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Hydro One privatization Page 4

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Striking Ontario teachers ordered back to work - but the struggle is not over

"40 is a speed limit, not a class size"! The struggle for decent contracts, free collective bargaining and the right to strike in Ontario's public sector is becoming increasingly broad-based and political. This is a movement against austerity and for decent wages and living standards, and quality education, healthcare and services for all.

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Will the Tories criminalize Palestine solidarity?

As the Harper government threatens "zero tolerance" for calls to boycott Israel, will protests like this August 2014 rally in Toronto soon be treated as criminal acts?

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People's Voice
photo by Ed Bil

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"Accidental" deaths?

With a very narrow frame of reference, a coroner's inquest into the explosion which killed two sawmill workers made some useful recommendations, but ruled that their deaths were "accidental."

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Canada out of Ukraine

In a shocking turn of events, 70 years after the victory over Hitler, Canada has sent troops to support a pro-fascist regime in Ukraine.

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"Real existing capitalism"

It's time to grasp the basic facts about the capitalist system which dominates our planet: mass poverty, environmental destruction, unchecked wars and militarism. But there is an alternative!

Striking Ontario teachers ordered back to work

PV Ontario Bureau

As People's Voice went to press, the Ontario Liberals introduced back to work legislation on May 25, ordering striking secondary school teachers in three districts back into their classrooms. Education Minister Liz Sandals told media the government was responding to the declaration by the Education Relations Commission (E.C.) that the school year was at risk for students in the Durham, Rainbow and Peel Boards who have been out of school from 3 to 5 weeks. These Boards had

jointly asked the Labour Relations Board to rule the strikes "illegal."

But teachers in the three districts are only some of the thousands of secondary and elementary teachers and educational workers around the province who have been without a contract since August 2014. This was the contract imposed by the Liberals' Bill 115 that cut \$2 billion from wages and benefits – something no-one has forgotten.

In the 2015 budget, the Liberals proposed to remove another \$500 million from education and to impose a wage freeze on teachers

and educational workers. That's the real reason why negotiations are going nowhere fast.

The Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation, the first of the education unions to strike, pointed a finger directly at the Liberal government, stating the employers are attempting to strip contracts with demands to increase class sizes and increase workloads. The government's "net zero" bargaining strategy means cuts, and cuts mean poorer working conditions for educators – and poorer learning conditions for students.

Bigger class size also fits with the government's orders to School Boards to close 600 schools across the province, and to limit public discussion and consultation with parents, students and communities. Larger class sizes and fewer schools also mean fewer teachers, and an altogether poorer quality education for students.

The NDP refused to give all-party support to the back-to-work Bill, noting the Liberals have a majority and can pass the Bill into law without NDP support. The Liberals responded with a dig, noting the NDP's all-party support for legislation against striking TAC workers in 2009.

The Liberals may think they have outmaneuvered the teachers in bargaining so far, but this is only the first round. With the collapse of talks at the provincial level, the OSSTF will be in a position to initiate province-wide strike action which could start in early June, and re-start in September if serious bargaining doesn't get underway shortly.

In the fall, the Elementary Teachers' Federation will also be in a strike position, along with the

French language teachers, Catholic Teachers, and support staff unions like CUPS and others.

Other unions in the Broader Public Sector who are covered by the wage freeze legislation will also be fighting contract strips and cuts, as the year rolls on. The Liberals may find the odds building against them, as McGuinty did, when he rolled the dice with teachers and educational workers.

The struggle for decent contracts, free collective bargaining and the right to strike in Ontario's public sector is becoming increasingly broad-based and political. This is a struggle against austerity and for decent wages and living standards, and quality education, healthcare and services for all.

Teachers demonstrated at Queen's Park on May 14th, linking their fight for a fair contract with the fight for quality education for their students. "40 is a speed limit - not a class size" their signs read.

