the civilisation our fathers and mothers fought for and which is now under attack as never before,” said McCluskey.

“The trade union movement must be at the heart of this coalition of resistance. We must all work together to build the fighting spirit which creates the climate for mass industrial action. Let me make it clear to politicians of all parties, if it is right to strike against austerity in Greece, in Spain, in France, then it is right to strike against austerity here.

“When UNITE members are ready and willing to take that industrial action to make the politicians change course, then we will not let the anti-union laws get

in our way.”

Civil Service union PCS leader Mark Serwotka said: “In our workplaces and in our communities, and we need to be working together and co-ordinating protests, industrial action and civil disobedience. We must also recognise that the People's Assembly isn't just a reaction to this government's policies, it is an opportunity to say that austerity is not the answer now and nor will it be under any government. It is an opportunity to set out an alternative that can inspire people, one where we invest in our communities and our economy for the benefit of the millions, not just the millionaires.”

TUC general secretary Frances O'Grady said: “Enough is enough. If they attack what's ours then they can be sure we will retaliate. It's time to stand up to the vested interests of the banks, corporations and super-rich. The People's Assembly will

take this campaign against austerity to a whole new level.”

Labour MP Jeremy Corbyn warned the People's Assembly that Britain could be dragged into a devastating war with Iran. He said the in Qatar between nations backing Syrian rebels, such as Britain, the US and France, “looks to me like leading to a war in Iran.”

Corbyn also used the Welfare

not Warfare session to urge Labour Party leaders to oppose Tory plans to splurge 100 billion pounds on replacing the Trident nuclear weapons system.

He asked them to consider “how many hospitals, schools and homes could we build with that money” and said people working in the industry could use their skills in these projects. ●



PV tour speaker blasts UK Cameron Tory government

During June, People's Voice was honoured to host a speaking tour to Vancouver and Toronto by Liz Payne, the vice-chairperson and National Women's Organizer of the Communist Party of Britain. Comrade Payne spoke at two major events - the annual People's Voice Victory Banquet in Vancouver, and a public forum at the Beit Zatoun in Toronto (above). Her presentations focused on the negative impact of the UK Conservative-LibDem coalition government's austerity cuts against women, and the fightback for pro-people policies. (Photo by Ed Bil)

Anti-“Right to Work” conference

By Saleh Waziruddin

The Ontario Federation of Labour's Executive Council passed a motion earlier this year calling for immediate preparations for a province-wide general strike in the event of any so-called “Right to Work” bill appearing in the provincial legislature.

Although there are few signs of such preparations, the Niagara Regional Labour Council, which initiated the motion, held a conference of about 40 activists in St. Catharines on how this particular anti-union attack can be fought. “Right to Work” is being aggressively advocated by Ontario Conservative leader Tim Hudak, who represents the riding adjacent to St. Catharines in Niagara.

The panel discussion was kicked off by two academics who pointed out that “Right to Work” undermines the very existence of unions, by allowing individuals to circumvent the democratically-decided collective action of their co-workers. The idea has its roots in racist Southern US reaction to post-World War II gains by labour.

Both speakers singled out the Cold War attack on the Communist Party as responsible for the weak state of the labour movement today, undermining the “economic and political power” of unions.

The Ontario NDP's silence on the danger of this fundamental attack was noted even by a sitting NDP MP, who told the conference “voting NDP is not necessarily the solution”. One of the report-back groups at the end of the conference echoed this by adding that they couldn't tell if the NDP was or wasn't an ally in the fightback. Speakers pointed out that “Right to Work” is but one of many points of assault of the austerity agenda, and so the fight against it can only be part of a broader common front.

Some speakers objected to even using the phrase “Right to Work” as a concession to labour's enemies, suggesting instead “Radical Republican US-Style Legislation” or “old tired policies from the racist Republican deep South”. No local action or demonstration is planned coming out of the conference so far, but getting clarity on the threat ahead is a preparatory step. ●

Summer fundraisers aim to finish PV Drive

People's Voice supporters across the country are aiming to help wrap up our 2013 Press Fund Drive with several fabulous fundraisers over the next several weeks. At the moment we are nearing the 85% mark towards our cross-Canada target of \$50,000, about ten percent ahead of the pace from last year. But we need to make a final push to complete the drive as soon as possible.

First up, the annual People's

Voice BBQ organized by the Davenport Club in Toronto has become a must-attend event for all supporters of the working class press. The event goes from 2 to 5 pm, Saturday, July 6 (rain or shine), at 58 Albany Ave. (one street east of Bathurst, north of Bloor). Meat and vegetarian dishes are both available, for just \$20/person (\$10 for students, low- and unwaged), and children under 12 eat for free. Please RSVP to let the organizers

know if you are coming, ph. 416-536-6771 or email omayasim@sympatico.ca.

Over on Vancouver Island, the Moncada Day Celebration held every year by our supporters in Nanaimo will include a raffle with proceeds to People's Voice. Come to enjoy the salmon BBQ, refreshments, and much more, at 530 Wakesia St., Nanaimo, Saturday, July 27, 3-7 pm. Admission is \$10, phone Grace Stevens at 250-741-7411 for information.

As we go to press, a tentative date of Sunday, August 18, has been set for the annual People's Voice Walk-A-Thon organized by our supporters in Surrey, BC. This popular event will take place as usual in Bear Creek Park, at the picnic area beside the parking lot at 140 St. and 88 Ave. Meet at 11 am for a brisk walk around the park, followed by a delicious picnic lunch featuring South Asian food and much more, and then a cultural program at 1 pm. Participation is free, but of course the organizers hope you will make a pledge towards the PV Drive. Call Harjit at 604-543-7179 for details.

Nanaimo Moncada Day Celebration

530 Wakesia St., Nanaimo, BC
Saturday, July 27, 3-7 pm

Refreshments, salmon BBQ,
raffle for People's Voice

Admission \$10

Ph. Grace Stevens
at 250-741-7411
for information.



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1600 Pennsylvania Ave. NW, Washington, DC 2500, USA

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

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Enclosed please find my donation of \$_____ to the 2013 People's Voice Press Fund Drive.

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

Dump corporate insiders, says Friends of Medicare

Special to PV

Long regarded as one of Canada's wealthiest provinces, Alberta has also seen major health care cutbacks since the era of former premier Ralph Klein. Repeatedly the province's health system has been decentralized, centralized again, then decentralized, as local or central boards are created and abolished.

Each time, the Conservative government's focus is on "administrative problems", not the fact that too few doctors, nurses and support staff are hired to work in hospitals and clinics.

In the latest act of this drama, Health Minister Fred Horne axed the entire Alberta Health Services board on June 12, after AHS directors defied his orders to halt the payment of bonuses, worth \$3.2 million, to 99 executives for 2012-13. The directors argued that they were legally bound to pay these bonuses.

According to Sandra Azocar, Executive Director of Friends of Medicare, "the question that Albertans should be asking is why the Premier and the Minister of Health do not read the employment contracts that are offered to Executives before hiring them? They are the ones that are ultimately responsible for the decisions that are being made regarding the use of our public health dollars.

"Since prior to the inception of AHS Board, Friends of Medicare expressed concerns regarding the manner in which this super board was appointed. In our view, a voice for the public interest was always conspicuously absent. Also, there was very limited representation of actual health care workers and health expertise. With the future of Alberta's health care system at stake, these have been glaring

omissions.

Given the abrupt end to this costly experiment, says Azocar, "the issue is not the structure, it is the culture and expectations that this ideologically driven government has created within our health care system. AHS was created through an internal coup; its whole culture is corporate and secretive, driven by an undisclosed agenda. It discloses trivia on expenses but nothing on the allocation of \$13 billion per year. It's privatizing without a mandate or public input.

"What we need is REAL Local input into our health care, regardless of structure. REAL public discussion of agenda, and real disclosure of allocations of public health dollars. Let's reflect back on the Colonoscopy issue in Calgary or the Home Care contracts that were just awarded to Toronto based companies, the



<http://medicare.ca>

ongoing aggressive privatization of seniors care. Everything about AHS's reaction showed a will to manage and minimize the issue,

no sense at all that it was an ethical crisis.

"Structure does not matter, culture does, and AHS and this

government who holds the responsibility over our health care have been heading towards the wrong direction.

"The ongoing financial mismanagement that we have seen over the years, has led to constant upheaval and costly reorganizations. Every time we need to reorganize the governance of our healthcare system we have seen millions of dollars being unnecessarily spent, and our health care thrown into chaos. We are constantly trying to change a tire on a car that is upside down in a ditch."

Friends of Medicare is demanding that the Minister of Health commit to a more transparent, accountable and democratic structure of governance of our healthcare system, "a structure that is no longer open to elitists, golden-parachuting, corporate insiders." ●

Boycott Ikea! Richmond store workers locked out

By Jane Bouey

Trade unionists and other supporters rallied outside the Ikea store in Richmond, B.C. on June 21, in solidarity with 350 unionized workers locked out since May 13 by the international furniture giant.

Ikea did \$1.4 billion in sales at its 12 stores in Canada last year, and had a 7% increase in sales in 2012. The Richmond store was recently rebuilt with a massive expansion. But the company claims that it must extract concessions from their workers in Richmond.

Teamsters Local 213 (the union representing the Richmond Ikea workers) Business Representative Anita Dawson, points out that Ikea has "locked us out in an attempt to

force the Union members to accept the terms of their last offer and invite the members back to work under the terms of the rejected offer."

Local 213 members have rejected Ikea's offer three times: on March 17 by 96%, May 5 by 83%, and on May 9 by 84% - the last vote offer conducted by the Labour Board.

Ikea is demanding major concessions, and warning workers with letters, that it will just get worse if they don't come back to work. Ikea has in fact been reducing its own May 9th offer, taking away items like a lump sum payment.

The concessions demanded by the company include reintroducing a tiered wage system. The Richmond Ikea workers successfully eliminated this with a strike in 2007 and won "equal pay for equal work". The company is demanding a difference of as much as \$7 per hour between workers performing the same job.

Ikea is also demanding major changes to the benefits program, including increasing the number of hours per week that an employee

needs to work to secure benefits for their family. Like most retail outlets, a large percentage of the workers are part-time, so this change would have a huge impact on those families.

Other concessions demands include contracting out of cleaning at the store.

Dawson states that, "Bargaining has since come to an impasse as the company will not move from wanting to reintroduce a multi-tiered wage system as well as other concessions and the union will not agree to this. We are going to

continue to stand strong. We are not interested in a race to the bottom. These are good jobs, we really need to stand up to these big companies and protect what we have."

