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# people's VOICE

## "Arab Spring" for Palestine

See page 12

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## A Workers Program to Defeat the Right-Wing Agenda

*"The election of a majority neo-conservative government is a major threat to those pillars of Canadian society, including public services, that we hold dear such as our health care system, social programs, our public and private pension system and our traditional approach to international relations such as peacekeeping. We need to send a signal to the Harper government: if they attempt to destroy those things that we hold dear, we will respond and we will respond strongly and strategically."*

*More on page 7*

Good jobs.  
Better lives.  
UNIONS make a difference!



## A tale of two conventions at the the Canadian Labour Congress...



*Report on  
page 7*

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### Lying politicians

Few will be shocked by recent WikiLeaks cables showing that the Harper Tories lied about the war in Afghanistan, and that the Chretien Liberals allowed Canadian troops into the Iraq war.

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### Which way: left or right?

"New Labour" is out of office in Britain, but Jack Layton's NDP has now become the Official Opposition. What do these parties really stand for?

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### They told you so...

For nearly 40 years, Japan's Communist MPs have warned that the reckless expansion of nuclear energy could bring disastrous consequences. Sadly, they have been proven correct.

# Postal Workers fighting against concessions

By Kimball Cariou

As this issue of People's Voice went to press, negotiations between Canada Post and the Canadian Union of Postal Workers were going down to the wire.

On May 22, making an attempt to "energize negotiations," CUPW presented a "global offer" to the Canada Post Corporation negotiating committee. The next day, Canada Post management replied that it was preparing a response. These developments meant that the union had not yet given the required 72-hour notice of strike action, leaving May 28 as the earliest date for a potential walkout by the union's 54,000 members.

The CUPW negotiations are seen as the first major test of the new Harper majority government's strategy to roll back the labour

movement. While Canada Post is technically an "arm's length" crown corporation, the company's drive to gut the collective bargaining agreement gains achieved over many years by its employees would signal a wider attack on the wages, benefits and pension rights of all public workers in the federal sector.

One indication of the importance attached to these negotiations by pro-business forces has been the vocal intervention by the Canadian Federation of Independent Business. This far-right lobby group has sent a letter in support of Canada Post's attempt to impose lower wages and pensions for new hires, and to replace the banking of sick days with a new program reducing the ability of postal workers to access sick leave.

In a response, CUPW says, "We do not understand why the

Canadian Federation of Independent Business is encouraging Canada Post to hold fast to bargaining positions, especially in connection with major negotiations issues such as new hires and sick leave. We think your members would be better served by an organization that encouraged bargaining rather than the kind of intransigence that leads to strikes... It may be difficult to get a settlement given the unprecedented number of concessions being demanded by Canada Post, but the union is determined to try. Unfortunately, letters such as yours encourage Canada Post not to try, which will not help our negotiations or your members."

After months of bargaining, Canada Post has proposed a 4-year agreement with wage increases of 1.75%, 1.75%, 1.9% and 2.0%.

For new employees, the company is proposing a starting rate of \$18/hour, which would be 22% less than the current starting rate for a letter carrier. CUPW points out that the wage offer is also well below the annual inflation rate of 3.3%. The union has also stressed that Canada Post has racked up 16 consecutive years of profits, including \$281 million in the 2009 fiscal year.

While the company wants to continue installing new equipment and work methods which threaten the health and safety of its employees, CUPW has called for ergonomic studies prior to such changes, as well as improved rotation of duties and delivery methods.

In another key issue, Canada Post wants to eliminate the impose a Short Term Disability Plan administered by Manulife insurance, which provides for seven personal days per year. Employees with borrowed sick leave credits would have to reimburse Canada Post, and there would be no protection for short term illnesses once employees have exhausted their personal days.

Calling to protect the current sick leave plan, CUPW says the employer should address the reasons for the increasing number of days lost due to workplace injuries.

The union's bargaining position is backed up with a 94.5% strike vote by CUPW members. ●

## COPE Councillors say hard work can ease housing crisis

The numbers of homeless people in Metro Vancouver have remained at the same level as 2010. According to the results of the annual count, released on May 24, about 2700 people are homeless in the wider region, but the numbers are down sharply in the city of Vancouver.

COPE Councillors Ellen Woodsworth and David Cadman pointed to the results as proof that hard work and real funding can make a difference. "What these statistics show is that for the first time ever homelessness numbers have not gone up in Vancouver," said Cadman. "More people are getting shelter, but shelters are only the first step in the housing continuum."

Cadman noted that the increased numbers seen in the sheltered population proves aggressive work

can result in measurable progress. "The next step is to take that same approach, that dedication and hard work, and aggressively start to tackle supportive housing and build affordable rentals for everyone for families, seniors and young people."

"We have 500 individuals who are housed right now because of the Mental Health Commission of Canada's 'At Home' study," said Woodsworth. "We have hundreds more off the street because of Provincial funding of HEAT shelters. When the Feds and Victoria work with us, and provide real resources, we get real results."

But Woodsworth pointed out that the "At Home" study expires in less than two years. "The question now is whether these positive results will convince senior levels of government that a

long term, fully-funded, housing strategy is the best next step to end homelessness once and for all."

Both councillors stressed that COPE will continue to press hard on the next critical steps in creating affordability in Vancouver, including building more non-market rentals for new families and seniors and creating more space at the low end of market rentals. ●

### Poetry for People's Voice

Vancouver's Peter Marcus, a retired hospital worker and trade unionist, is selling a new edition of his booklet of poems, *A Small Lamp*, with the proceeds going to the People's Voice Fund Drive. This edition includes some new works, including his recent poem *Pyramid Scheme*, inspired by the popular uprising which drove Egyptian president Hosni Mubarak from office earlier this year. *A Small Lamp* is available for \$5 from People's Co-op Bookstore, 1391 Commercial Drive, Vancouver, or directly from Peter Marcus, #213-675 East 5th Ave., Vancouver, V5T 4P1, email <pjmarcus@telus.net>.

## Here's my contribution to the PV Fund Drive!

Enclosed please find my donation of \$\_\_\_\_\_ to the 2011 People's Voice Press Fund Drive.

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## People's Voice Fund Drive - 52.8%

### Working class solidarity, not scapegoating!

Looking through this issue of People's Voice, you can see an important theme. This newspaper exists to help build working class solidarity, lifting the daily struggle for better jobs and working conditions towards a wider movement for a socialist Canada.

In contrast, the corporate media constantly attacks trade unions, workers, immigrants, young people, racialized communities, LGBT people - any convenient target will do in their profiteering drive to divide and conquer Canadians. People's Voice will continue to do everything possible to fight such racist, anti-working class scapegoating, and to unite our common struggles. But we need your contributions to help keep publishing!

After taking a break to campaign in the recent federal election, People's Voice relaunched our 2011 Fund Drive in the previous issue. Donations have begun to arrive again, bringing us over the hump, with about 53% of our \$50,000 Fund Drive target now received. Ontario has taken the lead, with 62.3% of achieved, or \$13,673 raised towards

their goal of \$21,600. Alberta is now in second place, with \$1855 raised, or 54.6% of their \$3400 target. Our Newfoundland/Labrador supporters are still half-way towards their \$400 goal, and Quebec is at 49%, with \$245 out of \$500 raised. Next is Saskatchewan (\$350 out of \$800, or 43.6%). British Columbia has made some progress, reaching 42.3%, or 8541 turned in on their target of \$20,000. The Atlantic region has sent in \$325 out of \$1200, or 27%, and another \$300 has come from friends outside Canada.

Two important B.C. fundraisers are coming up, starting with the "revolutionary bus tour" organized on May 29

by our Vancouver East supporters.

Doors open at 6 pm, June 4, for the 19th Annual PV Victory Banquet at the Russian Hall, 600 Campbell Ave., Vancouver. Tickets are just \$15, and the Banquet features a special media presentation and a raft of door prizes. Look at the ads on page 11 for more details!

Next issue, we'll announce the date of our most significant annual event, the PV Walk-A-Thon organized each summer by our Lower Fraser Club supporters in Surrey's Bear Creek Park. Each year, the Walk-A-Thon raises \$3000 or more, and participants get to feast on a mouth-watering array of south Asian culinary delights. Watch for details, and mark it on your summer calendar!

Once again this year, we offer a gift in appreciation of your solidarity. For each donation of \$100, contributors will have their choice of a PV 2011 Calendar, a framed portrait of a revolutionary fighter, or a copy of "Great October," a short DVD dedicated to the Great October Socialist Revolution of 1917.



# Tories and Liberals both lied about war plans

By Kimball Cariou

The latest diplomatic cables released by the WikiLeaks project to major news outlets show that Stephen Harper's minority Conservative government lied to Canadians about its Afghanistan policies, and that the Chretien Liberals gave covert support to the U.S. aggression against Iraq. Neither story will surprise most anti-war activists, but the news is likely to help reinforce public opposition against the war in Afghanistan.

According to a U.S. diplomatic cable released by WikiLeaks to CBC News, by early 2009 the Harper Tories were already reconsidering the 2011 end date for the Afghan mission. While denying such plans, a cabinet meeting in March 2009 "agreed that 'all options are back on the table' with respect to Canada's military role in Afghanistan after 2011," the March 17 secret cable says.

The cable quotes from conversations held with a senior adviser from the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade.

"It will take time for the government's public rhetoric to catch up to this 'new reality,' however, requiring some 'patience' on the part of allies," the senior adviser apparently told U.S. officials on March 16. Allies should not "publicly press" Canada to extend its troop deployment past 2011, he urged.

Not surprisingly, these comments encouraged U.S. officials to hope that Harper might keep the Canadian combat force in Kandahar beyond 2011. The mission had already been extended once beyond the original 2009 end date, in part because of feuding in Parliament between the opposition parties.

The fly in the ointment for the pro-war government, of course, was the "increasingly dubious Canadian public," the cable says, noting that a decision to extend the end-date would be a "political goldmine" for the Liberals.

At the same time, the officials speculated that upcoming U.S. policy reviews on Afghanistan might change the "dynamics enough to give this government - or its successor - enough political flexibility" to continue a combat role after 2011.

However, Canadian public opinion has remained solidly against continuing the military mission. While the opposition parties ignored Afghanistan during the May 2 federal election, even the Harper Tories did not dare present extension of the Kandahar mission as an option.

All the major parties in Parliament support the current official line, which claims that a small number of Canadian troops will remain in Kabul to train Afghan security forces. Recent information suggests this scenario is already changing. The number of Canadians to be engaged in training will be over 1,000, and their activity will extend beyond the capital into several other cities.



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The anti-war movement is warning that this "mission creep" inevitably means that Canadian troops will continue to kill and die for several more years in Afghanistan, fighting to prop up a corrupt government of warlords and reactionary fundamentalists.

The duplicity of Canadian politicians was also revealed in another WikiLeaks document, showing that Canada promised "clandestine" military support for the invasion of Iraq.

On March 17, 2003, bowing to massive public pressure in Quebec and the rest of the country, PM Chretien told the House of Commons that Canadian forces would not join the U.S.-led "coalition of the willing." The occupation of Iraq began two days later.

But on the same day, Canada was secretly singing a different tune. A confidential note written by a U.S. diplomat states that following a March 17 meeting of Canadian, U.S. and British officials in Ottawa, Foreign Affairs representative James Wright privately "emphasized" that Canadian naval and air forces could be "discreetly" put to use during the assault on Iraq.

At that time, Canada had warships, aircraft and over 1,200 naval personnel already in the Strait of Hormuz at the mouth of the Persian Gulf. The Canadians were part of Operation Enduring Freedom, the so-called "war on terror" launched by the U.S. after Sept. 11, 2001.

"While for domestic political reasons... the GOC [Government of Canada] has decided not to join in a U.S. coalition of the willing... they are also prepared to be as helpful as possible in the military margins," the briefing note states.

At the time, the Chretien government said a "few" Canadian soldiers embedded with the U.S. and British militaries would be allowed to remain, even if they wound up in Iraq. In reality, these soldiers, including Canadian general Walt Natynczyk, were deeply involved in war preparations.