The Premier might have carried such a sign herself when she protested Tory attacks on teachers and education in the 1990s. ●

Quebec: the PKP phenomenon

By Johan Boyden, Montreal

In the early 1950s, Pierre Peladeau obtained a \$1,500 loan from his mother – no small amount in those days – and turned around a failing publishing company. The son of a big timber capitalist who went broke in the '30s, Peladeau was a domineering businessman who brought British tabloid journalism to Quebec with its four S's – Sexe, Sang, Sport et Spectacles (sex, blood, sport and superficial entertainment) – and built an empire controlling 40 per cent of Quebec media. Peladeau was politically a right-wing nationalist but kept in the shadows.

Not so for his son. Pierre Peladeau junior joined a Maoist outfit in Quebec during the 1970s, adding "Karl" with a K to his name. But the young Peladeau's life as a class traitor was not for long.

The multi-millionaire, now known as "PKP," was elected in

May as the eighth leader of the Parti Québécois, winning the first round of voting with almost 60 per cent. PKP's leadership signals more continuity than change but, of course, is somewhat divisive. While his wealth is by luck of birth, PKP is known as a successful capitalist, adding "respectability" to the nationalist project.

But to workers he is a hard boss. Since joining daddy at Quebecor, "Citizen Peladeau" (i.e. Citizen Kane) broke the record for lockouts in labour disputes and union busting. He also once owned the Sun media chain, thoroughly reactionary in content but also staunchly Canadian chauvinist.

If he has a more hands-on relationship with the editors of his Quebec publications, then he is directing through his Montreal and Quebec City tabloids a racist media campaign that for years has been trying to fuel hostility in the "reasonable accommodation"

debate and inflame islamophobia. Their diatribes developed into the proposal for a "Quebec Charter of Values" – which would have effectively banned practising Muslim women from public sector employment.

The Charter backfired for the PQ in the last election, contributing to their defeat, along with the adoption of austerity policies.

These elements were not prominent in Peladeau's prudent leadership campaign. A very "domesticated" PKP only committed to a softer charter. But showing his real face, he refused to change the labour code to restore anti-scab provisions requested by the trade unions.

In fact, PKP made the grand tour from right to left – "Pelagaugauche" – of the PQ's broad nationalist tent. He rallied

see QUEBEC, page 11

Crunch time is here for PV 2015 Fund Drive

Here's the good news: we're about \$2000 ahead of last year's pace in our annual People's Voice Press Fund Drive. But now the difficult part: summer will be here shortly, with a federal election to follow, making it impossible to extend our efforts into the fall as sometimes happens. The bottom line? If you have not sent a contribution, we appeal for your immediate support. Remember that even a full-price \$30 subscription covers less than half of the cost of publishing 20 issues per year, so your solidarity is

urgently needed and deeply appreciated.

The latest two weeks of our 2015 Fund Drive has seen another \$1700 donated towards our \$50,000 target, taking us to a grand total of \$33,455, or 67% percent. The upcoming fundraisers are expected to bring in about \$7,000, but we need to make these successful!

Alberta remains in the lead, with \$3021 (86% of their \$3500 quota), followed by Ontario at \$16,367, or 74.7% of their \$22,000 goal. Saskatchewan is still at \$385, or

65% of their provincial target of \$600, and British Columbia has reached \$12,100, which is 60.5% of the \$20,000 quota for the west coast. Next is Quebec with \$265 (53% of \$500), Nova Scotia with \$510 (51% of \$1000), and Manitoba (\$400, or 20% of the \$2000 target). We have also received a \$25 donation from Newfoundland and Labrador, and a generous \$382 from readers in the United States.

Events coming up include a "Jazz BBQ" hosted by the East Toronto Club, from 2 to 6 pm on Sat., June 6, at 526 Main Street, two blocks north of the Main subway station. Tickets are just \$20 for an afternoon of great music, food and refreshments. The "rain day" for this one is Sunday, June 7, but we are weather optimists! The Sergio Montivero Club's press dinner will be on Saturday, June 20, starting 6 pm at the Centre for Socialist Education, 706 Clark Drive, Vancouver. Tickets are \$20, call 604-255-2041 for details.