The union is asking the public to boycott Ikea. For details, visit the Teamsters 213 site on Facebook. Listen to the Media Mornings Co-op Radio interview with Anita Dawson by Jane Bouey June 19, on the W2Media.ca website, <http://w2radio.wordpress.com/2013/06/19/media-mornings-wed-jun-19/>. ●



Solidarity rally on June 21 at Richmond IKEA

Setback for Harper, relief for Canada

Reports that Prime Minister Harper will return to Canada without a "comprehensive" EU deal should be taken with a sigh of relief, says the Council of Canadians. The Council is one of many environmental, farmers', labour, student, fair trade and social justice groups on both sides of the Atlantic that are critical of the deal on the table.

"If we thought there was any way Harper could get a good deal out of Europe that would benefit the people of Canada, we would be cheering him on. But he's exaggerated the benefits, ignored the costs and has already been caught trying to swindle the provinces into giving EU negotiators more of what they want - access to our resources and public services contracts," says Maude Barlow, national chairperson of the Council of Canadians.

Leaked texts over the past two years suggest provincial governments, Crown corporations and municipalities will lose the right to apply local preferences on public spending ("buy local" conditions). CETA will also include an investor "rights" chapter modeled on NAFTA, which continues to attract a growing number of punishing corporate lawsuits against environmental and resource conservation measures in Canada, including a \$250 million case against Quebec's moratorium on shale gas exploration.

Canada is also under enormous pressure from the EU and multinational brand name pharmaceutical companies in Canada to agree to extend patent terms and other monopoly protections, which will inevitably increase the cost of pharmaceuticals for patients and the provinces by

keeping cheaper generic competition off the shelves for longer.

"Is this a trade deal or a corporate rights deal?" asks Barlow. "The Harper government got into enough hot water, even with its own party, when it signed an investment treaty with China that gives oil and gas companies 31 years of protection from community resistance to projects or new environmental rules that could hurt profits. How do you think Canadians will respond when they see that Harper has given the same rights to European firms that are just as heavily invested in the tar sands, natural gas fracking projects, pipelines and mines?"

The Council of Canadians is calling on the government to give the public and Parliament an opportunity to see, revise and even reject any CETA deal.

From www.canadians.org ●

Annual People's Voice BBQ



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

58 Albany Avenue, Toronto
(one street east of Bathurst, north of Bloor)

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!



Sponsored by the Davenport Club, Communist Party of Canada

RSVP - please let us know if you will be coming by responding to omayasim@sympatico.ca or 416-536-6771

EDITORIALS

Mandela's legacy

As this issue of PV goes to press, the towering leader of South Africa's liberation movement remains in critical condition in a Pretoria hospital. Nelson Mandela has faced many powerful adversaries during his 94 years, inspiring new generations to take up the cause of human freedom. To those who focus only on the poverty which still faces the majority of black South Africans 20 years after "Madiba" became the first post-apartheid president, we reply that without his courage and wisdom, the fight for real change would have been even more difficult.

Nelson Mandela was one of the true visionaries of the 20th century. Born into a society which denied any semblance of human equality to non-whites, Mandela overcame enormous obstacles, becoming one of the first black lawyers in South Africa, and also a transformative leader of the African National Congress Youth League and then the ANC itself. With his colleagues and comrades, Mandela explored every strategy to overcome the apartheid system through non-violent means, from mass mobilizations, to strikes, to legal cases. The ANC's brilliant use of a wide range of tactics helped to win the vast majority of the people for the transition to armed struggle. When that time arrived, Mandela was jailed for 27 years for his role in creating Umkhonto we Sizwe, "the spear of the nation." Even from a prison cell on isolated Robben Island, he played a critical role in the liberation movement, helping to unite a broad spectrum of democratic forces, from Communists to liberal reformers, against the white supremacist system. Mandela's unifying strategy steered South Africa through those dangerous years, avoiding the nightmare of a bloody internal war.

Yes, the hopes of those who crafted South Africa's "Freedom Charter" remain far from completion. But Nelson Mandela and his legacy belong to all those who carry on the struggle for a world free from racism, war, violence and oppression.

Disaster for people, profit for corporations

Once again, a major North American city has been hit with a devastating flood. Eight years ago, New Orleans was inundated when Hurricane Katrina overwhelmed inadequate flood levees. This time, 100,000 residents of Calgary had to evacuate when torrential rains poured into the Bow and Elbow rivers, along with thousands more in smaller centres and on First Nations lands. We send our support and solidarity to all those hit by the disaster.

One of the main concerns of the corporate media has been the impact on business activities in Calgary, a key centre for the oil and gas sector. But while it may take some time to restore power and clean up downtown head offices, we predict that the major shareholders lose a nickel, since their profits are not generated in such buildings. Similarly, the major insurance companies are moving to limit losses, brazenly refusing to cover much of the flood damage. But many working class Albertans will lose employment income, and the damage to their homes and vehicles will not be fully compensated.

At least two conclusions can be drawn from this catastrophe. One is that right-wing governments will always put the interests of big capital ahead of the needs of working people, even as politicians express sympathies for all the victims. Second, of course, is that the intensified scale of climate disasters likely reflects global warming. "Once in a century" weather events are becoming more frequent; this phrase was used in southern Alberta in the 2005 floods. Humanity must begin to tackle the global warming trend by reversing greenhouse gas emissions. The private profit system can never address this challenge; it's time to consider urgent solutions based in social ownership of productive wealth.

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LETTERS

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706 Clark Drive, Vancouver, BC, V5L 3J1 or
pvoice@telus.net

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"Tayyip Erdogan - resign" (Cartoon by Latuff)

Twelve reasons why union-busting Bill C-377 is the worst

By Toby Sanger, rabble.ca

Liberal Senators say Bill C-377 is "one of the worst bills we've ever seen" and have pledged to sit through the summer to try and defeat or delay it.

Conservative Senator Hugh Segal has called the private member's bill targeting unions "immature, ill-conceived and small-minded." And yet Harper's Conservatives gave the bill its full support, forcing it through the House of Commons and threatening Senators who don't vote for it.

So why is Bill C-377 such an atrocious piece of legislation? Twelve Conservative Senators need to vote against the bill to defeat it - here are twelve reasons why they should:

1. It's unnecessary. Labour unions are already transparent and are required by federal, provincial and territorial legislation and their own constitutions to be democratically accountable and to provide regular financial reports to their membership. Financial statements are prepared regularly and disclosed at Local meetings and Convention. Salaries of elected officials and staff are also disclosed to union membership at least annually.

2. It's highly discriminatory. Bill C-377 specifically targets labour organizations for highly detailed reporting and disclosure on a public website. No other organization in Canada - public, private or crown corporations, non-profit organizations, charities, political parties, even fully-publicly funded government departments, ministers, members of parliament or senators - are required to report and publically disclose details of their internal finances and affairs to anywhere the same degree unions will have to under Bill C-377.

3. It imposes onerous and absurdly detailed reporting. The Bill imposes absurdly detailed reporting and disclosure requirements on all labour organizations, including those with

as few as one member, forcing them to submit at least 24 different detailed statements, including any cumulative transactions above \$5,000, separately identifying the payer, payee, and the purpose and description of the transaction,

Other voices...

including any legal services or health benefits paid for employees.

4. It's profoundly hypocritical. All labour organizations will be forced to report and disclose at least 24 different detailed financial and activity statements under Bill C-377 for use of their own independent funds. Members of Parliament disclose using only one financial statement (with only 14 items) while Senators only report five items in a single statement for their use of public funds. The Harper Government has even refused to disclose the amount of public funds spent for political staff and top officials, including Harper's former chief of staff, Nigel Wright, citing "privacy."

5. It's extraordinarily intrusive. Nothing in peace time comes close to the degree of intrusion into the affairs of independent organizations that this bill would legislate.

6. It would invade the privacy of millions of Canadians. By requiring labour organizations and associated organizations to report the details of every cumulative transaction of over \$5,000. It would invade the privacy of an estimated 12-million Canadians, including any business that provides service to a labour organization.

7. It would set a dangerous precedent. Conservative Senator Hugh Segal says, "I imagine that, were it to pass, subsequent legislation...might be aimed at newspapers; networks, TV and otherwise; student groups; universities; junior baseball leagues; and even, God forbid, community soccer. Where we are headed with this bill is down a

dark alley to a very dark place indeed."

8. It's unconstitutional. Numerous constitutional experts have testified that the Bill interferes with provincial jurisdiction over labour relations, and five provinces have already objected to the Bill.

9. It undermines fundamental legal rights and freedoms in Canada guaranteed by the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and other statutes. The Canadian Bar Association and legal experts have testified that the Bill undermines fundamental rights in a free and democratic society, including freedom of association, freedom of expression, as well as political rights, rights to personal and commercial privacy and confidentiality, and solicitor-client privilege.

10. It's unfair and anti-democratic. Bill C-377 was conceived and strongly promoted by Labour Watch and Merit Canada, organizations representing anti-union employers with strong ties to the Prime Ministers Office. The extraordinarily detailed disclosure provisions will give them an unfair advantage in

see BILL C-377, p. 11

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Shocking poverty rates for Aboriginal children

PV Vancouver Bureau

Half of Canada's First Nation children are living in poverty, according to a new analysis of census statistics by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives. Released on June 19, two days in advance of National Aboriginal Day, the study also finds that for other indigenous children - Métis, Inuit, and non-status Indian - the poverty rate is about 27 per cent.

By comparison, one-third of immigrant children and almost one-quarter of visible minority kids live below the low-income line, and the overall rate for children who belong to none of those groups is about 12 per cent.

The report also points out that First Nations children often live in communities that are impoverished when it comes to services and infrastructure. According to the study, indigenous children trail the rest of Canada's children on practically every measure of well-being.

"Canada cannot and need not allow yet another generation of indigenous citizens to languish in poverty," the study states. "Failure to act will result in a more difficult, less productive, and shorter life for indigenous children."

To define poverty, the analysis uses Statistics Canada's after tax low-income measure, which amounts to about \$38,000 a year for a family of four. Co-authored by economist David Macdonald, the report estimates it would cost \$7.5 billion a year from either market income or government transfers to bring all children in the country up to the poverty line.

The following excerpts from the study's summary give further details of the situation:

"As the most vulnerable members of any community, children have a fundamental right to protection and survival. This right is broadly acknowledged. For children living in poverty, the vulnerability runs much deeper. It is well established that poverty is linked to a variety of physical, social and economic disadvantages later in life. Children living in poverty require greater support to live and to fulfil their potential, a challenge that can only be met

with assistance from the broader community.

"Despite repeated promises from federal and provincial governments to address the issue - including a 1989 commitment by all Parliamentarians to eliminate child poverty by the year 2000 - Canada ranks 25th among the 30 countries in the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development with regard to child poverty. Recent modest declines in rates cannot hide the fact that over a million children in Canada still live in poverty.