In 2004, Natynczyk became deputy commander of 35,000 U.S. soldiers and other occupation forces in Iraq. Now Canada's chief of defence staff, Natynczyk was part of the team of senior U.S. military brass which helped prepare for the invasion from a mobile command in Kuwait. ●

## Canadians demand electoral reform



Canadians in ten cities took part in the National Day of Action for Electoral Reform held on May 14. Backed by Fair Vote Canada, the rallies were sparked by the distorted outcome of the May 2 federal election. While Stephen Harper's Conservatives gained just 1.8% over their 2008 results, taking 39.6% of the popular vote, this small increase won another 24 seats and a majority in Parliament. In a proportional representation system, the Tory vote gains would have won only 6 new seats, leaving Harper in a minority position in Parliament. Instead, the PM now has an obedient majority in the Commons and in the Senate, which has been packed with unelected Conservatives, giving him virtually a free hand to impose right-wing policies which were rejected by three-fifths of Canadian voters. (Photo from the Toronto rally by Ed Bil.)

## Mining justice rally in Vancouver



The Mining Justice Alliance of solidarity activists and organizations held a week of action and education from May 14-19 to expose the social and environmental impacts of Vancouver-based mining companies. Local events in Vancouver were coordinated with a network that includes communities affected by mining in Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Chile, and Canada. About 200 people took part in a May 18 protest at the annual meeting of Goldcorp, one of Canada's biggest mining companies. Led by the local Carnival Band, demonstrators marched to the Convention Centre, which also houses offices of the Canada Pension Plan, a major investor in destructive mining companies. While protesters took over the main floor of the building, supportive shareholders presented a special resolution calling to suspend operations at Goldcorp's Marlin mine in Guatemala, as recommended by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, a branch of the Organization of American States. For information, see <http://miningjusticealliance.wordpress.com>. (Photo: K. Cariou)

## Changes to "Grant's Law" put profits first

The so-called "family-friendly" government of British Columbia is taking steps to weaken regulations which were intended to protect retail workers employed on late-night shifts. Jim Sinclair, president of the BC Federation of Labour, has called on the Workers Compensation Board to reject amendments that would weaken the working alone regulation.

"Grant's Law," B.C.'s late night retail working alone regulation, was adopted following the killing of 25 year old gas station employee Grant DePatie. The regulation included prepayment for all gasoline purchases, as well as protective barriers, or staffing by at least two workers between 10 pm and 6 am. But the implementation of these laws was delayed, postponed and may now be further weakened after lobbying by late night retailers who want a lower cost third option.

"When the working alone regulation was introduced we felt B.C. had taken an important first step towards making late night retail workers safer," says Sinclair. "The delays in implementation have endangered workers. Now a group of retailers wants to water down the regulation by introducing a

low cost, ineffective third option. Instead of wasting money opposing the regulation, these retailers should invest in the safety of their workers."

"Six years after Grant's death it is hard to believe that late night retailers are still delaying and opposing these low cost measures that would make late night retail workers safer," says Grant's father

Doug DePatie, who helped spark the labour campaign for the law. "This is an insult to Grant's legacy. This regulation needs to be toughened up not weakened by a small group of late night retailers."

Late night surveys conducted by the Federation have found many late night retail employees continue to work alone and are often the victims of workplace violence. ●

## Air Canada union gets strong strike mandate

Air Canada's 3,800 customer and call-centre agents voted overwhelmingly to go on strike by June 13. The members of Canadian Auto Workers Local 2002 have been without a contract since Feb. 28. They voted 98% on May 19 to support the union's strike mandate. While the company has threatened to implement a "contingency plan" to book flights in the event of a strike, CAW President Ken Lewenza said, "with this strong strike vote, our members have clearly demonstrated that they've had enough of being taken for granted by Air Canada. What we're looking for at the bargaining table is a fair and equitable settlement, not the many concessions and the destruction of our pension plan like Air Canada is demanding."

The news came one day after the Air Canada Pilots Association voted down a tentative agreement, with nearly 67 per cent of the ballots cast opposing the deal. Air Canada must also negotiate new contracts this year with its other unions, including the International Association of Machinists & Aerospace Workers, which represents its ground workers and mechanics. ●

# EDITORIALS

## Time for Palestinian freedom

As this issue goes to press, events in the Middle East continue to unfold rapidly. Pressure is mounting on Israel to step back from its apartheid-style domination of the Palestinians.

Within days, the second Freedom Flotilla is expected to sail, with the goal of breaking Israel's inhumane and illegal naval blockade of Gaza. We salute the courageous Flotilla activists, including those on the *Tahrir* (Liberation), purchased through the collective contributions of thousands of supporters in Canada.

The Flotilla and the recent marches by Palestinians upon the borders of Israel are powerful expressions of global rejection of the Zionist project of ever-expanding occupation. Even the President of the United States, Israel's most important ally, has called to accept the 1967 borders as a starting point for genuine negotiations.

Barack Obama's recent statements mark a potentially important geopolitical shift, but peace in the Middle East cannot be achieved without justice. In particular, the relevant resolutions of the United Nations on this conflict must be accepted by Israel and its U.S. imperialist protector. The vast expansion of Israeli settlements into Palestinian territories must be ended. The Palestinians driven out of their ancestral homes and lands during and after the Zionist terrorist Nakba of 1948 must have the right of return. The status of East Jerusalem as the capital of a truly independent Palestinian state must be recognized.

Today, the Harper government stands virtually alone as a defender of the most viciously anti-Palestinian elements of the Israeli state. This policy does nothing to win peace, or even to advance its alleged aims of protecting Israel. Solidarity with the Palestinian people must be combined with stronger efforts to reverse Canada's shameful policy of unconditional support for the murderous Netanyahu regime.

## Steps forward... and back

The struggle to make police forces accountable to the people of Canada who pay their salaries saw both gains and setbacks during recent weeks.

One victory was the decision by the government of British Columbia to establish an independent process to review cases of police violence. For decades, cops who kill in British Columbia have been immune against any serious penalty. Their crimes are "investigated" by members of other police forces, rarely producing any result more dire than dismissal, especially when the victim is Aboriginal. After a growing number of police homicides in B.C. in recent years, the public demand for civilian review could not be denied any longer. However, the details of the new process have yet to be announced.

On the downside, prosecutors in B.C. will not lay murder charges against the four RCMP officers responsible for the 2007 taser killing of Polish immigrant Robert Dziekanski. Why? "No reasonable likelihood of conviction." In our opinion, the real reason is that a jury would likely have convicted these brutal cops, further undermining support for the RCMP.

Meanwhile, Ontario's Special Investigations Unit says it cannot identify officers involved in a G20 arrest that left Dorian Barton with a broken arm. Civilian witnesses told the SIU that Barton, who was taking pictures of mounted police officers, was struck with a riot shield and then hit with a baton after he fell to the ground. Photos were shown to 11 officers, but apparently none could identify the perpetrator. Even with a civilian-based review process, the "boys in blue" and the politicians who support them will invariably close ranks to protect violent, abusive cops.

The lesson? Despite some steps forward, Canada is far from reaching the goal of police forces under genuine civilian control.

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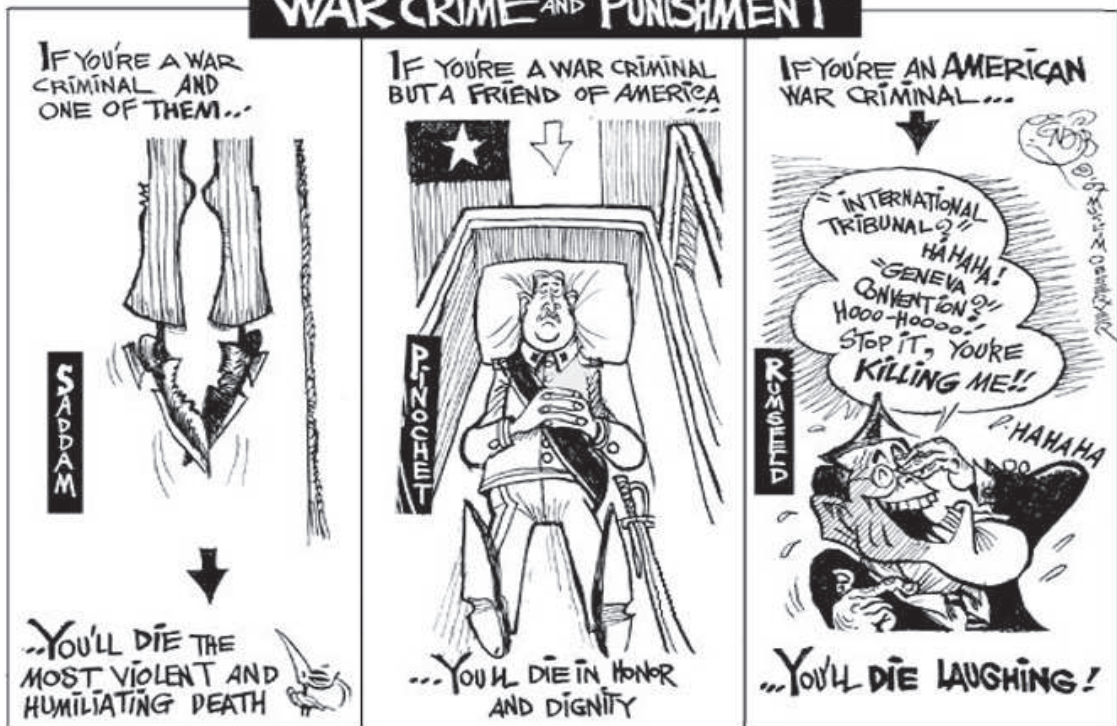
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## LETTERS

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

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## WAR CRIME AND PUNISHMENT



## SPEAKING FRANKLY

## Responsibility to Protect - the cases of Libya and Ivory Coast

By Prof. Marjorie Cohn,  
Global Research, May 16,  
2011

The United States, France and Britain [and Canada! - Ed.] invaded Libya with cruise missiles, stealth bombers, fighter jets and attack jets. Although NATO has taken over the military operation, U.S. President Barack Obama has been bombing Libya with Hellfire missiles from unmanned Predator drones. The number of civilians these foreign forces have killed remains unknown. This military campaign was ostensibly launched to enforce United Nations Security Council Resolution 1973 in order to protect civilians in Libya.

In addition, the United Nations and France have been bombing the Ivory Coast to protect civilians against violence by Laurent Gbagbo, who refuses to cede power to the newly elected president after a disputed election. UN Secretary Ban Ki-Moon insists that the United Nations is "not a party to the conflict." France, former colonial ruler of Ivory Coast, has over 1,500 troops stationed there. Ivory Coast is the world's second largest coffee grower and biggest producer of cocoa. The bombing of Ivory Coast is being undertaken to enforce Security Council Resolution 1975 to protect civilians there.

The UN Charter does not permit the use of military force for humanitarian interventions. The military invasions of Libya and Ivory

Coast have been justified by reference to the Responsibility to Protect doctrine.

The Responsibility to Protect is contained in the General Assembly's Outcome Document of the 2005 World Summit. It is not enshrined in an international treaty nor has it ripened into a norm of customary international law. Paragraph 138 of that document says each individual State has the responsibility to protect its populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing, and crimes against humanity. Paragraph 139 adds that the international community, through the United Nations, also has "the responsibility to use appropriate diplomatic, humanitarian and other peaceful means, in accordance with Chapters VI and VIII of the Charter, to help protect populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity."

Chapter VI of the Charter requires parties to a dispute likely to endanger the maintenance of international peace and security to "first of all, seek a solution by negotiation, enquiry, mediation, conciliation, arbitration, judicial settlement, resort to regional agencies or arrangements, or other peaceful means of their own choice." Chapter VIII governs "regional arrangements," such as NATO, the Arab League, and the African Union. The chapter specifies that regional arrangements "shall make every effort to achieve pacific settlement of local disputes through such regional

arrangements..."

It is only when peaceful means have been tried and proved inadequate that the Security Council can authorize action under Chapter VII of the Charter. That action includes boycotts, embargoes, severance of diplomatic relations, and even blockades or operations by air, sea or land.

The Responsibility to Protect doctrine grew out of frustration with the failure to take action to prevent the genocide in Rwanda, where a few hundred troops could have saved myriad lives. But the doctrine was not implemented to stop Israel from bombing Gaza in late 2008 and early 2009, which resulted in a loss of 1,400 Palestinians, mostly civilians.