Finally, word has arrived that our biggest fundraiser, the annual PV Walk-A-Thon org-anized by the Lower Fraser Club, will be on Sunday, August 9, starting 11 am, at Bear Creek Park in Surrey, BC. More details in our next issue! ●

Deliver a needs-based funding formula for quality public education

Communist Party of Canada (Ontario), May 14, 2015

Premier Wynne promised to treat teachers and educators fairly when she cleaned up the mess from McGuinty's despised Bill 115 in 2013. She promised to fight for students while a Trustee during the Mike Harris years, and in 2003 she was part of a Liberal government elected on a promise to deliver a needs-based funding formula for education. Since then a whole student cohort has passed through school on the Liberals' watch with no new funding formula. She should have kept her word.

Instead, the Wynne government is sacrificing public education – students, staff and schools, to eliminate the \$8.5 billion deficit they created with corporate tax cuts worth \$19 billion and catastrophic reductions in the corporate tax rate. The Wynne government is also sacrificing hospitals, healthcare, cities, post-secondary education, jobs and services, because it refuses to raise corporate taxes to pay for its \$130 billion infrastructure program. In fact the Liberals plan to drop the corporate tax rate even more.

The Liberal prescription for Ontario is austerity, privatization and attacks on labour and democratic rights as needed.

But Wynne had a choice. Instead of cuts and privatization, school closures and asset sales, she could have raised corporate income tax rates, restored the capital tax, repealed corporate tax cuts, collected deferred and unpaid corporate taxes, expanded the wealth tax, introduced an inheritance tax, and established a progressive tax system based on ability to pay.

Instead of attacking teachers and education workers, the Premier could have negotiated a fair provincial agreement, achieved settlements across the province, and kept schools open and operating through June, free of provincial pressure to close and/or sell upwards of 600 schools.

The whole public sector is affected by the Liberals' wage freeze and "net zero" bargaining. Last month, workers at York University won a breakthrough agreement after a strike supported by many York students. U of T workers who struck at the same time, over the same issues are likely to get a similar settlement in arbitration. Today, secondary and elementary teachers and education workers are leading the fight to maintain quality public education in schools across the province.

The public will not support government attempts to increase class sizes and close schools to cut costs. Students are not widgets on a production line, and schools are not factories. With unity and solidarity, this is a struggle that can be won.

We call on the labour and democratic movements and all those who support free collective bargaining and universal, quality public education to condemn back to work legislation and demand the provincial government and School Boards negotiate in good faith. We demand the Wynne government stop the cuts and school closures and deliver the needs-based funding formula for public education promised in 2003. It's the Liberals' failure to deliver this funding formula that is at the heart of this made-in-Queen's-Park crisis.

We salute teachers and education workers on the line to protect and enhance public education today. We will do everything we can to mobilize solidarity and support across Ontario. ●

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Enclosed please find my donation of \$_____ to the 2015 People's Voice Press Fund Drive.

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Private clinics challenge threatens health care, warns CCPA

Special to PV

For months, the threat of a legal challenge to the universal Medicare system has loomed on the political horizon. The challenge launched in B.C. by Dr. Brian Day's Cambie Surgeries Corporation has been postponed several times; at the moment, it appears that the case may be heard starting November 2015 by the British Columbia Supreme Court.

If successful, Dr. Day's challenge to the provincial Medicare Protection Act will impact all Canadians in every province and territory, says a report released by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA, www.policyalternatives.ca/).

The report, by CCPA research associate Colleen Fuller, examines recent attempts by private sector advocates to challenge the right to universal public health care in the courts, with a focus on the current Charter challenge. It reviews the evidence on the impact of for-profit providers and payers on wait times and looks at the potential consequences a successful bid could have on Canada's most valued and cherished public program.

"This is not the first or only Charter challenge to provincial and federal medicare laws," says Fuller. "However, it poses the most serious threat to the principles of equality and universality that Canada's public health care system is built upon."

According to the report, the

plaintiffs in *Cambie Surgeries Corporation et al. v. Medical Services Commission et al.* hope to build on the 2005 *Chaoulli* case, which challenged Quebec's ban on private insurance for medically necessary care. But the B.C. Charter case is a much broader challenge, seeking to eliminate the ban on extra-billing and user fees as well as B.C.'s ban on private insurance for services covered by public health insurance.