"More troubling, however, is the reality facing Indigenous children in Canada. Based on data from the 2006 census, this study found that the average child poverty rate for all children in Canada is 17%, while the average child poverty rate for all



Photo: K. Cariou

Indigenous children is more than twice that figure, at 40%.

"In fact, even among children living in poverty in Canada, three distinct tiers exist. The first tier, with a poverty rate of 12%, excludes Indigenous, racialized and immigrant children. This is three to four times the rate of the best-performing OECD countries.

"The second tier of child poverty includes racialized children who suffer a poverty rate of 22%, immigrant children whose poverty rate is 33%, and Métis, Inuit and non-status First Nations children at 27%.

"Most shocking, however, is that fully half - 50% - of status First Nations children live below the poverty line. This number

grows to 62% in Manitoba and 64% in Saskatchewan.

"Some of these differences in child poverty appear to be a matter of jurisdiction. The provinces provide social services to all but status First Nation children on reserve, children who fare considerably better than their counterparts under federal responsibility.

"For status First Nations children living on reserves, the federal government is responsible for funding social services, health care, education and income supports. Transfer payments for these social services on reserve have increased by a mere 2% per year since 1996, unadjusted for population growth or need. The removal of this cap on funding growth and an adjustment of transfers for need could reduce the alarming rate of status First Nations households living in poverty. It is a matter of choice.

"The federal government can also have an impact on child poverty rates among children under provincial jurisdiction. Increasing the National Child Benefit Supplement (NCBS) so that the total benefit from the NCBS and the Canada Child Transfer total \$5,400 for the first child would reduce that child poverty by approximately 14%.

"To bring all children in Canada up to the poverty line would cost \$7.5 billion, \$1 billion of which is required for Indigenous children. Of that, \$580 million would be required to lift status First Nations children to the poverty line, which equates to 11% of the budget of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada for the comparable year.

"Although these investments are significant, the cost of continuing neglect is higher, both to Canada's economy and to the children. The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples estimated "the cost of doing nothing" - representing lost productivity and increased remedial costs - at \$7.5 billion annually back in 1996, a figure that would be much higher today. And a study by the Centre for the Study of Living Standards projected a \$115 billion cumulative benefit (2006-26) for federal and provincial governments from equivalent educational attainment and labour market

outcomes for Indigenous people.

"Indigenous children trail the rest of Canada's children on practically every measure of wellbeing: family income, educational attainment, poor water quality, infant mortality, health, suicide, crowding and homelessness. For example, Status First Nations children living in poverty are three times more likely to live in a house that requires major repairs compared to the non-

Indigenous children of families with similar income levels, and five times more likely to live in an overcrowded house.

"The failure of ongoing policies is clear. The link between the denial of basic human rights for Indigenous children and their poverty is equally clear. Failure to act will result in a more difficult, less productive, and shorter life for Indigenous children. The choice is ours." ●

Rally for independent & secular Syria



The Ontario Legislature was the scene of a June 22 rally against the double standard policy of western governments (including Canada) in imposing sanctions on the Syrian people while encouraging and smuggling weapons to extremist groups in that country. Called by the Syrian Club in Toronto, the rally urged the Canadian government to respect the legitimate rights of the Syrian people to determine their future. Some other demands included lifting the sanctions which prevent humanitarian support to people inside Syria; reopening the Syrian embassy in Canada; respect for the right of the Syrian government to fight the terrorism of extremist armed groups; "no" to sectarianism, bloodshed, war, and NATO intervention, and "yes" to an independent and secular Syria. (PV photos: Ed Bil)



Replace the Senate with an elected House of Nationalities

Central Committee, Communist Party of Canada, June 1-2, 2013

The latest scandals around corrupt Conservative senators Mike Duffy, Pamela Wallin and Patrick Brazeau have renewed the longstanding and justified demand to abolish this completely undemocratic relic of Canada's colonial past. From its inception, a seat in the Senate has been a lucrative reward for faithful political servants of the ruling class. Far from being a so-called "chamber of sober second thought," it has always served as a buffer against any meaningful democratic reform of the Canadian state. In fact, the Senate was established to protect the interests of ruling cliques in the provinces which

joined Confederation, at the expense of the national rights of oppressed peoples.

The struggle to abolish the Senate must be placed within a truly democratic framework, rather than as an attempt to simply "rebalance" the federal and provincial power structures in the interests of competing sections of monopoly capital.

The Communist Party of Canada calls to replace the Senate with a democratically elected body which would give the Aboriginal peoples (First Nations, Inuit, Métis), the Acadians, and Québec effective powers to control their own destinies. Such a fundamental constitutional reform, starting with the convening of a truly broad and representative Constituent Assembly, and a referendum to

ratify the proposals from such a body, is needed to end the historic denial of Québec's status as a nation, and to recognize the full

How we see it...

national, economic, social, and political equality of the Aboriginal peoples.

We propose a confederal republic, eliminating the vestiges of the British colonial system, and based on a government consisting of two chambers: a reformed House of Commons, elected through a new system of mixed-member proportional representation; and a House of

Nationalities, composed of an equal number of elected representatives from Québec and from English-speaking Canada, with guaranteed and significant representation from the Aboriginal peoples (First Nations, the Métis, the Inuit) and the Acadians. Each chamber should have the right to initiate legislation, but both would have to adopt the legislation for it to become law. Furthermore the Aboriginal peoples must have the right of veto on all matters pertaining to their national development. This structure will protect both fundamental democratic principles: equality of the rights of nations whatever their size, and majority rule.

Structural changes reflecting this confederal arrangement would need to be made throughout

the legal system and state apparatus, as part of entrenching the right of nations to self-determination in the Canadian constitution.

Urgent constitutional change must also extend to recognition of the role of municipalities within the Canadian state, guarantees for the rights of workers to organize and bargain collectively, and protections for the natural environment. The struggle for such reforms is crucial to the wider movement for democracy, social advance and socialism. Uniting the working class across the country will not be possible without combating national oppression and fighting to achieve a new, equal and voluntary partnership of Canada's nations. ●

Western Emperors have no clothes

By Finian Cunningham,
Information Clearing
House, June 13, 2013

The military victory for Syria's government forces in the strategic central town of Qusayr was a watershed event for several reasons. But of the crucial turning points heralded by this event, one is inimitably clear - the Western powers, the would-be emperors of Syria, stand naked in their failed criminal conspiracy to destroy that country.

These would-be emperors - Washington and the region's former has-been colonial powers, Britain and France, have been shown demonstratively to have not a shred of credibility. The emperors have no clothes and they are running for cover.

The Syrian army now has the upper-hand and the momentum towards outright victory in a conflict that has ransacked large swaths of the Levantine nation, resulting in up to 80,000, mainly civilian, deaths, and causing 4-5 million internal and external refugees.

Western-backed insurgents are being destroyed or routed from villages and towns across Syria as the Syrian army moves swiftly on to its next objective of freeing the country's second major city, Aleppo, in the north. That clash may prove a more bloody and protracted fight than the three-week campaign to retake Qusayr. But, given their withering loss of fighters and the severance from key supply routes through Qusayr, the eventual defeat of insurgents in Aleppo looks all but assured.

The recapture of Aleppo, and shutting off the NATO weapons supply line from Turkey in the north, would then prove to be the last stand for the foreign-backed mercenaries. These mercenaries have been terrorising Syria since March 2011 at the behest of NATO powers and their regional allies, including Israel, Jordan, Turkey, Saudi Arabia and Qatar. The Western agenda of regime change to oust President Bashar al-Assad is therefore, in a word, a dead letter.

But perhaps a more telling repercussion from the victory in Qusayr is the stripping bare of the ugly face of Western imperialism in Syria and the wider region.

The routing of the mercenaries who had laid siege to Qusayr for the past year showed more clearly than even the largely foreign component of the so-called Free Syrian Army and the minimal support among the Syrian population for this outfit of Al-Qaeda-linked extremists. The FSA should henceforth be known as the Foreign Supplied Army. Without foreign supplies, there is no FSA, and there never would have been one in the first place.

Why were the 30,000 inhabitants of Qusayr obliged to hide in their homes for the past year while gangs of Libyan, Egyptian, Tunisian, Saudi, Chechen, Yemeni, French and British self-styled jihadists and, yes, local Syrian criminal opportunists, roamed the streets, looting and brutalising?

When these Western-backed killers and bandits were eventually

run out of Qusayr, why did the inhabitants greet the Syrian army and their Lebanese Hezbollah comrades with relief and gratitude? Why have street celebrations been held in Qusayr feting the restoration of civilian life?

Why did thousands of Qusayr's residents flee the town over the past year? Of course, it was to escape from the Western-backed so-called "rebels" who imposed their draconian, twisted fundamentalist tyranny that they have adopted from their Saudi and Qatari paymasters. This is the same kind of tyranny that is being imposed on the suffering communities of Aleppo still under the control of the mercenaries.

This week, reports emerged of a 14-year-old boy in Aleppo who was executed in a public square by foreign gunmen because he allegedly blasphemed over a cup of coffee. He was sentenced to death by a kangaroo court before being shot twice in the head in front of his mother and father.

Why is it that now those



This Reuters photo shows "Free Syrian Army" rebels being trained in Jordan with the backing of the U.S., Britain and France. <http://rt.com/news/americans-train-syrian-rebels-073/>

inhabitants who had fled Qusayr - Muslim, Sunni, Shia, Alawite, Christian alike - are returning to the resumed safety of their town to pick-up their hitherto peacefully co-existing lives?

None of these questions are being asked in the mainstream Western media, or of Western politicians, since the fall of Qusayr. Incredibly, the Western media

coverage on Syria seems stricken by a sudden muteness over the past week, as if crippled by a huge spanner tossed into its wheels. Conveniently, the news agenda seems to have inexplicably moved on to other matters.

At this juncture, what Western governments and their media propaganda system want most to avoid is for the Western public to see the naked, glaring truth: that these governments and media have been lying for the past two years about what is going on in Syria. This country is not undergoing a pro-democracy uprising, supported by Syrian people and benevolent Western powers. Rather, Syria has been subjected to a criminal covert war of aggression by Western powers for selfish strategic interests in the oil and gas-rich Middle East. This kind of conspiracy is what war criminals at Nuremburg were hanged for.

Qusayr has made Western government crimes in the Middle East abundantly clear. And that is why the story is being discarded down the Western media memory hole.

So let's drag it out of the memory hole. To achieve their

illicit objectives, Western governments have secretly funnelled weapons, money, Special Forces and networks of foreign cutthroat killers into a sovereign country to terrorise its people into submitting to their agenda for regime change. The blood of 80,000 Syrian people is on the hands of Western presidents, prime ministers and their foreign diplomats: Barack Obama, David Cameron, Francois Hollande, John Kerry, William Hague and Laurent Fabius. They all stand accused and should be tried before a war crimes tribunal.