Security Council Resolution 1973 begins with the call for "the immediate establishment of a ceasefire." It reiterates "the responsibility of the Libyan authorities to protect the Libyan population" and reaffirms that "parties to armed conflicts bear the primary responsibility to take all feasible steps to ensure the protection of civilians. The resolution authorizes UN Member States "to take all necessary measures ... to protect civilians and civilian populated areas" of Libya.

But instead of pursuing an immediate ceasefire, immediate military action was taken instead. The military force exceeds the bounds of the "all necessary measures" authorization. "All necessary measures" should first have been

see RESPONSIBILITY, p. 11

## 19th Annual People's Voice Victory Banquet

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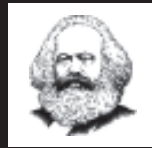
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## Marxist Theory

# From Britain: The ongoing demise of social democracy

By Steve McGiffen,  
Morning Star (UK)

European centre-left leaders gathered recently in Oslo to discuss their difficulties in winning power, and their inability to do anything with it once they've got it.

Patrick Diamond, an author of Labour's last manifesto, believes that recent local electoral success "cannot disguise the governing crisis which threatens Labour's very survival as a party of power." This crisis is not confined to Britain.

Centre-left parties hold office in Norway, Greece, Spain and Portugal, but only in Norway do their policies bear any resemblance to social democracy - the political philosophy behind the movement which brought us the welfare state, low rates of poverty and a code of values based on equality, solidarity and dignity.

This may be because the Norwegian government includes a party to the left of the social democrats or it may be because as a non-member of the EU, the country's rulers have a bit more space to determine policies than do those of the 27 countries bound hand and foot by the neoliberal Lisbon Treaty.

A recent poll conducted in the US, Britain, Germany and Sweden found that the vast majority of people in those countries do not believe that governments can stand up to vested interests, while sizeable minorities - almost three in 10 in Britain - are sceptical of any possibility that governments can be effective in bringing about positive social change.

This is hardly surprising when governments of the centre-left have failed to reproduce anything like the achievements of social democracy of the post-war years. The Labour Party and its sister organisations have failed to challenge the logic of neoliberalism.

Take the financial crisis and the economic crisis which it provoked. The problem began with a US subprime mortgage crisis which was the result of a process of national and international deregulation of financial services which centre-left parties might have been expected to resist.

After all there is nothing particularly radical in believing that consumers - both public and private - as well as honest investors should be protected from the unscrupulous and the greedy. Instead, nominally social democratic leaders were amongst the most enthusiastic advocates of global financial anarchy.

Once the system collapsed, governments bailed out the very institutions most culpable in bringing the crisis about. The result was a wave of destruction caused by the private sector being magically transformed into a crisis of government debt. The people's money was used to ensure that the people's enemies continue to sleep off their champagne suppers under silken sheets.

In Britain, the government is not just venal and absolutely unrepresentative of the country's people. It is also incompetent, floundering into an electoral



Under Tony Blair, Britain's "New Labour" party was a close ally of US imperialism. Has a change of leaders shifted this relationship?

trouncing, the junior partner staring into the abyss of total meltdown. Yet there is absolutely no sense that when people vote against this government they are voting for anything at all.

When I first voted Labour, in 1974 at the age of 19, I had a clear idea that the party stood for a gradualist approach to social progress. Although it was clearly not going to lead Britain to a glorious socialist future it was all we had on an electoral level.

Blair transformed it into a fully bourgeois party with only nominal links to the working class. This has been demonstrated by the Labour leadership's failure to promote a social democratic response to the intensified class war unleashed in

the wake of the crisis.

In some ways this is puzzling. Labour consistently shunned real left politics, ostensibly on the grounds that they would not have been popular with sufficient voters.

Whether this was really the case in the past or not is debatable, but it is surely the case that a programme of financial reform would - as the global economy began to fall apart, taking people's jobs with it - have been popular. A Keynesian programme including additional massive investment and public ownership of banks would have been capable of mobilising broad support. Proving to people that the state can stand up for their interests in the face of the concentrated power - the inevitable

product of deregulated markets - could have restored faith in democracy.

There are whole areas of public life which are being undermined by cynicism, corruption and that great British disease, nepotism. This could have been tackled by a programme of reform which could have been carried out at no great expense.

The survey cited above also showed that people associate the centre-left with high taxation but that they do not object to taxes in principle. It's just that they want value for money.

Taxation to strengthen public services, education and health care has majority support. Most people in western Europe and Britain are social democrats even if they don't know it. Survey after survey has shown that people want a strong welfare state, healthcare accessible to all, sound pensions and a good system of education.

Labour does not heed this because it is now, as much as the Tories, a representative of big capital and not of working people at all. It does not heed it because it is unwilling and unable to challenge the dictatorship of the European Central Bank and the European Commission.

For socialists to support the Labour Party is to indulge in a pessimistic nostalgia which has no real relationship to the world as it is now. Parliament itself is no longer an agent capable of bringing about meaningful social change.

Electoral politics in the context of modern Britain can only ever be protest politics.

However movements are stirring - UK Uncut, the refusal of students to lie down and see their education and their future prospects blighted, the emerging mass movement to save the health service - which promise to be far more effective than the passive strategy of putting a cross next to the name of the candidate whose party will, you hope, close down the fewest hospitals. ●

## But what does Layton's NDP stand for?

By Thomas Walkom,  
National Affairs Columnist,  
Toronto Star, May 11, 2011

The Liberal Party is under the spotlight and deservedly so. It is confused and rudderless. It appears to have no aim other than winning power. It lacks a reason for being.

All of this was made starkly clear in the federal election. What is less obvious is that the New Democrats - ostensibly major winners on May 2 - suffer similar problems.

Torain on the NDP parade might seem churlish. Yes, the New Democrats won big. Yes, they finally made a breakthrough in Quebec. Yes, party leader Jack Layton ran a skilled and graceful campaign.

But who are they? What direction would they take if they did win power?

We know that the NDP isn't a socialist party. It hasn't been for decades. But is it a social democratic party? If so, what does that mean in 2011?

The ideological uncertainty of the NDP has heightened under Layton's leadership. As a young, municipal politician, Layton didn't shy away from controversy. In 1984, he was famously arrested for handing out pro-union pamphlets in Toronto's Eaton Centre.

But by 2003, the grand gestures

were gone. Instead, he won his party's leadership by promising to be practical, to win more seats and to increase the NDP's appeal among younger voters.

In all of these areas he has succeeded. His optimistic message

other voices....

of practical solutions for working families resonated particularly well in this campaign.

Yet at the same time, the overall direction of the NDP under Layton has been harder to pin down. His parliamentary caucus does back the Canadian Labour Congress' call for a vastly improved Canada Pension Plan. But otherwise, labour seems largely invisible - this in a party the unions helped create.

Certainly, there were few hints of either labour or the left in the party's 2011 election platform. In fact, the central economic theory behind that platform was a very conservative one: The best way to create jobs is through tax cuts for business.

The only difference between this position and that of Stephen Harper's Conservatives was that Layton focused on small rather than large business.

In the Commons, all parties are

opportunistic. But the NDP under Layton has been unusually so - attacking the government at every turn without attempting to determine if its various critiques contradict one another, settling for the easiest or most popular position rather than one best aligned with its principles.

The NDP had little to say in 2005 when Canada decided to send troops into Afghanistan's Kandahar province. Only when opposition started to mount publicly did it come out against the war.

Similarly, and with almost no debate, the NDP joined other parties in quickly approving Harper's decision this year to make war on Libya.

In 2005, it sacrificed the very national child care scheme it had long advocated in order to bring down Paul Martin's Liberal government.

If the NDP had a coherent overall game plan, none of this might matter. Democratic politics is complicated. Even Harper's Conservatives take one step back for every two forward.

But Harper also has something larger in mind. He wants to transform Canada into a different kind of society, where collective action through government is minimized, where markets rule and where individuals are given freer rein to accumulate as much as they can.

Does the NDP these days have

an overarching notion of where the country should go and how it can get there? If so, I don't see it.

Rather its aim seems merely to become the Liberals. This, as the Liberals themselves have demonstrated, is not enough. ●

**Champagne and Meatballs**

BERT WHYTE  
edited and with an introduction by LARRY HANNANT

978-1-926836-08-9 paperback  
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Active for over forty years with the Communist Party of Canada, Bert Whyte was a journalist, an underground party organizer and soldier during World War II, and a press correspondent in Beijing and Moscow. *Champagne and Meatballs*, brought to light and edited by historian Larry Hannant, is Whyte's irreverent and informative history and biography, accompanied by a wink of his eye—the left one, of course.

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# Japan's Communists warned of nuclear power risks

*From Akahata, the daily paper of the Japanese Communist Party (abridged)*

The ongoing crisis at the Fukushima No. 1 Nuclear Power Plant has sharply raised concerns regarding the construction of nuclear power plants. The Japanese Communist Party has called on successive governments to make a drastic change in the atomic energy administration and has opposed additional construction plans together with concerned citizens. The JCP's consistent stance is crucial for Japan to take appropriate measures to prevent future accidents.

## The "safety myth"

The biggest issue of Japan's nuclear power administration is that it is based on the "safety myth," a lie that instills the belief that serious accidents emitting a vast amount of radiation are unlikely to occur. No other country has clung to this myth so blindly and built so many nuclear plants in earthquake zones.

In January 1976, then JCP Secretariat Head Fuwa Tetsuzo pointed out in the Diet [Japan's parliament], "Nuclear power is a dangerous and unproven technology with great potential risks. Development of nuclear power generation must provide safety arrangements as strong as technology can offer. Otherwise, it can bring about a very dangerous outcome."

At that time, the government launched a project to build 50 nuclear power reactors capable of generating 49 million kilowatts of electricity. The JCP opposed the reckless plan on the grounds that safety must be given the highest priority.

In 1979, a partial meltdown of the reactor core occurred at the Three Mile Island nuclear power plant. Fuwa, at the 1980 Diet discussion, cited a report compiled by the US President's Commission on the accident, which stated, "[T]he belief that nuclear power plants are sufficiently safe grew into a conviction."

Introducing the report, which stresses that "this attitude must be changed to one that says nuclear power is by its very nature potentially dangerous," Fuwa revealed the dangerous nature of the "safety myth".

Nuclear power advocates repeatedly made statements asserting that nuclear power is safe. Suita Tokuo, head of the Cabinet Office Nuclear Safety Commission, stated that an accident as serious as the one at Three Mile Island "would be highly unlikely to occur in Japan." Arisawa Hiromi, who led the Japan Atomic Industrial Forum at that time, said the emergency core cooling system for nuclear reactors is actually "overdesigned".

JCP Chair Shii Kazuo stated on March 23, "Now is the time for the Japanese government to stop promoting the 'safety myth', sincerely reveal the dangers of atomic energy before the public, and create an honest and scientific nuclear energy administration that takes thoroughgoing measures to secure citizens' safety."

In 1976, Fuwa warned, "Japan's national safety will face a crisis" with the construction of the many

proposed additional nuclear power plants.

At a Diet deliberation in February 1981, Fuwa showed that nuclear power plants in Fukushima, Miyagi, Niigata, Shizuoka, Ehime,

**"Nuclear power is a dangerous and unproven technology with great potential risks. Development of nuclear power generation must provide safety arrangements as strong as technology can offer. Otherwise, it can bring about a very dangerous outcome." - JCP leader Fuwa Tetsuzo, 1976**

Fukui and Shimane prefectures are all located in areas susceptible to massive earthquakes on active faults. "No other country in the world is building nuclear power stations on such dangerous active earthquake faults," said Fuwa, calling for the construction plan to be retracted and all existing plants to be thoroughly inspected.

In response, the government and electric companies made some improvements in safety features, including increasing quake-resistant capabilities, but refused to cancel the massive development plan.

Since the 2007 earthquake that hit Niigata Prefecture caused serious damage to the Kashiwazaki-Kariwa plant, three reactors are still shut down. The latest earthquake triggered a major crisis at the Fukushima No. 1 plant and also caused the suspension of the operation of the Onagawa plant in Miyagi Prefecture.

## Warning of loss of supply

The crisis at the Fukushima plant was caused by the destruction of its cooling system and the loss of electricity supply due to the massive earthquake and tsunami. JCP Lower House member Yoshii Hidekatsu warned of these risks years ago.