"The plaintiffs are asking the Court to legalize extra-billing, user fees and private insurance. If they are successful, it will affect the ability of the Canada Health Act and every provincial health

insurance plan to allocate access to physician and hospital services according to need rather than ability to pay," Fuller explains. "Stripped of these regulatory pillars, Canadians can expect to pay more out of pocket for health care whether or not they are privately insured."

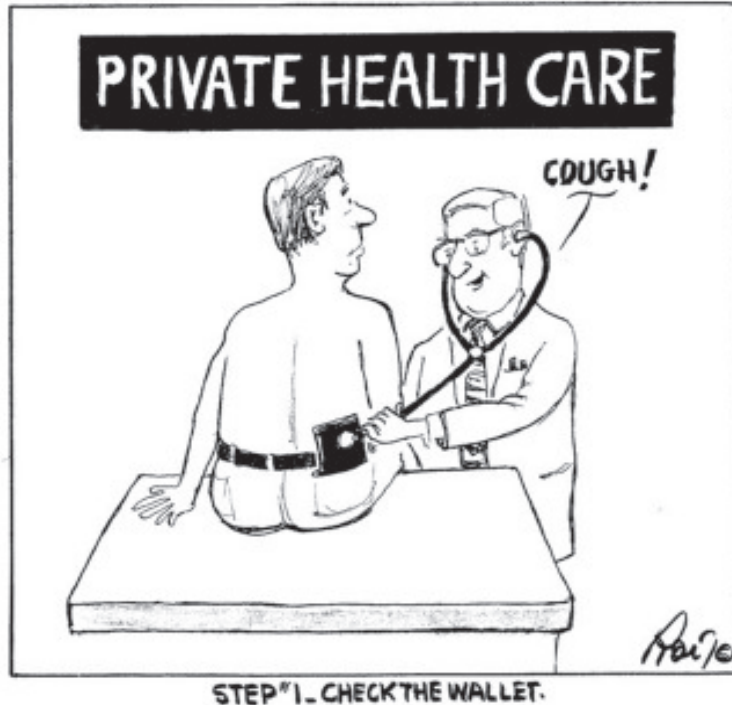
The plaintiffs argue that if two-tier care is allowed, wait times will improve. However, the report demonstrates that countries with a two-tier or multi-tier health care system do not experience shorter wait times due to the participation of a parallel private tier. In fact, private payment options increase wait times for those who rely on

the public system and increase costs overall while providing poorer patient outcomes.

In Canada, private insurance is an unlikely option for the vast majority of people. It is doubtful employer sponsored health benefit plans will be able to support additional costs associated with the provision of private services. Employers looking to control costs have already cancelled or reduced benefits for hundreds of thousands

of working people in Canada, including retirees.

"Public opinion research has shown that people across the country support innovation in the public health care system designed to enhance access and reduce wait times. Governments have had strong support for positive, public reforms since medicare was first introduced. It is time for them to act on this mandate," concludes Fuller. ●



Coroner rules sawmill deaths "accidental"

PV Vancouver Bureau

A coroner's inquest has ruled the April 2012 deaths of two men at the Lakeland Mills explosion in Prince George, B.C., as accidental. The May 14 ruling includes 33 recommendations aimed at improving workplace safety.

In April 2012, Glenn Roche and Allan Little died when the Lakeland Mills exploded. Another 24 workers were injured. The inquest recommended a review of emergency response and ambulance procedures, penalties for non-compliance with the B.C. fire code, and improvements to the way in which workplace deaths are investigated and prosecuted.