When Syrian army forces retook the bombed-out, sabotaged town of Qusayr, the facade of Western pretence and propaganda was demolished forever.

Now, as with the dregs of the retreating insurgents, Western governments are running scared from the damning exposure. Last week [mid-June] the White House held a series of emergency meetings on Syria. US Secretary of State John Kerry had to cancel a tour of the Middle East in order to attend those meetings. On the cards for discussion was the US moving towards sending weapons and other lethal aid openly to its Foreign Supplied Army in Syria - a desperate move that probably won't happen because the Western criminal agenda has already been defeated. The Obama administration - assailed by other scandals and imploding legitimacy among the American people and the wider world - is in no position to step up criminality in the Middle East.

The Associated Press reports, "[Syrian] opposition leaders [that is, Western stooges] have warned Washington that their rebellion could face devastating, irreversible losses without greater support."

That one sentence says it all. The emperors have no clothes. ●



Iran to send 4,000 troops to Syria

Excerpts from an article by
Robert Fisk, *The Independent*, June 16, 2013

Washington's decision to arm Syria's Sunni Muslim rebels has plunged America into the great Sunni-Shia conflict of the Islamic Middle East, entering a struggle that now dwarfs the Arab revolutions which overthrew dictatorships across the region.

For the first time, all of America's "friends" in the region are Sunni Muslims and all of its enemies are Shiites. Breaking all President Barack Obama's rules of disengagement, the US is now fully engaged on the side of armed groups which include the most extreme Sunni Islamist movements in the Middle East.

The Independent on Sunday has learned that a military decision has been taken in Iran - even before the presidential election - to send a first contingent of 4,000 Iranian Revolutionary Guards to Syria to support President Bashar al-Assad's forces against the largely Sunni rebellion that has cost almost

100,000 lives in just over two years. Iran is now fully committed to preserving Assad's regime, according to pro-Iranian sources which have been deeply involved in the Islamic Republic's security, even to the extent of proposing to open up a new "Syrian" front on the Golan Heights against Israel...

America's alliance now includes the wealthiest states of the Arab Gulf, the vast Sunni territories between Egypt and Morocco, as well as Turkey and the fragile British-created monarchy in Jordan. King Abdullah of Jordan - flooded, like so many neighbouring nations, by hundreds of thousands of Syrian refugees - may also now find himself at the fulcrum of the Syrian battle. Up to 3,000 American "advisers" are now believed to be in Jordan, and the creation of a southern Syria "no-fly zone" - opposed by Syrian-controlled anti-aircraft batteries - will turn a crisis into a "hot" war. So much for America's "friends".

Its enemies include the Lebanese Hizballah, the Alawite

Shiite regime in Damascus and, of course, Iran. And Iraq, a largely Shiite nation which America "liberated" from Saddam Hussein's Sunni minority in the hope of balancing the Shiite power of Iran, has - against all US predictions - itself now largely fallen under Tehran's influence and power. Iraqi Shiites as well as Hizballah members, have both fought alongside Assad's forces.

Washington's excuse for its new Middle East adventure - that it must arm Assad's enemies because the Damascus regime has used sarin gas against them - convinces no-one in the Middle East. Final proof of the use of gas by either side in Syria remains almost as nebulous as President George W. Bush's claim that Saddam's Iraq possessed weapons of mass destruction.

For the real reason why America has thrown its military power behind Syria's Sunni rebels is because those same rebels are now losing their war against Assad. The Damascus regime's victory this month in the central Syrian

town of Qusayr, at the cost of Hizballah lives as well as those of government forces, has thrown the Syrian revolution into turmoil, threatening to humiliate American and EU demands for Assad to abandon power...

In the Middle East, there is cynical disbelief at the American contention that it can distribute arms - almost certainly including anti-aircraft missiles - only to secular Sunni rebel forces in Syria represented by the so-called Free Syria Army. The more powerful al-Nusra Front, allied to al-Qaeda, dominates the battlefield on the rebel side and has been blamed for atrocities including the execution of Syrian government prisoners of war and the murder of a 14-year old boy for blasphemy. They will be able to take new American weapons from their Free Syria Army comrades with little effort.

From now on, therefore, every suicide bombing in Damascus - every war crime committed by the rebels - will be regarded in the region as Washington's responsibility. ●

Our LGBTQ rights: Celebrate! Defend! Expand!

Pride 2013 Statement from the Communist Party of Canada and the Young Communist League

It's Pride! Time to celebrate the advances of the LGBTQ communities in Canada and around the world. The Communist Party of Canada and the Young Communist League applaud these victories. More and more countries around the world are recognizing same-sex marriage and other fundamental LGBTQ rights. In Canada, the struggle for concrete steps to end harassment based on sexual orientation and gender expression/identity has seen a number of key victories. The number of GSA's in schools, and districts with explicit LGBTQ policies continue to increase. Working with the queer community, Newfoundland and Manitoba have become the most recent provinces to ensure schools are safer and more welcoming places for all students. This year is the tenth anniversary of same-sex marriage in Canada.

We all welcome the continued expansion of queer-positive environments in the mass media, the labour movement and in the traditionally homophobic arena of male professional sports, where the "you can play" campaign is sending a powerful message that gay athletes must be treated with respect.

The vote by the Ontario Legislature to enshrine "gender identity" and "gender expression" in the provincial Human Rights code, the defeat of attempts to deny civic funding to Pride Toronto, the adoption of Vancouver Pride as a civic event and other legal, political and cultural victories are the hard-won results of decades of efforts by the LGBTQ community and our allies.

But those who spread fear and bigotry are not giving up. The anti-equality protests in France and the near-unanimous vote in the Russian Parliament to ban so-called "propaganda of non-traditional sexual relations" are, in part, a reaction to the democratic progress being made elsewhere. The Communist Party of Canada strongly supports the statement of the International LGBTI Association-Europe co-chair, Gabi Calleja: "We are deeply concerned by the negative impact of this law (in Russia). Homophobic rhetoric which accompanied the adoption of this law at the regional and federal



Communist Party/YCL contingent at last year's Pride Parade in Toronto (Photos this page: Ed Bil)

level for the last few years already significantly contributed toward a climate of hatred and physical violence against LGBTI people which recently resulted in a number of murders."

There are still far too many countries where LGBTQ people face laws that can result in imprisonment or even death. Of course the myth that queer rights can only be won in wealthy capitalist countries is shattered by advances in countries such as Cuba, Brazil, and South Africa, and by the reality that homophobic and racist views are deliberately exported from North America and Europe.

And while we have made great strides here in Canada, we should not be complacent. The forces that spread hate in other countries, have powerful friends in the Conservative caucus of Stephen Harper. 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 sharpest negative impact is on the most marginalized members of the LGBTQ community, including trans, two-spirited, racialized queers and young people.

The trans community is frequently left out of the gains made by the rest of the LGBTQ community. While we celebrate the recent decision by the Nova

Scotia Government to fund gender reassignment surgery, there is a long ways yet to go. The cost of delaying full equality for trans people would be tragic. This is not a "marginal" issue; trans people are 10% of the LGBTQ population, and face huge medical costs, higher unemployment, less access to housing, widespread intimidation at work, and lack of legal protections.

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

Homophobia and transphobia are weapons to divide working people; just like racism, sexism, and national chauvinism. Today, those in charge of our economy, the ruling class, use the economic crisis and the so-called "war on terror" to justify their assault on

workers and social equality. But "an injury to one is an injury to all." Our unity will be strengthened by adopting full legal and political protections for sexual orientation and 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 coalition to put people's needs before corporate greed. Our LGBTQ community must be a key player in 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, our unified struggle in our communities and workplaces, in the streets and at the ballot box, can defeat the Harper Tories and open the door to a "people 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 all face today. We urge you to join the Communist Party and the Young Communist League to achieve a liberated society in which, as Karl Marx said, "the freedom of each is the condition for the freedom of all." ●

REDS ON THE WEB

www.comunist-party.ca
www.peoplesvoice.ca
www.ycl-ljc.ca
rebelyouth-magazine.blogspot.com
<http://solidnet.org>

ILO fights workplace discrimination

This statement was issued on this year's International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia, as the International Labor Organization (ILO) steps up efforts to eradicate workplace discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation or gender identity.

The world of work has been a crucial arena for spearheading legal change, ending stereotypes and promoting understanding of the need for dignity of all human beings. Through advancing workplace rights for women, persons with disabilities and people living with HIV, the ILO has been, and continues to be, at the forefront in advancing human rights for all workers. The progress in recognizing the rights

of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) people over the past decade is undeniable. However, major challenges remain. On this important day for world recognition of equality for all, the ILO affirms its commitment to strive for workplaces free of discrimination on all grounds, including on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity.

Using international labour standards to end discrimination and the 1998 Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, member States have been vigilant in identifying and opposing unfair treatment in the workplace; yet until recently, discrimination against LGBT persons has not been a specific



focus of action. This has changed and we are now undertaking targeted research in a selected number of countries to start tracking workplace discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity, with a view to promoting workplaces that champion equality and diversity in all its forms.

Promoting workplace rights for LGBT women and men reflects the attention being given to such rights in other UN fora. More than 60 member States have acknowledged sexual orientation as a prohibited ground of discrimination under the Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111); and the ILO's Committee of Experts on the Application of Standards and Recommendations has welcomed this development.

While there is undoubtedly progress on LGBT rights, both in the workplace and beyond, LGBT workers still suffer discrimination and harassment. Moreover, from 2011 to 2012, there was a slight increase - from 76 to 78 - in the number of countries with legislation criminalizing people on the basis of their sexual orientation. On the positive side, in the same period, several countries adopted legislation to prevent such discrimination in the workplace.

The ILO's social justice mandate means promoting employment in conditions of freedom, equity, human security and dignity for all: we bring this agenda founded respect for rights, acceptance of diversity and tolerance to the realization of decent work for LGBT women and men. ●





GLOBAL CLASS STRUGGLE

Sharp decline in labour's share

The global trend towards a sharp decline of labour's economic share is discussed by the International Labour Organization in its Global Wage Report 2012/13. The ILO report summarizes some of the evidence this way:

"The OECD has observed that over the period from 1990 to 2009 the share of labour compensation in national income declined in 26 out of 30 developed economies for which data were available, and calculated that the median labour share of national income across these countries fell considerably from 66.1 per cent to 61.7 per cent ... Looking beyond the advanced economies, the ILO World of Work Report 2011 found that the decline in the labour income share was even more pronounced in many emerging and developing countries, with considerable declines in Asia and North Africa and more stable but still declining wage shares in Latin America."