On March 1, 2006 at a House of Representatives Budget Committee workshop, Yoshii cited the examples of the massive tsunami that followed major earthquakes in Chile (May 1960), Sumatra (December 2004), and the Sanriku Coast of Japan (June 1896). Pointing out that the Sanriku tsunami reached a recorded height of 38 metres, he proposed that the government seriously consider the risks and take appropriate measures.

Yoshii introduced the worst-case scenario following a tsunami with a major undertow: nuclear reactors will not be able to utilise seawater for cooling due to the fall of sea level for a long time, leading to a core meltdown. "A case similar to the Chernobyl disaster must be always kept in mind when designing countermeasures," he said.

In response, Nuclear and Industrial Safety Agency Director General Hirose Kenkichi stated that nuclear power plants are already designed to secure the necessary seawater and to cool their reactors, and denied the need to take further measures.

A possible loss of electricity was pointed out by Yoshii at a Lower House Economy and Industry Committee meeting in 2010. He stated that a massive earthquake could destroy both the external electric supply and the in-house power generation of a nuclear power plant at the same

time. "What would happen when the backup cooling system fails due to the loss of both external supply and in-house power generation must be examined," stressed Yoshii, calling on the

government to urgently plan for such worse case scenarios.

After the latest disaster, Prime Minister Kan Naoto stated, "It is undeniable that we had a weak understanding [of the effects of tsunamis]. It will be a problem if the present standards for tsunami preparedness continue to be set in accordance with a low tsunami height," admitting that the ongoing nuclear crisis was caused by the government and electric



companies which promoted and continued to adhere to the "safety myth" of nuclear energy.

## Call for independent regulatory body

Japan's nuclear safety measures fall far behind the rest of the world. The fundamental cause of this problem is the lack of an independent regulatory body. Although the Nuclear Safety Commission is an independent body, its role is limited due to an insufficient number of staff and inadequate authority.

Presenting the JCP proposal regarding safety control measures on nuclear energy, Fuwa Tetsuzo in 1976 said as follows: "It is necessary for the government to urgently create an independent safety control organisation separated from the promoter of nuclear power generation. Like in other countries such as the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany and France, this independent body should take responsibility for the entire process of nuclear power generation from building a nuclear power plant to disposing used fuels."

Successive Japanese governments avoided establishing an independent regulatory authority. They wanted the construction of more nuclear plants as demanded by Japanese electric power companies and the US nuclear power industries. The other reason is that if a regulatory body launches its activity to control nuclear safety, it will impose tighter regulations on US nuclear-powered

aircraft carriers and submarines visiting Japanese ports.

In 1974, Fuwa revealed that a private institution for chemical analysis submitted fabricated data on radiation leaked from US nuclear-powered submarines. After that, US nuclear-powered ships stopped entering Japanese ports for 183 days. Following this, the government partially improved the system, monitoring radiation near nuclear power plants and seaports in which the US nuclear-powered vessels enter.

In response to requests made by residents and researchers and to the JCP's continuous demands, the government in 1978 established the Nuclear Safety Commission, whose actual working-level section was placed in the former Science and Technology Agency. However, it had no permanent member in its special committees, in contrast to the US Nuclear Regulatory Commission consisting

Commission to the Cabinet Office. However, all members of its special committees, except five nuclear safety commissioners, are temporary members. In addition, the Nuclear and Industrial Safety Agency (NISA) is placed under the nuclear-promoting Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, although NISA should play a part in controlling nuclear safety.

In the Fukushima crisis, NISA is only releasing reports by Tokyo Electric Power Co, failing to play the role required by the international convention on nuclear safety.

## Plans to construct more reactors

JCP Chair Shii Kazuo has visited the disaster-hit areas and victims and made representations to the government three times. He has urged the government to respond to urgent demands of affected municipalities and their residents and to change its nuclear power administration drastically.

On March 31, Shii met with Prime Minister Kan Naoto to hand over the "JCP proposal in the aftermath of the Great East Japan Disaster" and said, "The government should drastically review its nuclear power administration and energy policy." When Shii said the government must stop the construction of more than 14 nuclear reactors under its "basic national energy development plan", Kan replied, "I will reconsider the plan to build 14 more nuclear reactors. When doing so, going back to the beginning is one option." He also expressed his intention to revise the government energy policy fundamentally.

The JCP proposal states that the Fukushima crisis is "a human-generated disaster caused by the irresponsible attitude of the atomic energy administration, which has promoted the 'safety myth' of nuclear energy and blindly pushed for more nuclear power generation without implementing necessary measures to ensure a modicum of safety."

In the proposal, the JCP calls for: an implementation of a nuclear power administration which breaks away from the "safety myth" and is fully aware of the danger of nuclear energy; a thorough inspection of all reactors and a cancellation of the planned construction of more nuclear reactors and the nuclear-fuel recycling program that uses plutonium; and a separation between regulation and promotion of nuclear power generation and an establishment of an independent regulatory organ with strong authority. ●

of about 1,900 experts and full-time staff.

In his one-on-one debate with the Prime Minister in November 1999, Fuwa asked, "The Convention on Nuclear Safety stipulates that a regulatory body should be separated from those concerned with the promotion of nuclear energy. In Japan, which organisation is a regulatory body and which is a promoter?"

In his response, Prime Minister Obuchi Keizo said that "the Science and Technology Agency (the current Ministry of Science and Technology) and the Ministry of International Trade and Industry (the current Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry)" have authority over both regulation and promotion. This clearly revealed that Japan was in violation of the international convention on nuclear safety.

Following Fuwa's questioning, the government in 2001 decided to shift the Nuclear Safety

### The ongoing crisis at Fukushima No. 1 is getting little media coverage in Canada, but here are some highlights of a May 13 report from Bloomberg news agency:

Tokyo Electric Power Co. said one of the reactor cores at its stricken Fukushima Dai-Ichi nuclear plant is more seriously damaged than previously thought, setting back the utility's plan to resolve the crisis. Fuel rods in the core of the No. 1 reactor are fully exposed, with the water level 1 meter below the base of the fuel assembly, Junichi Matsumoto, a general manager at the utility known as Tepco, told reporters at a May 12 briefing in Tokyo. Melted fuel has dropped to the bottom of the pressure vessel and is still being cooled, Matsumoto said.

"What this means is this is probably going to be a much more difficult cleanup than they originally planned for," said Paul Padley, a particle physicist at Rice University in Houston. The government and Tepco "have consistently appeared to be underestimating the severity of the situation." ●

# The CLC: a tale of two conventions

By **Sam Hammond,**  
Vancouver

For the 26th time since its founding, the Canadian Labour Congress met in Convention May 9-13 in Vancouver, BC. President Ken Georgetti welcomed the 2500 delegates with a speech that probably won't be remembered for more than a few days, if at all. The speech did not reflect the anger and anguish the people are going through across Canada, or the dangerous reality of a new Harper majority in Ottawa. That reality had to come from the floor, and it did several times during the week.

The structural changes that will effectively reshape the CLC into a consensus of the largest private and public sector union leaders were adopted as expected, with only mild squirming from the Labour Councils which are left out of the new structure completely.

Ken Georgetti managed the microphones with clumsy prejudice. Early in the convention he twice cut off Dave Pritchett from the Longshore Union, while allowing CAW leader Ken Lewenza to go four minutes beyond the speaking time. On Tuesday morning, Georgetti apologized for his sins the day before, but through the week he continued giving speakers at pro mikes preference over speakers at con mikes. The chairing became quite a topic of discussion in the food courts and even in some of the caucuses. Many new affiliates and first-time delegates were particularly upset.

More than at any other CLC convention, the several hundred resolutions sent in were grouped into watered down composites and squeezed into debate times that were severely compressed by a line-up of guest speakers, cultural presentations and discussion

panels. Some of the delegates who took part in the Action Caucus estimated that in the week-long convention, only about nine hours were allotted to floor debate on resolutions.

One of the guest speakers was Jack Layton, who understandably was on a high over the NDP election success, and of course received a resounding welcome from the delegates.

The Action Caucus had its first meeting on May 8, before most delegates had not arrived. Regular daily meetings of the Caucus began in earnest the next day. The main thrust of the Action Caucus was to get adoption of an "Action Plan to Resist the Harper Agenda". A petition to get the Action Plan on the floor was signed by over 500 delegates, the most effective work done at the convention. Although the Action Plan did not make it to the floor, it was in tune with the

feelings of the majority of delegates. Much of it was incorporated by the executive into "Good Jobs, Better Lives: A Workers Program to Defeat the Right-Wing Agenda," an action resolution which was passed and is now policy.

Because of the behind the scenes work of the Action Caucus, the language of the "Good Jobs, Better Lives" resolution is militant and emphasizes the need to support unions in struggle and under attack such as CUPW and PSAC, to promote "public demonstrations" and "direct action where necessary to defeat the right-wing agenda".

The resolution states, "We will work with affiliates, federations and labour councils to build a strong progressive workers movement to counter the right-wing corporate agenda in this country. This will include engaging in member-to-member campaigns, public outreach and direct action..."

It also states, "At the 27th Constitutional Convention in 2014, the CLC will bring forward a political plan to defeat the Conservative government and to elect a federal New Democratic Party government." This is a much different posture than two

conventions back when Gilles Duceppe and Jack Layton got equal billing.

The members of the Action Caucus brought militancy to the mikes, reflected the urgency of delegates who want a stronger fightback, and built respect and prestige for the left, for the ideology of struggle against capital and unity of working people.

In the words of one member of the Action Caucus, "It was as if there were two conventions going on at the same time that did not connect."

This is an accurate observation. The thrust from the top is to prepare conditions for the election of an NDP majority in 2015. The thrust from the left is to fight every day over the next four years, to prevent the Tories from implementing their pro-corporate, pro-war, pro-imperialist agenda.

The youth, the homeless, the disenfranchised, the unemployed and the abandoned, our entire working class, cannot wait for social democratic salvation in 2015. Thanks to the Action Caucus and the militant delegates the "Good Jobs, Better Lives" resolution gives equal billing to both agendas. It has the potential for unity and resistance. ●

## Good jobs. Better lives. UNIONS make a difference!

### A Workers Program to Defeat the Right-Wing Agenda

Adopted by the 26th  
Convention of the  
Canadian Labour  
Congress, May 9-13,  
Vancouver, BC

The election of a majority neo-conservative government is a major threat to those pillars of Canadian society, including public services, that we hold dear such as our health care system, social programs, our public and private pension system and our traditional approach to international relations such as peacekeeping.

We need to send a signal to the Harper government: if they attempt to destroy those things that we hold dear, we will respond and we will respond strongly and strategically.

We will not stand by while medicare is destroyed and we will not stand by while unions in the public sector, such as CUPW or PSAC, are attacked or while private sector unions are weakened through the continued elimination of their jobs. We will all work together so we strengthen and defend all affiliates.

The Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) and the National Campaign Committee (NCC) will work with our affiliates through the federations of labour and the labour councils to build momentum by mobilizing our membership and our allies in the community through education, public demonstrations and direct action where necessary to defeat the right-wing agenda.

As outlined in the policy paper, Building on Our Success Mobilizing for Our Future, adopted by the delegates, we will continue the work of the CLC in mobilizing targeted, effective, focussed campaigns that build

capacity, visibility and power for the labour movement.

We will combine the work of this workers action plan with the ongoing political work of the CLC and we will utilize these efforts toward building an effective broad-based opposition to the mean-spirited, right-wing agenda. At the 27th Constitutional Convention in 2014, the CLC will bring forward a political plan to defeat the Conservative government and to elect a federal New Democratic Party government.

1. We will create a strong and principled opposition both within the labour movement and with our coalition allies that will anticipate and counter the government's legislative initiatives with a series of targeted and specific actions. We will also work to develop a parliamentary strategy on lobbying and parliamentary committee work.

2. We will utilize the CLC National Campaign Committee to develop strategies, create materials in traditional format and electronically (Facebook, email, Twitter, websites, etc.) for our activists, membership, canvassing and for our social allies in order to build community-based opposition.

We will poll our members and the general public to gather information to develop common messaging based on broad labour and progressive, Canadian values such as our commitment to medicare, education, and equality. We will use this information to also anticipate and counter the Conservative government agenda.