Stephen Hunt, Director of the United Steelworkers District 3, released the following statement: "We are pleased with a number of recommendations that affirm actions that our union has been calling for, specifically an emphasis on the rights of workers - including the right to refuse unsafe work - and training for police on investigations of criminal negligence in workplace deaths. The recommendations also underscore the need for a public inquiry into the sawmill explosions to deliver on the promised accountability and justice for victims and their families. The Premier made that commitment; despite the fact that by its very nature an inquest is unable to provide it. A glaring example is the failure of the Inquest to assess the flawed investigation by WorkSafeBC and why the agency did not enforce safety regulations. There are now even more outstanding questions that need to be answered... This has been very hard on the families who lost loved ones, and at the very least, they deserve to see the Premier to live up to her government's commitment of justice for victims."

Irene Lanzinger, President of the BC Federation of Labour, said that she was "pleased to see some strong directives regarding strengthening joint health and safety committees and reinforcing workers' rights, including full and meaningful participation in incident investigations. In addition, recommendations regarding enhanced capacity to pursue criminal negligence charges in cases of workplace serious injury and death are essential. The BC Federation of Labour, along with the United Steelworkers, has long demanded that negligent employers be held accountable."

"However, there remain some glaring holes in the recommendations coming from this inquest. The BC Federation of Labour continues to insist that the systemic issues within WCB and the need for more prescriptive regulations must be fully examined, and that requires a full public inquiry. The mandate of the Coroner's Inquest, as a strictly fact-finding process, is too restrictive to achieve this."

Commenting at the time on the sawmill explosions at Lakeland and Burns Lake (where two more workers died) People's Voice pointed to broader concerns about the potentially deadly impacts of over-cutting and climate change.

That article said, "Faced with a drastic shortage of fibre to supply mills, the provincial government has encouraged companies to harvest beetle-infected trees before they crumble into stumps. Workers and industry analysts say that processing these trees creates a finer form of sawdust, with far more potential for the type of explosions which destroyed mills in Burns Lake and Prince George. In other words, the scramble for corporate profits which began over a century ago probably set in motion a series of policy decisions which are killing today's millworkers. Several immediate measures must be taken to end this slaughter, starting with the installation of more effective technology to remove sawdust from the workplace. An end to the shocking export of high-quality logs from British Columbia would save jobs and make the mills safer. There are also unanswered questions about the effect of speed-up on the type of dust created in sawmills." ●

Ontario Injured Workers' Conference

Injured workers, their families, advocates and unions from around Ontario will gather from 11 am to 1 pm on June 1, as they have every year since 1983, in front of the Legislative Assembly at Queen's Park. Following the Injured Workers' Day activities, a joint conference will be held June 1-2 at the Steelworkers Hall (25 Cecil St., Toronto), focusing on the state of today's workers' compensation system. For more information, visit <http://injuredworkersonline.org/events/> ●

Museum cuts Winnipeg General Strike exhibit

The Windsor Star's Joanna Smith reports that a room in the Canadian Museum of History devoted to the 1919 Winnipeg General Strike will be excluded from the renovated facility. According to a document obtained by the Toronto Star in response to an access to information request, a summary of a draft renovation risk assessment prepared for the Museum argued last year that "Changes can be made to the module with few political or institutional risks."

"Some comments by academics cite the closure as evidence of the museum's lack of interest in working class history ... The removal of this module represents minimal risk to the museum, though it will entail communications challenges to the academic community," says the document.

The exhibit, which opened in 1999, was modelled after a meeting room in the Labour Temple on James St. in Winnipeg, where union members met to debate, organize and vote in the months leading up to, and during, the massive strike. Created using a photo from the Manitoba Carpenters Union, the exhibit also included a recreated prairie-town streetscape, featuring a print shop, a Chinese hand laundry and a reassembled Ukrainian Catholic church, in the permanent exhibition space at the museum. The streetscape has been dismantled to make way for the new Canadian History Hall, scheduled to open July 1, 2017.

Located in Gatineau, Quebec, the institution was formerly known as the Canadian Museum of Civilization. The name change along with a new mandate were

widely seen as part of a political agenda imposed by the Harper Conservatives to rewrite history along right-wing lines.