The U.S. labour share of income has fallen from around 68-70% of GDP through the 1970s, to just 63% by 2009-10. For other major capitalist countries the trend is similar. In Japan, the labour share dropped from 80% in the late 1970s to 64% in 2010. The German figures showed a drop from 73% in 1974 to 64% in 2010.

Between 1999 and 2011 average labour productivity in developed economies increased more than twice as much as average wages. In the United States, real hourly labour productivity increased by about 85 per cent since 1980, while real hourly compensation increased by only around 35 per cent. In Germany, labour productivity surged by almost a quarter over the past two decades while real monthly wages remained flat.

The global trend has resulted in a change in the distribution of national income, with the workers' share decreasing while capital income shares increased in a majority of countries. Even in China, where wages roughly tripled over the last decade, GDP increased at a faster rate than the total wage bill - and hence the labour share went down.

The ILO concludes that the drop in the labour share is due to technological progress, trade globalization, the expansion of financial markets, and decreasing union density, which have eroded the bargaining power of labour. Financial globalization, in particular, may have played a bigger role than previously thought.

ILO lifts Myanmar sanctions

Delegates have voted to totally lift all remaining sanctions against Myanmar at the annual International Labour Conference in Geneva, Switzerland. Sanctions initially imposed by the UN agency back in 2000 meant the 185 member states were recommended to limit ties with the country in order to check the stream of forced labor in Myanmar.

"The resolution adopted by the conference recognizes the progress made in Myanmar and lifts all ILO restrictions on Myanmar," the ILO said in a June 18 statement. "The remaining restrictions have been lifted because Myanmar carried out pragmatic measures, including legislation, for eliminating forced labour in the country, and has



achieved good results," said the official statement.

But activist Su Su Nway, who spoke to Associated Press, said that while there has been progress in the area of workers' rights, forced labor is still a major problem in many parts of the country.

Over a year after the enactment of Burma's labor organization and freedom of association laws, local and international workers' rights activists say more must be done to support the newfound freedoms in practice.

Addressing a forum of several hundred trade union leaders and activists in Rangoon in April, ILO Deputy Director-General Gregory Vines said that although the passing of the new laws and the revival of Burma's long-suppressed labor movement was positive, "there have been some issues around the laws and their enforcement."

Banana strike averted

Colombia's banana industry is set to avoid strikes after key players reached an agreement that will raise workers' salaries, while also providing health, housing and education benefits. The deal was reached between the National Agriculture Workers Union (Sintrainagro) and the Colombian Banana Growers' Association (Augura).

A Sintrainagro release said the agreement would benefit 18,000 workers from 288 farms in Uraba, as well as in the regions of Apartado, Carepa, Chigorodo and Turbo in the department of Antioquia.

"The National Agriculture Workers Union, Sintrainagro, had already declared the zero hour to stop activities, but this morning it managed to ward off a strike," the union said on June 19. "Economic compensation of COP300,000 (US\$155) was agreed upon for each worker, as well as improvements in social security aspects."

The agreement strengthens housing funds of US\$39 per planted hectare and establishes US\$360,000 for an Education, Recreation and Culture Fund, among other benefits.

Sintrainagro had previously ratified the strike, which would have stopped the export of 243,000 boxes worth of bananas daily.

Russian auto workers may strike

The Interregional Trade Union of Autoworkers (ITUA) scheduled a strike at Ford in Vsevolozhsk, Russia, over the issues of wages and working conditions. The ITUA reports that Ford management in Vsevolozhsk, 25 km east of St. Petersburg, has been informed of the planned strike on June 24.

Earlier during the collective bargaining round, workers rejected an 8.6 per cent wage raise proposed by the administration. Out of this figure, 6.6 per cent accounts for inflation leaving only a 2 per cent increase in real terms. The average monthly wage at the plant is roughly 940 euros. Workers demand a hike to 1150 euros (50,000 roubles).

"We understand that the real inflation level in Russia is higher than the official figure. Labour productivity at our plant is very high. However, our wages are not enough to provide decent education for our children, ensure quality healthcare and a normal retirement, have good vacations and comfortable housing," says Alexander Kashitzin, president of the ITUA local at Ford in Vsevolozhsk.

Kashitzin notes that company profits are constantly rising, and the share of labour costs in overall expenses is low. Other issues at the plant include poor working conditions, inadequate health and safety training, and lack of breaks due to high temperature in the summer required by Russian labour laws.

In November-December 2012 Ford workers conducted a work-to-rule protest over working conditions. The plant is well-known for its militant union local which held eight strikes since 2006.

Fuel price walk-outs in Indonesia

The head of Indonesia's largest labour union says strikes could soon paralyze the country. Thousands of workers walked out on June 21 and police prepared for widespread protests ahead of an impending fuel price hike.

Four water cannon and six armoured vehicles were mobilized to secure the Ministry of State-Owned Enterprises against demonstrators, and hundreds of police officers and military personnel have been assigned to the area. In the city's satellite industrial centers, thousands of workers downed tools before Friday prayers to protest the government's plan to raise the price of subsidized fuel.

Said Iqbal, president of the Confederation of Indonesian Workers Unions, said industrial areas in Bekasi, Cibitung and Cikarang, West Java, had been paralyzed after workers walked out en masse.

"There are so many military personnel and police officers guarding the demonstration here

in Ejip, Hyundai, Lippo, Delta Silicon and MM2100 in Cikarang Bekasi because it is expected that thousands of workers will close down the toll road to protest the fuel price hike," he said. Workers in Pulogadung and Karawang industrial zones were expected to join the strike.

Indonesian authorities have imposed specified time deadlines, nominally 6 p.m., when protests are required to disperse. Since such laws are only sporadically enforced, it was unclear whether this would inhibit the scale of anticipated protests.

Said emphasized that workers had to protest the fuel price increase because it would have a profound impact on living standards, pushing many into poverty.

"Labourers who are nearly poor will become absolutely poor with this price hike," he told the Jakarta Globe. "The increase of the minimum wage announced by the government earlier will become useless, and we reject the government's temporary direct cash assistance scheme because it was a political move created before the 2014 election and it will make the president and his party appear as Santa Claus."

If the government insisted on the fuel price hike, he said, workers in 200 districts across the country would continue demonstrating, while a national strike on August 16 would involve "10 million workers," the day before Independence Day.

Poland eliminates 8-hour day

On June 13, the Polish government eliminated the 8-hour

working day, a right which was won in 1919. The government claims it is trying to make Poland more "competitive" for capitalists who want to earn higher profits by imposing lower wages and longer hours.

The elimination of the eight-hour day was accomplished by increasing accounting periods for calculating the average amount of hours worked, and by also introducing flexible working hours. In the past, workers had to have a certain resting time between shifts. If shifts were moved from day to day, it could be considered outside normal working time, and workers would then be entitled to overtime pay. The new rules allow bosses to impose much longer working days, as long as they cut hours during another time of the year. For workers in some industries and areas, this could mean much longer working days for extensive periods of time, followed by months of unemployment. It is not clear what rights workers who are hired temporarily for a few months will have under this scheme.

The amendments to the Labor Code were drafted by Wladyslaw Kosiniak-Kamysz, a 32-year old doctor who first ran for the Krakow city council in 2010. A year later, he had already become Poland's Minister of Labour, and vice-chair of the right-wing agrarian Polish People's Party (PSL). He introduced the amendments which effectively abolish the guaranteed 8-hour working day, acting on behalf of the country's employers' lobby.

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

Send me information on the Communist Party of Canada



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

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“NObama” campaign to protest US foreign policy

Statement by a coalition of progressive movements against the late June visit to South Africa by President Obama

We as South Africans, in the form of the South African Communist Party (SACP), the Young Communist League of South Africa (YCL), the South African Students Congress (SASCO), the Muslim Students Association (MSA), the National Education, Health and Allied Workers Union (NEHAWU), the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), Friend of Cuba Society (FOCUS), Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions against Israel in South Africa (BDS South African), and the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU), declare our utmost rejection of visit of the U.S. President, Barack Obama to our country.

Our rejection is based on the USA's arrogant, selfish and oppressive foreign policies, treatment of workers and international trade relations that are rooted in war mongering, neo-liberal super-exploitation, colonial racism and the disregard and destruction of the environment,

thus making the realisation of a just and peaceful world impossible.

The coming of President Barack Obama to South Africa is the first ever since he was elected head of state. The USA under his leadership has escalated its assault on human rights, militarisation of international relations and continuing galloping of world resources at the absolute expense of the environment and oppressed peoples of the world.

The USA is deeply implicated in the oppression of the people of Western Sahara, the only remaining colonised country on the African continent, colonised by Morocco. And to this day, the release of the Cuban Five and a continuing baseless embargo against the country and peoples of Cuba still seems unmovable issues of commitment for the USA. The call for the release of the Cuban Five has been an important international campaign supported even by Nobel Prize winners...

The criminal occupation of Palestine by the Apartheid State of Israel, as a well-known fact in our country, has only been made possible by the USA's financial and political support for the Racist Israeli regime. This is expressed

in the main, through both its open support and military donations that come to billions of dollars every year - with USA aid to Israel being more than that of Africa, Latin America and Asia combined.

In addition, the USA has for years been single-handedly blocking any progress and is totally divorced and isolated from the consensus of the international community. In fact, the USA is the most frequent user of the UN veto: it has used its veto power over 40 times to defend Apartheid Israel. As South Africans, we painfully recall how the US used its veto power to defend Apartheid South Africa, particularly from UN resolutions imposing economic and military sanctions. The USA, under Reagan and others, supported Apartheid South Africa and was on the wrong side of history. Why does the USA not learn from its history, and be on the right side of history this time?

Finally, the United States' policies on the environment, specifically the fact that it is one of the largest contributors to global warming, yet to this day continues to refuse the observing and signing of the Kyoto protocol, is simply unacceptable.

Progressive forces in South Africa have consistently been raising these issues and many others regarding the role of the USA in the global community. We categorically make it known, that the visit of the USA President to South Africa is an unwelcome visit that will be protested, picketed and resisted by all justice and peace-loving peoples of this country. Friendship with South Africa must be based on values of justice, freedom and equality and these the USA has offended, undermined and ridiculed through its actions in the global front.