3. We will work with the affiliates, provincial and territorial federations of labour and labour councils to commit resources to coordinate both direct and indirect political campaigns in support of progressive parties and candidates in their respective provincial and municipal elections over the next three years. We will continue to use these elections as a means to

test and modify our strategies and tactics as a lead up to October 19, 2015, the date of the next federal election.

4. We will work with affiliates, federations and labour councils to build a strong, progressive workers movement to counter the right-wing corporate agenda in this country. This will include engaging in member-to-member campaigns, public outreach and direct action, based on issues affecting the affiliates specifically on the broader political issues of the day. We not only need to build support within our own membership for this program, we also need to build support among the broader public.

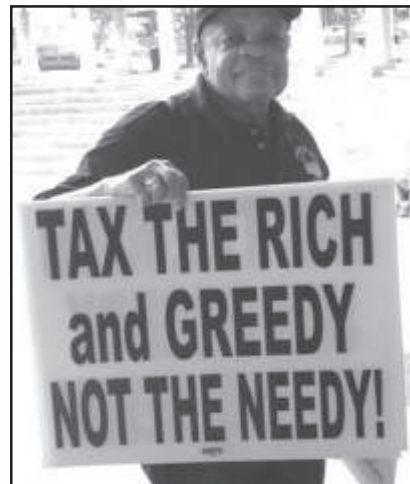
5. We must strengthen our coalitions and work to develop stronger relationships with civil society partners to broaden the base of our campaign work. We must find ways to assist civil society and our coalition partners to improve their capacity and resources, and link their work to our labour council activities in our communities.

6. We will continue our campaign and fight for improved pensions through the CPP/QPP, defend defined benefit pension plans and work to ensure adequate funding for the health and social transfer programs prior to the upcoming review.

7. We will work with affiliates through the CLC Canadian Council to develop strategies and support for unions who are in difficult bargaining and/or political situations and take whatever actions are necessary to defend our affiliates.

8. We will work with affiliates to defend and expand union density and will coordinate with the federations of labour campaigns to change provincial and territorial legislation to achieve automatic certification through card check in order to build a strong worker base. ●

## Labour movement demands fair taxation



Delegates to the Canadian Labour Congress convention in Vancouver voted overwhelmingly in favour of a resolution to actively engage in the fight for fair taxation. The Fair Tax resolution stated:

*The Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) will work with affiliates to: a) highlight the erosion of tax fairness; b) promote progressive tax reforms, including higher taxation of very high individual incomes, and the closure of tax loopholes and*

*tax havens; c) outline the role of tax cuts in producing greater income inequality and the adverse effects on our society and economy; and d) urge governments to develop a fairness test to assess the impact of key tax and spending policies in budgets on income inequality; e) continue to call for world leaders to place a 0.05% Robin Hood Tax on financial transactions, and demand these funds be used to fight global poverty, and meet global public needs, such as health care and climate change.*

The CLC will also: a) work with affiliates and progressive allies to develop effective coordinated messaging to advocate for a fairer taxation system; and b) support the development of, and actively work with, grass roots organizations and their networks to advocate for a fairer taxation system in Canada;

Because sufficient taxation revenues are necessary to pay for decent public services which benefit all Canadians; Canada's tax system has become increasingly unfair, with cuts to corporate income taxes and high-income individual income tax rates, and an expansion of tax loopholes that benefit the wealthy;

Because over the last 15 years, poorer Canadians have seen their tax rates rise steadily as the tax rates for the richest Canadians and corporations have dropped dramatically;

Because tax cuts are a major factor behind the growing problem of income inequality in Canada;

*Because the financial services sector is one of the least taxed, and this will generate more than \$400 billion a year.*

The CLC is promoting a Canadians for Tax Fairness petition to stop corporate tax cuts, available on the internet at [www.taxfairness.ca](http://www.taxfairness.ca).

The petition reads, "We, the undersigned, oppose additional corporate tax cuts which will give billions of dollars to the country's most highly profitable corporations, such as oil companies and banks. Rather than foregoing this tax revenue, these funds should be used to pay for the public services that Canadians want and need and/or targeted to support the direct creation of more jobs. We call on Parliament to stop the corporate tax cuts and instead implement a process to develop a fair and equitable tax system for Canada. We also call on all provincial governments to do likewise." ●



# GLOBAL CLASS STRUGGLE

## Brazilian auto workers on strike

Brazilian workers at a factory operated by U.S. auto maker General Motors walked off the job May 21, calling a 24-hour strike to protest the company's latest profit-sharing offer. First- and second-shift workers at GM's plant in Sao Jose dos Campos in Sao Paulo state voted unanimously to approve the strike. The walkout will cost GM production of 950 vehicles at the plant, which produces about 400,000 vehicles a year, the union said.

"GM is living its best moment, with consecutive records of production," said Vivaldo Moreira Araujo, president of the Sindicato dos Metalurgicos de Sao Jose dos Campos. "Today's strike was only the first step."

Brazil is a key overseas market for GM, which is investing 5 billion Brazilian Reals (\$3.1 billion US) in its local operations over the 2008-2012 period. Fully financed by its Brazilian unit, the investments will go toward expanding GM operations, which currently sell about 650,000 cars in Brazil, the world's fourth-biggest car market. GM is the third-largest auto maker in Brazil, after Fiat and Volkswagen, and ahead of Ford.

Meanwhile, 3600 workers at Volkswagen's Sao Jose dos Pinhais plant went on strike on May 5 for a bigger share of company profits. The workers union, the Greater Curitiba Metalworkers Union, affiliated to the CNTM/FS national metalworkers' federation, an IMF affiliate, is asking for a total of 12,000 Real (\$7,340 US) in two instalments in May and in January 2012.

Volkswagen's San José plant produces 810 Golf, Fox, Fox and Cross Fox cars per day for export. During the first week of the walkout, the company lost the production of 5,000 vehicles. In addition to workers directly employed at the company, the strike indirectly affects 20,000 workers in the supply chain, including suppliers of auto parts and outsourced work.

## Greeks reject new social attacks

Waving red flags and toting colourful placards, Greek workers walked off the job May 18, pouring onto the streets of Athens and other cities to challenge a new rash of proposed "reforms" and cost-cutting measures designed to save the cash-strapped country \$33 billion through 2015.

In Athens, about 30,000 protesters marched outside the parliament building, jeering lawmakers and calling them "thieves" and "robbers." Some youths clashed with riot police, pelting them with stones, water bottles and oranges. Police fired tear gas and pepper spray, and at least a dozen demonstrators were injured.

The 24-hour general strike, the country's second this year, was held as the European Union and the International Monetary Fund began assessing a new austerity package, including a third wave of

tax increases and a sweeping sell-off of state assets.

"These are barbarous policies that are driving workers and society into poverty for the benefit of bankers and creditors," said a statement from the ADEDY public-sector umbrella union. "They must not pass."

A year after receiving a \$146-



billion bailout from the EU and the IMF, Greece has slipped far behind slated fiscal targets, fanning market speculation that the country will default, or require some sort of debt restructuring or even a new deal with its international creditors. The German weekly Der Spiegel reported that Greece's debt woes were so grave that Athens was contemplating ditching the euro currency.

While the Socialist government succeeded in cutting the country's deficit by about a third last year, the shortfall still hovers at 10.5% of gross domestic product, the second highest in the 27-member EU. Tax collection, according to the Finance Ministry, has also slumped 9.2%, and a much-vaunted privatization plan has yet to begin for a slew of state companies, including the Public Power Corp., the country's former energy monopoly.

Polls in recent weeks have signalled fading support for the Socialists. About 70% of Greeks oppose the government's handling of the crisis, with 60% supporting renegotiation of the bailout deal. About one in four say the government should scrap the rescue program and abandon the euro.

## Spanish youth occupy city squares

As voting in Spain's May 22 regional and local elections began, tens of thousands of young protesters camped out in city squares across the country, despite a ban on political activities on the day before elections. In Madrid, about 30,000 people occupied the central Puerta del Sol square. Similar protests sprang up in many other cities including Barcelona, Valencia, Seville and Bilbao. The governing Socialists suffered major losses in voting for city councils and regional governments.

Condemning the government's austerity drive, the demonstrators are demanding a priority on jobs and economic growth over servicing foreign debt. The movement gathered momentum on May 15, when students and

unemployed people rallied in more than 50 cities. Protesters in Madrid chanted: "We aren't merchandise in the hands of politicians and bankers" as they marched to the city hall. Many wore yellow T-shirts distributed by the Youth Without a Future group, founded in early April to press Prime Minister Jose Zapatero to invest in job creation programmes.

Some 40 per cent of working-age youth are currently unemployed but Zapatero has announced a 6 billion euro cut in public-sector investment. Under pressure from the European Union, the International Monetary Fund and the US the government has also imposed a freeze on pension payments and a pay freeze for civil servants which follows a 5 per cent wage cut last year.

According to official data, a record 4.9 million Spanish people are currently unemployed. The government forecasts growth of 1.3% this year, but the central bank says that prediction is optimistic.

## Turkey charges labour activists

The Turkish government has filed criminal charges against 111 union leaders, members and supporters which carry prison terms of up to 5 years. The charges are in connection with a 2010 demonstration in support of 12,000 workers made redundant following the privatization of the state tobacco monopoly TEKEL.

Following the sale of TEKEL in February 2008, the state retained control over 40 warehouses where leaf and semi-processed tobacco was stored. The TEKGIDA-IS union, which represents the workforce at TEKEL, sought negotiations with the government over the future of the 12,000 warehouse workers, who were offered only insecure contracts at half their former wages and no rights or benefits. In December 2009, their employment was abruptly terminated.

Three months of union protests in Ankara brought no results, but as a goodwill gesture the union ceased public action and waited for a response to their demands for new employment with acquired rights - as required under Turkish law. When the government failed to offer anything concrete, TEKGIDA-IS and their supporters demonstrated again in Ankara on April 1, 2010. They were beaten and pepper-gassed, and now they face prison.

Those indicted by the Ankara Public Prosecutor include TEKGIDA-IS President Mustafa Turkel along with four other national officers and twelve branch presidents, the current and former heads of the national center DISK, two former leaders of the public sector confederation KESK and other prominent union and social activists. The court proceedings are scheduled to begin on June 3.

The indictments are intended to cripple the labour movement in Turkey by criminalizing protest action in defense of employment and social rights. Labour law in Turkey already severely restricts organizing and bargaining rights. Allowing these charges to proceed

would be a major setback to ongoing efforts to bring Turkey's industrial relations system into conformity with international Conventions.

## Bahrain arrests 54 undocumented migrants

Barely a week before the lifting of the State of National Safety announced by the Bahrain government, 54 undocumented migrants were arrested by authorities, according to Migrant-Middle East, a Filipino migrants right group providing assistance to distressed migrant workers.

John Leonard Monterona, Migrant-Middle East regional director, cited local reports that the Bahrain Interior Ministry had arrested migrants of various nationalities.

"...We are quite sure that the undocumented, mostly Asian migrant workers, are not part of the anti-government groups," Monterona said, adding that most of the undocumented migrants were forced to run away from their employers after being abused and exploited, and have become victims of rampant labor malpractices. Many have been charged with absconding, which is a breach of the host government's immigration laws.

Monterona has appealed to Bahrain authorities to respect the rights of the migrants. "Though undocumented they deserve humane treatment," Monterona said.

The neighbouring Saudi and Kuwaiti governments announced the granting of amnesty to all undocumented and illegal migrants on February and March, respectively.

## Venezuela raises incomes and minimum wage

Following a decision to raise the country's minimum wage by 26.5%, Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez also announced increases of 40% and 45% for university-based and public administration workers, respectively. Chavez called on working people to use their increased incomes responsibly, in the "fight against speculation, since every time we raise wages the capitalists raise prices," and asked people to stay away from "the very consumerism that capitalism itself promotes."

Speaking on national television, Chavez explained the specific wage increases for the higher education community. "For the university-based professionals; the workers, employees, and professors, those who have gone three years without a wage increase. Well, we're going to raise their salaries 40%, starting on 1 May (2011), which is a significant amount," explained Chavez.

The government has also doubled (from \$47 to \$93 US) the monthly scholarship amount received by some 87,500 students nationwide.

"In the United States and Europe they are cutting salaries, cutting loans and credits, extending the retirement age, firing workers, outsourcing jobs, cutting budgets allotted for health, for education - that's how the capitalist world works," said Chavez, contrasting the global economic situation with Venezuela's own economic conditions.

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

## Send me information on the Communist Party of Canada



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

### Central Committee CPC

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# NATO continues killing spree in Africa and Asia

By Rick Rozoff,  
www.globalresearch.ca,  
May 15, 2011

On May 13 President Barack Obama welcomed North Atlantic Treaty Organization secretary general Anders Fogh Rasmussen to the White House and the two pledged to continue the world's two major wars, those in Afghanistan and Libya. There are over 150,000 foreign troops engaged in the nearly ten-year war in Afghanistan, at least 130,000 of them serving under NATO's International Security Assistance Force. Since taking command of the war against Libya on March 31 the military bloc has conducted almost 7,000 air missions, including over 2,600 combat flights. Obama and Rasmussen also announced that the U.S. will host next year's NATO summit.

In a column in the same day's *Wall Street Journal*, Rasmussen said, "NATO's operational commitments have changed beyond recognition in the past 20 years, and we have never been busier." Indeed.

NATO troops killed a 12-year-old girl and injured four other girls

ages 8 to 15 in Afghanistan's Kunar province on May 15, according to the provincial police chief. The day before NATO forces killed a 15-year-old boy, the son of an Afghan soldier, in a night raid in Nangarhar province, resulting in a demonstration by local Afghans



Afghan father holds picture of sons killed by NATO forces.

that was fired upon by government forces with four protesters killed, including a 14-year-old boy.

On May 12 NATO troops killed a 12-year-old girl and a policeman, her relative, also in Nangarhar province. According to the girl's father: "They (foreign troops) hurled a hand grenade at my daughter after she ran out of the room in a panic. She was killed on the spot." [1]

Two weeks before NATO and Afghan government troops attacked a Pakistani checkpoint in the South Waziristan Agency. Three Afghan soldiers were killed and two Pakistani security personnel were injured. "Pakistani security forces said they returned fire when they came under attack from Afghan and Nato forces...." [2]

According to a leader of a Pakistani opposition party: "The NATO attack was not accidental but a calculated and planned move to target Pakistan so as to hide its failure in Afghanistan. The violation of Pakistani territory indicated that the US was planning to push the war inside Pakistan." [3]

U.S. drone missile attacks killed

eight people in Pakistan's North Waziristan Agency on May 12, after which "locals said the dead were innocent people." [4] Two days before "U.S. drone aircraft fired two missiles at a vehicle, killing at least five people and injuring seven others" in South Waziristan. "The identities of the deceased were not known immediately." [5]

The U.S. had enough Hellfire missiles left over to launch a drone attack in Yemen earlier this month, missing the intended target and killing two other people instead.

Late last month three NATO helicopters fired on Iranian fishermen 750 kilometers north of the Somali capital of Mogadishu in the Indian Ocean, wounding three Iranians and killing three Somalis in the second such attack in two days. Iran's minister for Fisheries and Marine Resources Mohamed Ali "condemned the NATO attack and demanded an apology from the international forces." [6]

On May 13 NATO aircraft bombed the Libyan city of Brega, killing 16 civilians, including 11 clerics who were there on a peace mission, and wounding 45 others.

The same day Alliance warships, part of a 20-ship flotilla enforcing a naval blockade of Libya, shelled a Red Crescent Society building in rebel-held Misrata as well as bombing the outskirts of the nearby town of Zlitan.

The preceding day Libyan state television reported that a NATO air strike hit the North Korean

embassy in Tripoli. Several other sites were targeted in the capital hours after Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi made his first television appearance since a NATO strike on April 30 killed one of his sons and three of his grandchildren.

General Carter Ham, the commander of U.S. Africa Command, which was in charge of the air war and naval operations against Libya from March 19-30, spoke in Uganda on May 11 and advocated the deployment of more troops for the ongoing armed conflict in Somalia, offering American assistance for the effort. Since last year NATO has airlifted thousands of Ugandan troops into and out of the Somali capital, where three Ugandan soldiers were killed and as many wounded three days after Ham's statement.

On May 14 Djibouti, where the Pentagon has its only permanent military base in Africa and at least 2,500 troops assigned to its Combined Joint Task Force - Horn of Africa based there, announced it would deploy two battalions to Somalia to join 9,000 Ugandan and Burundian forces there.

There will be far more innocent people, including children, killed in Africa, Asia and the Arabian Peninsula before the NATO summit convenes in the U.S. next year.

Notes: 1) *Pajhwok Afghan News*, May 12 2) *Dawn News*, April 27 3) *News International*, April 28; 4) *The Nation*, May 13; 5) *Online News International*, May 10; 6) *Press TV*, April 24. ●

## Honduran resistance appeals for solidarity

Havana - Leaders of the National Front of Popular Resistance (FNRP) have confirmed their rejection of the reincorporation of Honduras to the OAS, and of the international acceptance of President Porfirio Lobo's administration, until the FNRP's demands are complied with.

These points are essential requirements in any process of international mediation, they said, including the return of former president Manuel Zelaya and remaining exiles with full guarantee for their lives; the installation of a Constituent Assembly; and the acknowledgment of the FNRP as a political organization.

Sonia Banegas and Francisco Rios, active in the FNRP Communications Commission, spoke on May 12 at the headquarters of the Organization of Solidarity of the Peoples of Africa, Asia and Latin America (OSPAAAL) on the situation in Honduras since Zelaya was overthrown in June 2009.

Referring to the ongoing mediation process, they said that

the fact that it was requested by Lobo himself through Colombian president Manuel Santos, and that both requested the participation of Venezuelan head of state Hugo Chavez, reveals the impotence of the de facto regime. Former president Zelaya has demanded that the U.S. take a clear stance on the mediation process.

Addressing representatives of political parties and organizations accredited in Cuba, Rios admitted that political mediation by itself will not solve the Honduran domestic problem, since the resistance demands not only a return to the constitutional state, but also a solution to the social crisis created by the reintroduction of neoliberal policies.

Following Zelaya's ousting by a military coup supported by the domestic oligarchy and the United States government, the FNRP emerged in Honduras, formed by a wide range of trade unions, political and farmer organizations, and other social strata.

The government claims that except for Zelaya's return, the

remaining points have been complied with, since it modified articles in the Constitution, created the Ministry of Human Rights, and its public forces "do not repress." But this is a farce made up by Lobo, said Rios.

Two days earlier, reporter Hector Francisco Medina was shot down after leaving the Omega Vision TV channel in Morazan. Eleven journalists have been murdered since 2010.

On May 11, Rios said, two farmers were assassinated at the service of landowners, who have killed 27 members of farmer organizations who defend their rights against the regime.

Answering a question, Rios said the government may try to avoid fulfilling its part of agreements that emerge from the mediation process. For that reason, the popular mobilization will be maintained, since it is the basis of the FNRP's struggle in the 18 departments and 298 municipalities of the country.

Rios referred to Honduras as a platform of U.S. imperialism to act against other liberation processes taking place in the region.

The national oligarchy is weak, Banegas said, since it responds to the interests of U.S. transnationals. Lobo has put the mines in foreign hands, and there are projects to transfer the control of water supplies to foreign entities.

She pointed out that the government is also trying to cut down the teachers' pensions and trade union funds, and that it violates labour rights in favour of the corporations, driving workers into misery. Almost every day the government murders intermediate leaders of the resistance, she said, yet the people keep protesting in the streets. ●



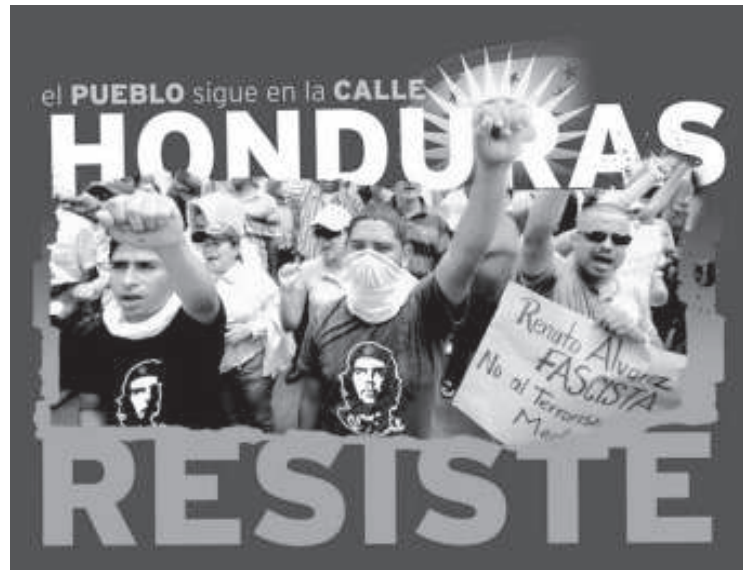
### International Communist meeting in December 2011

The Working Group of the Communist and Workers' Parties met on April 29 in Athens, to prepare for the 13th international meeting of the group. The CP of Brazil, the CP of Cuba, AKEL (Cyprus), the CP of Bohemia and Moravia, the KKE (Greece), the Lebanese CP, the People's Party of Palestine, the Portuguese CP, the CP of the Russian Federation, the South African CP, and the Syrian CP participated.

It was decided that the 13th International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties will be held in Athens on December 9-11. This year's theme is: Socialism is the Future! The international situation and the experience of the communists 20 years after the counterrevolution in the USSR. The tasks for the development of the class struggle in conditions of capitalist crisis, imperialist wars, of the current popular struggles and uprisings, for working class-popular rights, the strengthening of proletarian internationalism and the anti-imperialist front, for the overthrow of capitalism and the construction of socialism.

The Working Group discussed and made a positive assessment of the development of joint actions along the lines decided upon at the 12th IMCWP, which took place last December in South Africa. There was also a very useful exchange of views on international developments.

(For more information, visit <http://solidnet.org>)



# May Day 2011



Some of the performers at this year's United Mayday celebration at the Steelworkers Hall in Toronto (see Music Notes on this page). Clockwise from top right: Mohammad Ali Aumeer, Voces Poetica, Haiba and Omer Mansour with Wally Brooker, Salimah Valiani, Nicola Ward.



PV photos taken by Ed Bil.



## Phil Ochs: glory and tragedy

**PHIL OCHS: THERE BUT FOR FORTUNE**, written and directed by Kenneth Bowser, 2010, 96 minutes

Review by Kimball Cariou

The May 13 screening of *There But For Fortune* at the DOXA film festival in Vancouver was almost a reunion of grey-haired radical activists. But this remarkable documentary on the life of singer/songwriter Phil Ochs deserves a much wider audience.

It's not that Ochs should be put on a pedestal. But during his brief life, he voiced the anger and the dreams of a generation of young people throwing off the chains of Cold War conformity.

Phil Ochs was proof that capitalism pushes millions to draw radical conclusions about the world. Born in Texas in 1940, Ochs was the middle-class son of a doctor who moved frequently. He entered a military high school in Virginia at the age of 16, and displayed exceptional musical talents as a teenager.

Searching for his way in life, Ochs enrolled in journalism at Ohio State University. There he met Jim Glover, whose father was close to the Communist Party USA. The Glovers introduced Phil to the songs of Woody Guthrie and Pete Seeger, and the rest is history. Ochs headed to New York in 1962, aiming to become the greatest folksinger/songwriter in America.

That ambition ran into Bob Dylan, whose girlfriend during those years had a powerful

influence on his writing; Suze Rotolo was the activist daughter of CPUSA members.

*There But For Fortune* uses archival film footage and interviews with contemporaries of Ochs to present a vivid picture of the social and cultural struggles which rocked the USA during the Sixties. Inspired by the civil rights movement and enraged by the war in Vietnam, Ochs used his songs to rip the mask from the brutal face of imperialism.

Sadly, Woody Guthrie was dying a painful death even as the musical renaissance he helped to launch was blossoming. But Pete Seeger was delighted to bring these talented young folksingers to public attention.

Friendship and rivalry is a major theme of *There But For Fortune*. While Ochs worshipped Bob Dylan's powerful poetic imagery, he himself took a different route, writing what he called "topical songs." Dylan, as the film shows, disdained protest lyrics, constantly urging Ochs to focus on the personal, not the political.