The following issues will be highlighted in upcoming protests of President Barack Obama:

1. The championing and maintenance, by the USA, in the militarisation of international relations and co-operation. It is a well-known fact that the USA approaches conflicts in the world through inciting, encouraging as well and championing war, primarily driven by its business interests often masqueraded in the language of defence of human rights. The militarisation of international relations is in the main exemplified by institutions like Africom, NATO, and the continuing double standards around nuclear disarmament that the USA preaches when it comes to countries in the South, whilst continuing to collaborate with on nuclear weapons with Israel.
2. The continued greed in the guzzling of world resources by the USA epitomised by its encouragement and support of its multinational companies that have no regard for the environment, human rights, progressive labour laws etc.
3. The USA's active support and

defence of colonial and oppressive regimes. This is the one aspect of USA foreign policy that most exposes its hypocritical character where regimes that support its interest are never opposed; instead they are not only supported but maintained through amongst other things, the USA war machinery. Chief amongst these is Israel, which continues to serve as the USA's frontline state in the Middle-East whilst suppressing and maintaining its racist apartheid policies on Palestinian people. Another example is the USA's support to Morocco, that is oppressing and colonially occupying Western Sahara, and increasingly the support of oppressive regimes like the one in Colombia.

4. The USA's role maintaining the underdevelopment of the African continent and its imperialistic trade relations with African countries.

5. The unjustifiable blockade on Cuba, and the unfair imprisonment of the Cuban 5.

6. The USA is the single largest contributor to global warming which is condemning the world into catastrophic environmental disasters.

The coalition has called a National Day of Action on June 28, including a march to the U.S. Embassy in Pretoria. The Day of Action will raise key demands: Immediate release of the Cuban 5! Cease US/NATO war-mongering in Syria and everywhere else! Take your "Africom", we don't want it! Immediate closure of "GITMO"! Stop snooping on our e-mails, phone calls and social networking! Halt the unleashing of your Al Qaeda forces on the World's people! Free Bradley Manning! ●

Turkey: “The winner is the people”

Central Committee of the Communist Party of Turkey, June 17, 2013

Tayyip Erdogan and his fellows, who believed that they could put out the weeks long riot with unprecedented police terror and an unheard campaign of lies, have turned out to be completely wrong.

We are not discussing what form the resistance will take today, tomorrow or next week. What is important at this point is that people, who were disregarded by the AKP dictatorship, have risen up.

The people of Turkey have responded positively to the call out “never surrender” as millions of people resisted in the streets under the risk of death and even more took to their balconies or leant out of windows banging pots and pans. Not just half of the population, but more than that think that the AKP has deserved such a reaction and full-heartedly support the resistance.

All resources of the state are in the service of the AKP. The markets, which continue to count on the government despite the initial alert, are on their side. The imperialists and global capital, which direct the markets, are on their side. Ignorance and reaction are on their side. All sorts of “the opposition of the majesty”, which watch out that the ongoing crisis would not give any serious harm to the system, are on their side.

In other times, a much more crowded flock would have come out into the streets on the side of the government. But, it was seen that the government's meetings could not cope with the resistance in terms of quantity as well.

The people stand against the AKP! The masses, with courage,



TKP activists at rally in Taksim Square

determination, youth, fathers and mothers, women and men, worker and unemployed, computer engineers and grocers.

The Communist Party of Turkey believes that this is the fundamental achievement of the resistance. The people have risen up in Turkey. The brutality of police might have an impact on the pace and form of the resistance. But it is just that. No power can push our people back to indifference and apathy or force them to bow down. The previous widespread belief that “we will not achieve anything” has been buried into past. The price that we paid was not paid of no avail.

This achievement is our country's today and future. Our people deserve to imagine the future. Our people have to look at the future.

The precondition to win the future is obvious: To get organized!

The people that have not surrendered will be more open to the idea of organized struggle.

Turkey, in a short while, will be a more organized society compared to the level of its organization today. Considering the extensive gains of a resistance marked by disorganization, imagine what might be the achievements of an organized society!

As seen by everyone, the TKP has done everything that could be done in all neighbourhoods of resistance. The TKP is more powerful and experienced than it was before. The party has the ability to move with all sectors of the population and in different geographies. The TKP has taken a peculiar place inside the popular resistance.

If it is obvious that to win the future people have to get organized, the Communist Party of Turkey is the spring, which will quench people's thirst for organization.

We invite our people to the ranks of our party! We are embracing our people with love, respect and fervour. ●

CJPME urges MPs to oppose Israeli settlements

Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East (CJPME) is urging MPs to denounce both the soaring Israeli “settlement” housing starts in the West Bank and the recent extremely belligerent statements by Israel cabinet ministers.

According to Israel's Peace Now group, settlement starts in the first three months of 2013 tripled the number in 2012's first quarter, and were 355 percent higher than in the last quarter of 2012. On June 17, Israel's Economics and Trade Minister Naftali Bennett proposed that Israel confiscate “Area C” - the 62 percent of the Palestinian West Bank under full Israeli control - “as quickly as possible.”

Disparaging the idea of a separate Palestinian state, the Israeli minister commented, “Never have so many people invested so much energy in something that is hopeless... The most important thing ... is to build, build, build. It's important that there will be an Israeli presence everywhere.”

Israel's deputy foreign minister Zeev Elkin, who lives in a West Bank settlement, agreed with Bennett's remarks. Two weeks earlier, deputy defence minister Danny Danon claimed a majority within the Israeli government staunchly oppose the creation of a Palestinian state.

A CJPME statement notes that neither Canada's Foreign Affairs minister John Baird, nor opposition critics Paul Dewar (NDP) and Dominique LeBlanc (Liberal), have deplored the soaring settlement starts or the Israeli cabinet ministers' appalling statements.

“Canadian MPs' silence in the face of such belligerence is unethical and contradicts all Canadian parties' long-standing support for a ‘two-state solution’,” notes CJPME President Thomas Woodley. The group calls on government and opposition MPs to be “less passive in the face of statements and actions by Israel that run contrary to Canadian policy and the international consensus on a feasible solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.”

CJPME points out that Israel's “settlement” (colonization) of the West Bank violates Article 49 of the Fourth Geneva Convention, which prohibits occupying powers from transferring their civilian population into the territory occupied. Palestinian leaders have repeatedly offered to negotiate a peace agreement based on the 1967 borders, even though those borders would leave Palestinians with only 22 percent of British Mandatory Palestine. ●

Greek public broadcaster still off-air due to cuts

Greek state broadcaster ERT remains off air despite a court ruling that the blackout was illegal. Prime Minister Antonis Samaras shut down the station and sacked all 2,700 workers in mid-June in a bid to cut costs.

The action sparked protests across Greece, including a one day general strike and daily pickets of the ERT offices.

Samaras claimed that ERT was plagued by chronic mismanagement, lack of transparency and waste. But his coalition partners disagreed and he was forced into face-saving talks on June 17 with PASOK and the Democratic Left, which were furious that they had not been asked first. The Greek Communist Party (KKE), on the other hand, pointed out that the two ostensibly left-wing coalition partners have voted for austerity budgets which require massive layoffs of public sector workers.

Also on June 17, the Council of State ruled that the decision to take ERT off the air was illegal. But it was only a partial victory

for workers, as the court said that shutting down the company and sacking all of its staff was lawful.

Samaras offered to restart broadcasts with a smaller staff of less than 200. Democratic Left head Fotis Kouvelis claimed this compromise was all his party wanted, insisting that ERT's TV and radio broadcasts should continue until it is restructured.

Greeks have reacted angrily to the closure of ERT, with thousands descending on its headquarters for a rally organised by the PAME union federation. PAME executive member Christos Katsotis said the

union was struggling for those "employed by the new ERT with despicable labour relations and starvation wages".

"The shrinkage of ERT does not take place for cost saving but in order to provide space for the development of the activity of the big private channels and radio stations," he warned.

ERT journalists are broadcasting on the KKE's Channel 902. But Channel 902's private provider cuts the signal every time it broadcasts a strike announcement on behalf of ERT staff.

(With files from the Morning Star, UK) •

Ghadar centenary events in GTA

The centenary of the founding of the Ghadar Party is being celebrated from June 29 through July 1 in the Greater Toronto Area,

to pay homage to the Great Warriors (Ghadari Babas) who made supreme sacrifices to liberate India from the clutches of the British Empire.

Formed in the USA and Canada in 1913, the Ghadar Party sought to end the British colonial rule of India. [See back issues of PV for background on the Ghadar movement, including Feb. 1-14 and April 1-15, 2013.]

June 29: Ghadar March and Rally in Mississauga, starting from parking lot of Alexander Secondary School facing Malton Community Centre (Morning Star Dr.). After speeches and musical performances, the March will arrive at Greater Punjab Plaza (near Malton Gurdwara) for a rally featuring prominent singers and speakers from Canada and abroad. There will also be book stalls, and an exhibition related to the Ghadar Party and the Babas. Food and soft drinks will be available.

June 30: Drama Fair at the Rose Theatre in Brampton (Queen and Main), 11 am to 5 pm. There will be four plays: *Banda Bahadur* (by Hats-up Team, director Hira Randhawa); *Lray Deen Kay Hayt* (Naiti Theatre Group, director Gurcharan Singh); *Azadi They Jahaz* (Ontario Punjabi Theatre, director Jaspal Dhillon); *Ikk Supnay da Political Murder* (Punjabi Arts Association, director Baljinder Lailna/Sarbjit Arora). Price for a whole-day drama pass is only \$20.

July 1: Ghadar Conference in Brampton, at Loafer's Lake Rec. Centre (30 Loafer's Lake Lane, east of Kennedy, off Sandalwood), 9 am to 6 pm, including lectures: Political Ideology of the Ghadar Movement (Dr. Waryam Singh Sandhu); Journalism of the Ghadar Movement (Dr. Raghbir Singh Sirjana); Poetry of the Ghadar Movement (Dr. Sadhu Singh); Poetry Recitation (4-6 pm) by poets from Canada, North America, England, India, and Pakistan. Entry Free.

GTA residents are encouraged to participate in these events. For further information about the historical celebrations, call 416-735-5554, 416-881-7202, 416-616-4320, 416-892-6171, 647-233-6522. •



MUSIC NOTES

By Wally Brooker

"Do You Hear the People Sing?"

On June 10, shortly after Turkish Prime Minister Erdogan dismissed Taksim Square protesters as "capulcular" (i.e. riff-raff), a "capulcular chorus" performed an English-Turkish version of "Do You Hear the People Sing?" in the square. In the circulating YouTube video the choir stands in front of a banner that reads "Taksim Solidarity." The rousing anthem comes from the 1980 hit "Les Misérables." The perennially-popular musical by Claude-Michel Schönberg and Alain Boublil is based on the Victor Hugo novel, set in France in the 1830s. The song appears in a climactic scene where revolutionary Parisian students and urban poor take a stand on the barricades against the forces of the old regime. The same Turkish YouTube user has also posted a video of protesters surrounding a grand piano and singing the old Italian anti-fascist song "Bella Ciao." To find the story and both videos enter the keywords "Les Mis Turkey" at www.cbc.ca/news.

Alicia Keys in "soul danger"

An open letter from writer Alice Walker to superstar singer Alicia Keys, calling upon her to cancel a July 4 concert in Tel Aviv, was published in May on the website of the US Campaign for the Academic & Cultural Boycott of Israel. In it, the author of "The Color Purple" writes "it would grieve me to know you are putting yourself in danger (soul danger) by performing in an Apartheid country that is being boycotted by many global conscious artists." In June a delegation representing hundreds of organizations presented a petition with 13,000 signatures to the office of the singer's HIV/AIDS foundation Keep a Child Alive. University of New Mexico students have produced an eloquent video combining the singer's current hit "Girl on Fire" with images of Palestinian women peacefully confronting the Israeli military. A recent poll by Black Entertainment Television revealed that 63% of respondents thought Keys should cancel the gig. To learn more visit: www.bdsmovement.net/.

An anthem for USA immigration reform

La Santa Cecilia is a popular LA-based Mexican-American band (named for the patron saint of musicians) that plays a hybrid of styles including cumbia, Afro-Cuban, rock, jazz, and klezmer. Recently they joined forces with filmmaker Alex Rivera and the National Day Laborer Organizing Network (www.ndlon.org) to release *Ice-El Hielo*. Hielo is Spanish for ice - a loaded term for undocumented workers who are constantly harassed by the Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency (ICE). Both song and video sympathetically portray the daily struggles of undocumented immigrants. In fact, the parents of lead singer Marisol Hernandez and accordionist Jose "Pepe" Carlos were both illegal immigrants. In April the band sang *Ice-El Hielo* at a massive immigration rally in Washington and joined in the march to the ICE offices. Bilingual lyrics can be found at www.onlylyrics.com. *Ice-El Hielo* appears on the band's new album "Treinta Dias." For more info: <http://lasantacecilia.com>.

Guitar Centre workers unionize

Last month *Music Notes* carried a story about the struggle of workers to unionize at the Guitar Center's flagship store in Manhattan. The world's largest musical instrument retailer is owned by Mitt Romney's Bain Capital. Working conditions have deteriorated since the corporate bottom-feeder took over the company in 2007. The good news is that Guitar Center workers in Manhattan are celebrating a huge victory. On May 24 they voted by a 27-15 margin to join the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union (RWDSU). The momentum is spreading with elections at Guitar Center stores in Brooklyn and Queens on the horizon. Thanks to their own resolve, and the support of co-workers and customers (including musicians like Steve Earle and Tom Morello), the Guitar Center workers have ensured that their voice will be heard as they negotiate for improved wages, benefits and respect. For more info: www.rwdsu.info/.

Music against Child Labour

Some of the world's leading classical musicians have joined with the International Labour Organization in an initiative to combat child labour. The Music against Child Labour Initiative calls for orchestras, choirs, and musicians of all genres to dedicate a concert between October 2013 and December 2014 to the struggle against child labour. Supporters include renowned conductors Claudio Abbado and Daniel Barenboim, the International Federation of Musicians, and Fundacion Musical Simon Bolivar El Sistema. The "call to batons" was launched, along with the Music Against Child Labour Manifesto, at a June 11 concert in Paris. Signatories point to the 215 million children worldwide who are trapped in child labour, and highlight the transformative power of music and the positive effects of engaging vulnerable children in musical activity. The official beginning of the concert series is scheduled for October 8 in Brasilia, where a concert will open the Third Global Conference Against Child Labour. For more info: www.ilo.org.

TORONTO PRIDE PARADE Sunday, June 30



Join the Communist Party of Canada
and Young Communist League
contingents at this year's parade!

Meet us at 1.30 p.m. at the Parkette, NW corner of Bloor & Church
Further info: Dave Foreman @ 416-960-1465 or dforeman@hotmail.com

Toronto Club Council, CPC and
LGBTQ Commission of CPC-Ont.



La Trova Nuestra

Friday, June 28, 8 pm

"La Peña Nuestra"

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

About Vancouver's "La Trova Nuestra"

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

Brazil: The voice of the people must be heard and acted upon

By Renato Rabelo, National President of the Communist Party of Brazil (PCdoB)

The popular and youth manifestations that are growing and expanding all over the country have a reason, a social cause. For PCdoB, democratic matters are intertwined with social issues. Therefore, for democratic advance to take place, it is precious and auspicious to know through these more authentic manifestations what our people urge for and feel tormented by.

Usually there are greater reasons that build up and surface through apparently simple claims. The fight against high prices for urban transportation, and dissatisfaction with the extremely high investments in the construction of football stadia, are acute manifestations of the stress the population from urban centers in Brazil is undergoing.

Our cities have grown at a fast pace, however, without having adequate structure for such transformation. That caused a concentration of severe social problems, making cities inhospitable for their inhabitants, mainly the ones



Many Brazilians are angry at the cost of hosting the FIFA World Cup while urban infrastructure and transit fall behind.

who live in the outskirts.

The outbreak of these happenings that are spreading throughout the country is a warning. This is an outpouring of real life conditions in the cities, which amongst other problems now have priority in the agenda and must be faced.

We believe that governments that are really democratic and committed to ensuring social advance, that is, the governments that we are leading or somehow participating in, have the duty to look for ways to start addressing these serious urban problems. One of the solutions advocated by the PCdoB Program is an Urban Reform with an integrated development plan, renewal and humanization of the cities. It is a growing demand.

Measures to face the urgent housing issue, which strongly impacts on urban centers, have been taken by President Dilma Rousseff through Minha Casa Minha Vida Program (My House, My Life). This program helps the financing of popular housing. There are also several ongoing projects to solve structural and urban mobility issues through PAC2. The burning issue now is to finance quality mass transportation, enabling citizens to move without having to constantly use cars.

PCdoB will engage in finding the necessary emergency measures to reduce the price of urban transportation fares and to improve the overall efficacy of public transportation. PCdoB will act by using its influence in the social movement and its participation in democratic governments. There must be a joint effort gathering the federal, state and city governments in order to find a way to meet these needs. ●



PCdoB leader Renato Rabelo

Bill C-377 must be stopped....

continued from page 4

business, enabling them to undermine unions, unionized employers and unionized workers at every step. Independent Progressive Conservative Senator Elaine McCoy says Bill C-377 should "not be tossed aside lightly. It should be thrown with great force....for a thousand years...we have been slowly evolving until we have a society that is fair to one and all....This bill violates all of those principles. It violates a 1,000-year-old tradition. It violates the Canadian code of fairness. I think

this bill should be forcefully, forcefully rejected, and I trust we will do that when the time comes."

11. It creates costly, burdensome and unnecessary paperwork and regulations for labour organizations and the Canada Revenue Agency. Bill C-377 seems designed to tie labour organizations in red tape and then to fine them punitively if they don't comply. Set up and compliance will cost both labour organizations and the federal government tens of millions. Every penny spent will reduce the capacity of labour unions to work for better conditions for their members and other Canadians - and federal government spending on this will take away from other public services.

12. It imposes excessive and punitive fines and penalties on unions. Any labour organization that fails to comply with its onerous requirements will be fined \$1,000 a day and up to \$25,000 a year for non-compliance. The Canada Revenue Agency itself estimates it will levy annual fines of \$72-million as a result of this bill, but total fines could amount to over \$600 million a year - for not filing unnecessary paperwork. In comparison, the federal government only collected \$2.4-million in fines over 20 years under

the environmental protection act from corporations - for the very real damages.

Bill C-377 is now at the final stage - third reading in the Senate - before it can receive royal assent and become law. After this, it could become even worse, with additional regulations directly imposed by Harper's Cabinet. Liberal Senators and a few principled independent Conservative Senators have pledged to fight it and/or to significantly amend it. They need your support and the support of at least a dozen other Conservative Senators.

The problems with the bill are so fundamental and severe that no number of amendments can make it a "good bill," just one that is slightly "less bad." At a time when the Senate has come under unprecedented criticism, this Bill provides Senators with a chance to demonstrate some principle and their worth - and for Conservative Senators in particular to show that they are not just pawns of the Prime Minister's Office.

If this bill is rejected, delayed or significantly changed, it will also help in the battle against other anti-labour and anti-democratic laws being planned by Harper and other Conservatives at the federal and provincial level. ●

What's Left

Nanaimo, BC

Moncada Day Celebration, 530 Wakesia St., Sat., July 27, 3-7 pm. Refreshments, salmon BBQ, raffle for People's Voice, admission \$10, ph. Grace Stevens at 250-741-7411 for information.

Vancouver, BC

La Trova Nuestra, evening of Latin American music and socialising, admission \$10, 8 pm, Friday, June 28, Centre for Socialist Education, 706 Clark Drive.

Left Film Night, "The Zenkin Motoyama Strike," Sunday, June 30, 7 pm, Centre for Socialist Education, 706 Clark Drive. For information, call 604-255-2041.

"Salsa for Life", fundraiser presented by "Friends of Rolo", Friday, July 5, doors 6 pm, concert 8 pm, Russian Hall, 600 Campbell Ave., with music by Tabasko, Sumalao, and Rumba Calzada. Tickets \$20, <http://magdafi.wix.com/salsa4life>.

COPE's annual Summer Celebration, Wed., July 10, Vancouver Rowing Club, Stanley Park, tickets \$75, contact sean@cope.bc.ca or 604-600-2731.

Surrey, BC

People's Voice Walk-A-Thon, tentatively scheduled for Sunday, August 18, starting 11 am, at Bear Creek Park. See our next issue for full details, or call 604-543-7179.

Winnipeg, MB

Picnic to support the war resisters, Thursday, July 4, 4:30-8 pm, St. Vital Park, bring potluck food and dishes, ph. 204-233-7116 or 204-792-3371 for details.

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

Toronto, ON

Pride Parade, Sunday, June 30, join the Communist Party/YCL contingent, meet 1:30 pm at the Parkette, corner of Bloor & Church.

Annual People's Voice BBQ, 2-5 pm, Sat., July 6 (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 let us know if you are coming, 416-536-6771 or omayasim@sympatico.ca.

60th Anniversary of Moncada Celebration, Sunday, July 21, 1:00 pm, Lula Lounge, 1585 Dundas St. W, sponsored by CCFA-Toronto, for details visit www.ccfatoronto.ca.

Montreal, QC

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

People's Voice deadlines

August 1-31 issue: Thursday, July 18
September 1-15 issue: Thursday, August 15

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

Rich keep getting richer

The rich are getting richer, and there are more of them. The World Wealth Report, issued by RBC Wealth Management and Capgemini Financial Services, says the number of millionaires globally grew by 1 million, or 9.2 per cent, to 12 million last year after declining in 2011.