Fortunately for the movement, Ochs became a prolific writer of songs like *Too Many Martyrs* and *I Ain't Marching Anymore*, which directly attacked the greed and hypocrisy of the ruling class. Instead of distancing himself from the working class, Ochs remained a staunch supporter of working people's struggles for a better life.

At the same time, his career was marked by the contradictions of becoming a famous revolutionary folksinger under capitalism. The in-your-face political songs of his

early years took on a more personal character, especially after his move to California in 1967, as the progressive Greenwich Village scene in New York crumbled. The assassinations of Martin Luther King Jr. and Bobby Kennedy, and the vicious police attacks against demonstrators in Chicago later in 1968, left him deeply disillusioned.

Ochs began to succumb to alcohol and drug abuse, and to the depression which his father had suffered. But he also embarked on wide-ranging international travels. He was inspired by the socialist Popular Unity government in Chile, where he befriended the great folksinger Victor Jara and performed for miners.

Shocked at the murder of Jara by the Pinochet fascists, he organized a major concert to support Chilean refugees and exiles. Together with Joan Baez and others, he held a May 1975 concert in New York to celebrate the end of the Vietnam War.

*There But For Fortune* suggests that ironically, Ochs may have taken this historic victory as a signal that he had nothing more to accomplish. Unable to write and exhausted by his personal demons, Ochs took his own life in April 1976.

Phil Ochs burst onto the cultural scene at a moment when people's movements were advancing around the world. And his death came as imperialism and fascism began to mount a violent counter-attack. His legacy is contained in eight albums recorded in less than a decade, and dozens of songs which ring true today, covered by many performers. This film gives much for his original fans and a new generation of activists to consider as the struggle against war and repression continues. ●



## MUSIC NOTES

By Wally Brooker

### Toronto's Mayday cultural evening

The United Mayday Committee's celebration at Toronto's Steelworkers Hall demonstrated the truth of the slogan "capitalism divides, Mayday unites." With its broad spectrum of endorsing organizations and diverse cultural program, the evening made a positive contribution towards greater unity among the city's working class and progressive forces. A splendid lineup of performers was a key factor in the evening's success. Hats off to hip-hop artist Mohammad Ali Aumeer, guitarist Maneli Jamal, poet Lisa Makarchuk, Sudanese musicians Omer Mansour and Haiba, poet Charles Roach, poet Salimah Valiani, performing ensemble Voces Poeticas and bassist-poet Nichola Ward for their stellar contributions. The United Mayday Committee advocates advancing from Toronto's current two Mayday marches to a single march under the auspices of the Toronto and York Region Labour Council. Avanti!

### Miriam Makeba: Mama Africa

*Mama Africa*, a film about South African singer Miriam Makeba (1932-2008), received enthusiastic reviews after its Canadian premiere at Toronto's "Hot Docs" Festival. Makeba played a key role in popularizing African music and was both a lifelong critic of racism and a consistent fighter for peace and social justice. *Mama Africa* traces the singer's life from her poverty-ridden childhood and rise to fame in the sixties, to her emotional homecoming in 1990 after a 30-year exile. Finnish director Mika Kaurismaki includes archival footage of Makeba performing with Dizzy Gillespie, Nina Simone, and Harry Belafonte, as well as interviews with family, friends and former band members. Learn more at [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Miriam\\_Makeba](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Miriam_Makeba).

### Detroit musicians ratify agreement

The six-month strike of Detroit Symphony Orchestra musicians (AFM Local 5) ended with the signing of a collective agreement on April 3. In what can be described as a public rebuke to management, the musicians were met with a prolonged standing ovation when they returned to the stage of Detroit's Orchestra Hall on April 9. Although the worst of management's proposals were defeated, the musicians paid a heavy price with a near 25% reduction in salaries. Health and pension benefits were protected, but the orchestra will be reduced in size from 96 to 85 members. The musicians' modest achievements were mostly the result of their own efforts. They did a great deal of community outreach, including numerous free concerts. Thousands of AFM members supported them with resolutions, donations and benefit performances, but more solidarity from organized labour will be required to halt the drive to apply "free market principles" to North American orchestras.

### Tom Morello's Union Town

Readers of this column will be familiar with guitarist-singer Tom Morello, who rose to fame with hard rock bands Rage Against the Machine and Audioslave. Morello, a key figure in the current upsurge of radical musical activism, is co-founder of Soundstrike, the musicians' solidarity campaign with Arizonans fighting racist Bill SB1070. Last winter he was an inspirational presence at rallies in Wisconsin against the repressive anti-union administration of Governor Scott Walker. Morello has just released a new album of songs for the struggle: *Union Town*. All proceeds go to the America Votes Labor Unity Fund. It's available at iTunes. For info: [www.nightwatchmanmusic.com](http://www.nightwatchmanmusic.com).

### Ghost Town Remembers Chernobyl

April 26 was the 25th anniversary of the Chernobyl disaster, which remains (even after Fukushima) the world's worst nuclear accident. A 2006 Greenpeace report estimated that the meltdown in the Ukraine had caused 200,000 cancer deaths, with more to come. Chernobyl must never be forgotten. On the 20th anniversary, American folk duo Huns and Dr. Beeker released a timeless song: *Ghost Town*. Now is an appropriate time to revisit it. The duo sing eloquently of the response of the victims to the unfolding terror, and raise questions about the ultimate meaning of the nuclear disaster. Watch the video on YouTube and visit [www.hunsanddrbeeker.com](http://www.hunsanddrbeeker.com).

### The Education of Justin Bieber

Canadian teen idol Justin Bieber has been in the spotlight for his opinions on social and political issues. In a February *Rolling Stone* interview he declared his opposition to abortion, likening it to "killing a baby." Coming from a top-selling artist among teenage girls, these comments are deeply troubling. In the same interview, however, Bieber defended Canada's single-payer health insurance system. Later, after a wave of bullying-related suicides, he contributed a video message in defence of LGBT youth. Regrettably, Bieber ignored requests to respect the cultural boycott of Israel and cancel his April 14 Tel Aviv concert. However, the next day he denied a photo-op to Israeli PM Netanyahu, who had lined up a meeting with children from a community that had been hit by a rocket from nearby Gaza. Check out BDS activist and filmmaker John Greyson's brilliant Justin Bieber parody (banned on YouTube - a story in itself) at <http://artthreat.net>.

## "Responsibility to Protect"...

continued from page 4

peaceful measures to settle the conflict. Yet peaceful means were not exhausted before the military invasion began. A high level international team - consisting of representatives from the Arab League, the African Union, and the UN Secretary General - should have been dispatched to Tripoli to attempt to negotiate a real cease-fire, and set up a mechanism for elections and for protecting civilians. Moreover, after the passage of the resolution, Libya immediately offered to accept international monitors and Gaddafi offered to step down and leave Libya. These offers were immediately rejected by the opposition.

Security Council Resolution 1973 regarding Ivory Coast is similar to resolution 1973 regarding Libya. The former authorizes the use of "all necessary means to... protect civilians under imminent threat of physical violence" in Ivory Coast. It reaffirms "the primary responsibility of each State to protect civilians" and reiterates that "parties to armed conflicts bear the primary responsibility to take all feasible steps to ensure the protection of civilians."

The UN Charter commands that all Members settle their international disputes by peaceful means, to maintain international peace, security, and justice. Members must also refrain from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state or in any manner inconsistent with the purposes of the United Nations.

Only when a State acts in self-defense, in response to an armed attack by one country against another, can it militarily attack another State under the UN Charter. The need for self-defense must be overwhelming, leaving no choice of means, and no moment for deliberation. Neither Libya nor Ivory Coast had attacked another country. The United States, France and Britain in Libya, and France and the UN in

Ivory Coast, are not acting in self-defense. Humanitarian concerns do not constitute self-defense.

There is a double standard in the use of military force to protect civilians. Obama has not attacked Bahrain where lethal force is being used to quell anti-government protests because that is where the U.S. Fifth Fleet is stationed. In fact, the *Asia Times* reported that before the invasion of Libya, the United States made a deal with Saudi Arabia, whereby the Saudis would invade Bahrain to help put down the anti-democracy protestors and Saudi Arabia would enlist the support of the Arab League for a no-fly-zone over Libya.

The League's support for a no-fly-zone effectively neutralized opposition from Russia and China to Security Council Resolution 1973. Moreover, the military action by the U.S., France and Britain has gone far beyond a no-fly-zone. Indeed, Obama, France's President Nicolas Sarkozy and Britain's David Cameron penned an op-ed in the *International Herald Tribune* that said the NATO force will fight in Libya until President Muammar Gaddafi is gone, even though the Resolution does not sanction forcible regime change.

When Obama defended his military actions in Libya, he said "Some nations may be able to turn a blind eye to atrocities in other countries. The United States of America is different." Two weeks later, the Arab League asked the Security Council to consider imposing a no-fly-zone over the Gaza Strip in order to protect civilians from Israeli air strikes. But the United States, an uncritical ally of Israel, will never allow the passage of such a resolution, regardless of the number of Palestinian civilians Israel kills. This is a double standard.

The military actions in Libya and Ivory Coast set a dangerous precedent of attacking countries where the leadership does not favour the pro-U.S. or pro-European Union countries. What will prevent the United States

from stage-managing some protests, magnifying them in the corporate media as mass actions, and then bombing or attacking Venezuela, Cuba, Iran, or North Korea? Recall that during the Bush administration, Washington levelled baseless allegations to justify an illegal invasion of Iraq.

During a discussion of the Responsibility to Protect in the General Assembly on July 23, 2009, the Cuban government raised some provocative questions that should give those who support this notion pause: "Who is to decide if there is an urgent need for an intervention in a given State, according to what criteria, in what framework, and on the basis of what conditions? Who decides it is evident the authorities of a State do not protect their people, and how is it decided? Who determines peaceful means are not adequate in a certain situation, and on what criteria? Do small States have also the right and the actual prospect of interfering in the affairs of larger States? Would any developed country allow, either in principle or in practice, humanitarian intervention in its own territory? How and where do we draw the line between an intervention under the Responsibility to Protect and an intervention for political or strategic purposes, and when do political considerations prevail over humanitarian concerns?"

The Responsibility to Protect doctrine violates the basic premise of the UN Charter. Last year, the General Assembly's Fifth Committee declined funding for the office of the new Special Advisor on Responsibility to Protect. Some member States argued that the Responsibility to Protect had not been agreed to as a norm at the World Summit. The debate will continue. But for many States, this is a slippery slope that should be viewed with extreme caution.

*Marjorie Cohn is a professor at Thomas Jefferson School of Law. See [www.marjoriecohn.com](http://www.marjoriecohn.com).* ●

## Palestine will not remain hostage...

continued from page 12

was declared then that any peaceful solution should be with one representative of the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza. Ironically, now the American administration is following a wait and see position. It declared that it will take a final position after the formation of the Palestinian unity Government... We consider that such a position is an unacceptable intervention in the internal affairs of the Palestinians. Threatening to withhold financial support for the Palestinian Authority is a rude and one-sided policy in favour of the Israelis. It is an extortion and a way to dictate the Palestinian agenda. We reject that completely.

Directly after the Palestinian reconciliation, the Israeli finance minister declared that his government decided not to transfer the Palestinian tax money collected by the Israelis to the Palestinian authority... As a result, the Palestinian government stopped the monthly salaries of about 151,000 employees. Israel is using the financial leverage to thwart the reconciliation, under the pretext that this money will go to Hamas.

Prime Minister Netanyahu complained to the international community that the Palestinian reconciliation is a unity of war against Israel. This is a false accusation because whoever listened to Khalid Mashaal's speech in the reconciliation ceremony in Cairo will understand that there is a

big change in the Hamas approach. It accepts now an Independent Palestinian state within the borders of June 4, 1967.

What Israel wants is to keep division in the Palestinian society as long as possible. Before the reconciliation Netanyahu was asking all the time: Shall I make peace with Gaza or with the West Bank? We can now reply: You shall make peace with a unified Palestinian entity, you should make peace with the State of Palestine. But Netanyahu will persist to find excuses how to fail all chances to make a just and comprehensive peace.

With the establishment of a government of national unity, we will close one of the darkest periods in the history of our people. Palestinians are looking forward now. We will continue to work hard on gaining international recognition for the State of Palestine in the 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital. Today, we have received such recognition from 112 countries. The latest vote in the UN Security Council calling for an end to settlement expansion (14 countries in favour and the United States against) shows unprecedented support for the Palestinian position: the Israeli occupation of Palestinian land must end.

According to the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the United Nations and the European Union, Palestine has reached a point where it is ready to take the reins of state. Only the Israeli occupation

stands in the way of our progress.

In September 2011, a united Palestinian people will go to the United Nations to request that the State of Palestine be admitted as a full UN member. It is time for Israel to stop denying freedom to the Palestinian people. We deserve to live free, just like all other peoples. Our message is simple: the Palestinian people will not remain hostage to Israeli intransigence and unilateralism; settler violence and expansion are not going to stop us.

National reconciliation will also re-energize and empower our struggle for justice and peace. So as we continue our efforts at uniting our people and building our state, we call on Israel not to interfere in domestic Palestinian politics.

The choice is not between Hamas and Israel, as Prime Minister Netanyahu has suggested. The choice is between settlement-colonies or Palestinian state: between accepting two states with the 1967 border outlining the shape of the future for Israelis and Palestinians where real peace is possible, or maintaining the occupation and a relationship with Israelis as one of oppressor and oppressed.

The way to peace is through reconciliation and democracy. We hope that the international community will stand shoulder to shoulder with us in order to support peace and reconciliation by ending the Israeli occupation and consolidating a sovereign Palestinian state in the 1967 border. ●

## What's Left

Vancouver, BC

**Revolutionary Bus Tour**, Sunday, May 29, leaves 10 am from 706 Clark Drive. Visit sites in Vancouver linked with the history of the Communist Party and the labour movement! Tickets \$20 (includes lunch), call 604-255-2041.

**Palestine-South Africa Solidarity Tour**, Sunday, May 29, 7 pm, Maritime Labour Centre, 1880 Triumph St., (two blocks north of Hastings), Info 604-779-7430.

**Sanctions - Busting Fundraiser** for Aboosfian Abdelrazik, Monday, May 30, 7 pm, at Grandview Calvary Baptist, 1803 E. 1st Ave. Tickets \$20 at People's Co-Op Books (1391 Commercial). Hosted by No One Is Illegal-Vancouver ([www.nooneisillegal.org](http://www.nooneisillegal.org)) and Streams of Justice.

**19th Annual People's Voice Victory Banquet**, 6 pm, Sat., June 4, Russian Hall, 600

Campbell Ave. Admission \$15, for information call 604-254-9836.

Toronto, ON

**Hemingway On Stage: IN DEADLY ERNEST**, Thur., June 2, 7:30 pm, 585 Cranbrooke (east of Bathurst, north of Lawrence), preview performance of world premiere at the International Colloquium Ernest Hemingway in Havana, award-winning actor Brian Gordon Sinclair as Hemingway. Sponsored by CCFA Toronto (Canadian-Cuban Friendship Association) and United Jewish People's Order, advance tickets \$10, door \$15. For info ph. Liz 416-654-7105 or Sharon 905-951-8499.

Montreal, QC

**Palestinians And Jews United**, boycott/disinvestment/sanctions picket, every Saturday, 1-3 pm, outside Le marcheur, at Duluth & St. Denis.

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Send your contribution today!

## People's Voice deadlines

June 16-30 issue, Thursday, June 2

July 1-31 issue, Thursday, June 16

Send submissions to PV Editorial Office,  
706 Clark Drive, Vancouver, V5L 3J1,  
<[pvoice@telus.net](mailto:pvoice@telus.net)>

People's Co-op Bookstore & Mangle por la Cultura present  
the internationally renowned singer/songwriter...

## Daniel Viglietti in Concert

Thur.. June 9, 7:30 pm (doors 6:30)

Russian Hall, 600 Campbell Ave., Vancouver

Daniel Viglietti, the renowned passionate Uruguayan singer/songwriter, political activist, and poet has been a major force in Latin American music since the 1960s. A voice for peace and an opponent of the fascist tyranny that dominated South America, Viglietti was imprisoned in 1972 by the Uruguayan dictatorship, until an international campaign resulted in his release. Viglietti has continued to write, record, tour and perform around the world.

Tickets \$25 at People's Co-op Books (1391 Commercial) and Zulu and Highlife Records

## Revolutionary Bus Tour

Join us on a school bus ride to historic Vancouver sites linked with the labour movement and the Communist Party! Visit locations of the Battle of Ballantyne Pier, the On to Ottawa Trek, the Post Office occupation, the original People's Co-op Books, the hall where COPE celebrated victories, and more.

Sunday, May 29, 2011

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# "The Arab Spring" reaches Palestine

**The Palestinian People's Party has issued its views on the "reconciliation agreement" in Palestine and recent developments in the Middle East and North Africa. The full commentary is available at SolidNet, <http://solidnet.org>.**

Having all Palestinian political factions come together for national reconciliation was an emotional experience for all who witnessed the events taking place in Cairo. The Arab Spring has finally reached Palestine.

All the parties across the Palestinian political spectrum, with the support of the new Egyptian government, reached an agreement to establish a technocratic government in order to hold

elections within one year and rebuild the Gaza Strip. This is a critical step in our path toward freedom and independence.

Our party has an important part

in this reconciliation. We have worked through the past four years in order to end the division and retain Palestinian unity. At the same time we should not overestimate



*Palestinians in Gaza City celebrate the May 4 reconciliation agreement signed by Hamas and Fatah in Cairo.*

what has happened. This is the first right step towards unity. The next step is to form a new unity government of technocrats and independent figures for one year.

Politically speaking, Hamas has mostly agreed to go on according to the political platform of the PLO, in exchange of lifting the siege from Gaza, mainly opening the Rafah entrance, rebuilding Gaza after the destruction inflicted by the Israeli aggression there in 2008/2009.

Even with this positive development there are still problems. The main cause for the division is not solved yet. The main discussion after forming the unity government will be on the comparative representation of each party in the civil and security establishment (and) in the Authority. As a party we think that this problematic issue could be a ticking bomb. The only solution is through general elections and through consolidating the democratic base of the Palestinian National Authority. This necessitates a collective national effort and not a monopoly of Fatah-Hamas.

It is quite obvious that the revolutionary developments in the Arab world affected positively the developments in Palestine. The reverberation of the Arab revolutions, especially in Egypt,

has been reflected quickly in Palestine. The movement of young Palestinians to end the division proved that the people here will not tolerate any more this split.

The main slogan in the Arab world is "The people want to overthrow the Regime" and the main slogan here is "The people want to end the division". So we were inspired by what is going on in the Arab states. The timing of the reconciliation proved that. We think that Fatah and Hamas were obliged under the pressure of the mass movement in Palestine and the Arab world to step forward in the right direction.

Besides that, we should notice that the previous negative positions and pressures by certain Arab states have been negated by the revolutions there. The Palestinian leadership felt itself freer to do what it wants to do. That feeling made President Mahmoud Abbas initiate his visit to Gaza, which triggered the walk towards reconciliation.

As usual the US has a negative position toward these developments in Palestine. In the Annapolis meeting in 2008 the issue of Palestinian unity was raised, and it

**see PALESTINE, page 11**

## FBI secrets revealed in misplaced documents

### Special to PV

Newly-released secret FBI documents provide details of the attack on democratic rights in the United States.

Last fall, FBI agents raided the Minneapolis home of Mick Kelly and Linden Gawboy, taking documents, books, computers, cell phones and a passport. By mistake, the agents left behind the operation plans for the raid, "interview questions", and other materials. The file of secret documents was accidentally mixed in with Gawboy's files, and was found in a filing cabinet on April 30.

The raid was one of the many targeting homes and the offices of the Minneapolis-based Anti-War Committee on Sept. 24, 2010. To date, 23 anti-war and international solidarity activists have received subpoenas to appear in front of a Chicago Grand Jury.

Taken as a whole, the FBI file shows willful disregard for the U.S. first amendment rights to freedom of speech and association. Using McCarthy-era language, the documents make it clear that legal solidarity activities are being targeted.

The documents show that public advocacy for the people of Colombia was the genesis of the FBI investigation. The "Operations

Order" for the FBI SWAT Team states "The captioned case was initially predicated on the activities of Meredith Aby and Jessica Rae Sundin in support of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, a U.S. State Department designated foreign terrorist organization (FTO), to include their travel to FARC controlled territory."

Yet there is nothing illegal about travelling to Colombia, or visiting areas where the FARC is in charge, as U.S. journalists often do. Aby and Sundin have spoken at many public events about their experiences in Colombia.

The FBI interview questions for Meredith Aby ask "1) Have you ever met Lilia [sic] Obando? 2) Where? 3) When? 4) Why?"

Liliana Obando is a well-known Colombian trade unionist who has spoken in the U.S., Canada, Australia and other countries about human rights violations carried out by the Colombian government and its paramilitary allies. She has been in jail for over two years in Colombia, facing trumped-up charges for her activities.

The "interview questions" also focus on delegations that have visited Palestine, which is also a legal activity.

How did the FBI get involved? The most likely explanation is that

a undercover police officer named "Karen Sullivan" infiltrated the Anti-War Committee shortly before the 2008 Republican National Convention. She met Meredith Aby and Jess Sundin, who often spoke at public events. "Sullivan" gave her reports to the FBI, paving the road to the September 24 raids.

In the documents, the "Operations order" for the raid on the Kelly/Gawboy home has the word "DANGEROUS" in underlined bold type at the top of the page. FBI agents were told to bring assault rifles, machine guns and two extra clips of ammunition for each of their side arms. Two paramedics were to stand by in the event of casualties. Other documents include photos of Kelly and Gawboy, as well as pictures of the home. The "Operation Plan" also claims that Kelly "offered to provide weapons training" - an outright lie.

As the Committee to Stop FBI Repression points out, "The events of September 24 and the ongoing grand jury are not about 'material support of terrorism,' as any normal person would understand it." In reality, these activists are being targeted for practising their rights to speak out and organize.

**For more information, go to [www.StopFBI.net](http://www.StopFBI.net).**

## Anger over deportation of ANNCOL director

A growing storm has been brewing over the decision of Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez to deport Colombian-born journalist Joaquin Perez Becerra, the director of the Swedish-based alternative Colombian news agency ANNCOL. Perez is likely to face serious charges of being a so-called "Farcpolitica," the accusation made by the regime against many critics of its human rights abuses and right-wing economic and social policies. ANNCOL, which has been one of the main sources of independent news and analysis of the corrupt and criminal Uribe/Dos Santos regime, has since been shut down by Swedish authorities.

This issue has become very intense internationally, especially among the left forces in Latin America. The Communist Party of Venezuela has been sharply critical of this action, accusing Chavez of violating the international legal rights of Perez as a Swedish citizen.

Carlos A. Lozano Guillen, editor of PCV's newspaper *La Voz*, said shortly after the detention of Perez in Caracas and prior to his deportation to Colombia: "President Hugo Chavez Frias, to which we express our solidarity with the Bolivarian revolution without conditions, we say: 'There are decisions that a revolutionary, in power or not, should never take'. The surrender of Joaquin Perez Becerra to the government of Juan Manuel Santos would be an affront..."

PSUV government deputy head Roy Daza responded by attacking the PCV's long-standing commitment to the 'patriotic pole' which supports the Bolivarian Revolution in Venezuela.

On May 11, the World Peace Council issued the following statement:

"The WPC denounces the capture and deportation from Venezuela to Colombia of the journalist Joaquin Perez Becerra, director of the alternative News agency ANNCOL, which is based in Sweden. Joaquin Becerra, nowadays a Swedish citizen, had left Colombia in the 1990s as a political refugee after many threats to his life, when he was member of the 'Union Patriotica' and under threat of his life.

"We express our serious concern about the state of the health of Joaquin Becerra, now held by the Colombian authorities, with the accusations of being a terrorist and a member of the FARC of Colombia.

"The reactionary regimes of Colombia have decades' long records of violations of all kinds of human rights and democratic freedoms. As one of the most loyal to the USA government, the Colombian government has committed many crimes against its people and against neighbour nations.

"We reject the accusations of the Colombian government and demand the release of Joaquin Becerra back home to Sweden. We express our profound disagreement with the deportation of Joaquin Becerra by the Venezuelan government, with which we stand in solidarity, and express our support to the peace loving forces in Colombia in their struggle for the resolution of the political and social conflict and against the deployment of new US military bases in Colombia and the region."

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