The jump of those high-net-worth people, defined as individuals with more than \$1 million (U.S.) to invest, was credited mostly to strength in stock and real estate markets.

North America was home to the most number of millionaires, an estimated 3.73 million, regaining the top spot from Asia-Pacific whose millionaires numbered 3.68 million.

In Canada, the number of millionaires grew by 6.5 per cent in 2012 to 298,000 individuals. Canadian wealth expanded to \$897 billion (U.S.) in 2012, a 6.8 percent increase from 2011.

The amount of wealth controlled by the world's richest rose 10 per cent to \$46.2 trillion (U.S.), well above the pre-economic crisis level of \$40.7 trillion in 2007, and previous high of \$42.7 trillion (U.S.) in 2010.

Overall, global investable wealth is expected to increase to \$55.8 trillion (U.S.) by 2015.

The rich are split into three categories: the millionaires next door, with assets of \$1 million to \$5 million (U.S.), mid-tier millionaires, with assets of \$5-\$30 million (U.S.), and ultra millionaires who have assets exceeding \$30 million (U.S.).

The ultra millionaires represent less than 1 per cent of global high-net-worth individuals, or 111,000, but they control more than one-third of the world's wealth.

(From a report by Vanessa Lu, Toronto Star, June 18, 2013) ●

News for people, not for profits!



Canada's housing crisis can be solved

By Kimball Cariou

Canadians frequently criticize attacks against human rights around the world, and often with good reason. But one of the worst global human rights abuses is also a huge problem here in this country. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights specifically includes the right to housing - but at least 30,000 people in Canada on any given day are homeless. Every year, homelessness affects about 200,000 people across the country, and this crisis is now estimated to cost \$7 billion annually.

A landmark report on the issue paints "a picture of a disaster in communities across the country," according to Tim Richter, one of the authors of *State of Homelessness in Canada: 2013*, and the president of the Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness.

"In a natural disaster, the loss of housing or life happens because of a fire or flood or something like that," he told the media following the mid-June release of the report. "In the unnatural disaster of homelessness, the same things are happening, but it's happening because of poverty, disability, addiction, mental illness and trauma."

Natural disasters are met with emergency response plans to get people back to their normal lives, notes Richter, but the response to homelessness is "stuck in crisis mode".

The study found that on any given night, at least 30,000 people are in homeless or domestic violence shelters, sleeping outside or temporarily housed in places like prisons or hospitals. Another 50,000 are the "hidden homeless," couch-surfing with friends or family because they have nowhere else to go.

A joint effort by the Canadian Homelessness Research Network and the Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness, this is the first attempt by researchers to quantify the problem on a Canada-wide scale, going beyond the "homeless counts" conducted in many communities.

Co-author Tanya Gulliver taught the "Homelessness in Canadian Society" course at Ryerson University from 2003 to

2010. A key figure in the Toronto Disaster Relief Committee, Gulliver writes that "many more Canadians are facing challenges in paying their rent and meeting other basic survival needs, including food."

"I've been working in the homelessness sector for nearly 20 years," says Gulliver, who is excited to be able to quantify homelessness in a meaningful way.

"Yet, even this report is, in a few places, only our best guess," she points out. "It's an informed, well-researched best guess, but the lack of a common definition around homelessness, varying methodologies for counting homeless people and a lack of funding and support for research and evaluation means we are trying to take different sets of numbers and make them all match up. And those numbers show us that homelessness is affecting more Canadians than we might realize."

The 30,000 nightly figure, she says, includes 2,880 unsheltered (outside in cars, parks, on the street); 14,400 in emergency shelters; 4,464 provisionally accommodated (homeless but in hospitals, prison or interim housing); and 7,350 staying in women's anti-violence shelters.

Homelessness is often a very short experience. About 29% of people in this category spend only one night in a shelter and are able to resolve their homelessness crisis with minimal supports.

At the other end of the spectrum, 4,000 to 8,000 people are chronically, long-term homeless, and 6,000 to 22,000 experience repeated episodes of homelessness over a lifetime. While these are just one-seventh of the total homeless population in Canada, they use about 50% of the emergency shelter spaces and consume the most resources (including emergency services and hospital treatment).

"When we think about how much cheaper it is to provide rent supplements, supportive and social housing - not to mention the moral issues of warehousing people in shelters - it's really time that we started focusing on the solutions," says Gulliver.

Other research across North America has repeatedly found that

homelessness is cheaper to fix than to ignore or deal with on an emergency basis.

In a 2005 study comparing four Canadian cities, Steve Pomeroy estimated that it costs \$66,000 to \$120,000 per person per year for

averaging \$134,000 per year. The Foundation has been able to provide housing and support to chronically homeless people for \$10,000 to \$25,000 per year, saving huge amounts of tax dollars.

Gulliver argues that some cities

Another recommendation calls for a "housing-first" approach to ending homelessness.

The study points to initiatives such as the At Home/Chez Soi pilot program in five cities. Backed by \$110 million in federal funding from the Mental Health Commission, this program aims to get homeless people into subsidized housing, and then provide services to address their underlying problems.

The Harper government's latest federal budget includes \$253 million annually over five years, which must be matched by the provinces, to be spent on new construction, renovation, home ownership assistance, rent supplements, shelters and homes for battered spouses.

The budget also commits to five more years of funding for the Homelessness Partnering Strategy, at \$119 million a year, lower than the previous \$135 million a year, with a "housing first" emphasis as discussed above.

But is this all just window dressing to obscure the government's true agenda?

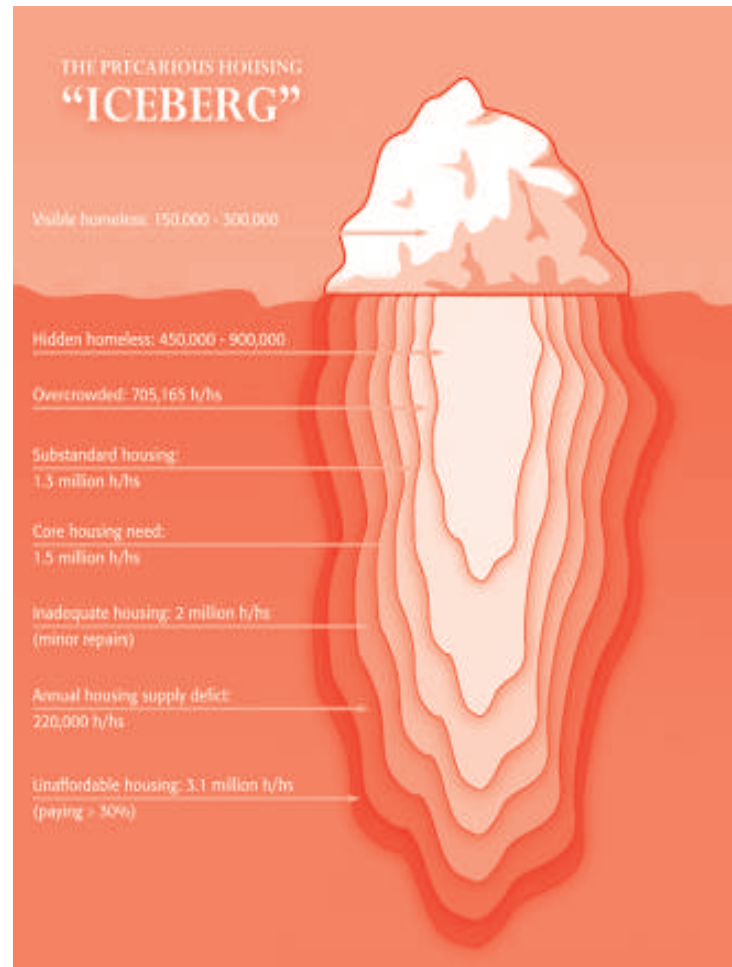
Most anti-poverty advocates and housing researchers point to a long-term withdrawal from social housing by the federal government as the origin of the growth in homelessness. Liberal and Conservative governments alike during the 1980s and '90s slashed support for cooperatives and other social housing options. Canada and the U.S. are now virtually the only major capitalist countries with no national housing strategy. The downloading of federal responsibilities left provinces and municipalities holding the bag for vital social services. Provincial governments froze or reduced social assistance, just as market housing costs began to skyrocket.

This deadly mix of policy changes led to today's crisis, with millions of people stuck in unaffordable, cramped, unhealthy housing situations.

The argument that "we can't afford" decent housing doesn't stand up to real scrutiny. A country which can budget \$70 billion over the next two decades for fighter-bomber jets and massively armed warships could surely decide to make housing a priority instead.

Advocates for the "one-percent solution" argued in the last decade that federal and provincial investments of about \$4 billion per year (about one percent of GDP) could provide adequate housing for all. This would also employ huge numbers of building trades workers, and dramatically cut spending on emergency services for the homeless. But federal investments on such housing instead fluctuate around 0.25% of GDP, far below the level necessary to solve the problem.

Of course this crisis can be solved. But for that, we need a government which puts people's needs ahead of corporate greed. Reviving the "one-percent solution" housing campaign would be a good way to step up public pressure on Parliament. ●



Almost 1.5 million Canadian households (about one-in-eight) lived in core housing need in 2006, according to Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. That same year, more than 3 million households (about one-in-four) paid 30% or more of their income on housing, according to Statistics Canada. The dimensions of precarious housing are seen in this iceberg illustration from the Wellesley Institute's Precarious Housing in Canada 2010 report.

institutional responses to homelessness (e.g. prison, psychiatric hospitals), compared with \$13,000 to \$18,000 for supportive housing.

A Simon Fraser University study in 2006 estimated it costs \$55,000 per person per year to leave someone homeless in British Columbia, versus a housing and support cost of \$37,000.

In 2007, the Calgary Homeless Foundation estimated that chronically homeless people consume emergency services

are making progress. Vancouver has had a 66% reduction in street homelessness since 2008; Edmonton saw a 30% reduction in overall homelessness since 2008; and Toronto reports a 51% decrease in street homelessness since 2006. Alberta has a plan which has led to a 16% province-wide reduction since 2008.

But the reality can be more complicated. In Vancouver, for example, the shocking rise in street homelessness became a hot button topic by the late 1990s, finally compelling city council to take steps to provide more temporary shelter spaces. But the overall numbers of people who lack affordable housing in the most expensive city in Canada remain stubbornly high.

On a wider scale, the number of people in "core housing need" across Canada is huge, estimated at over 3 million by the Wellesley Institute. The situation is most dire in impoverished First Nations communities, which frequently lack decent schools or even clean drinking water.

The *State of Homelessness* report makes recommendations to improve the situation, calling on communities and governments to develop plans to end homelessness, and to increase the supply of affordable housing.

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