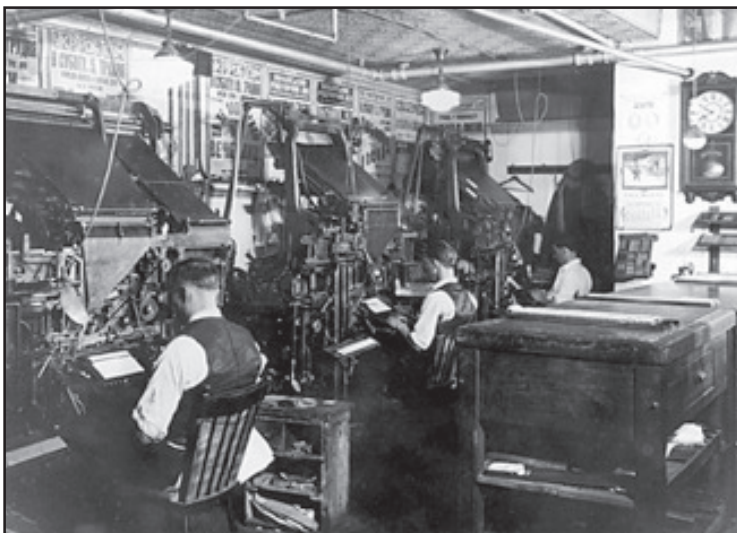
The Museum denies that the removal of the Labour Temple is connected to the anti-labour policies of the Conservatives, and claims that there was poor attendance at the exhibit.

"Government is certainly not telling us what to put into the hall. Nor do they know what we are putting into the hall. We are not reporting to them and they are not telling us what to do. There is a very high level of cynicism and paranoia out there," said David Morrison, the director of research and content for the Canadian History Hall project.

But the Canadian Labour Congress was not consulted about the changes, and called on the museum to include the history of organized labour in its future plans.

"What is critical for the curators of the museum to recognize is this is an important aspect of Canada and the development of Canada," says Hassan Yussuff, CLC president. "If they didn't adequately design the room to allow traffic to appreciate the contribution of workers in this country, then this is an opportunity to fix that - not get rid of it, by the way. Quite the opposite."

The new hall is still in the planning stages, but Chantal Schryer, vice-president of corporate affairs at the museum, said labour history will be included, and that the virtual version of the exhibit will remain on the museum website. ●



Ukrainian Labour Temple print shop, Winnipeg, ca. 1929. Visit www.historymuseum.ca/cmhc/exhibitions/hist/phase2/mod3e.shtml

EDITORIALS

Whopper of the Month Award

As a working class publication, we were intrigued to receive an email with the subject line "Release from Working Canadians", announcing the launch of radio ads highlighting Justin Trudeau's "inability to relate to and stand up for ordinary working Canadians." Suffice it to say that the "evidence" for this charge is that the Liberal leader fails to support Stephen Harper's tax breaks designed mainly to benefit upper-income families where one parent (guess who?) stays at home.

Justin Trudeau is indeed a third-generation multi-millionaire, and his party certainly won't be endorsed here. But the real story behind "Working Canadians" should be known to every activist in the labour and democratic movements as we head towards the Oct. 19 federal election.

Oddly enough, this new organization is fronted by a spokesperson named Catherine Swift, who can be interviewed by contacting Gisele Lumsden. According to the website, "Working Canadians" are "volunteer individuals concerned that union leaders have too much influence over government... they drive up taxes, debt and deficits and make it harder for people and businesses to get ahead and create jobs." Those who sort through hundreds of emails every day may recognize these names as current or former staffers for the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, a prominent anti-union lobby group. To give just one example, the CFIB recently urged the federal government to slash wages and benefits for public sector employees by \$20 billion per year, an average pay cut of \$8,150. Enough said.

A phone call to "Working Canadians" confirms that Lumsden is still on the CFIB payroll (part-time), while Swift has retired from the CFIB. But this new organization, they say, is run by volunteers. That may well be so at the moment. However, while they masquerade as "working folk," this group actually speaks for a very different category of the population: right-wing business owners, not "ordinary working Canadians." Don't be fooled!

Apartheid is the real hate crime

The Conservative government keeps escalating its threats to criminalize solidarity with the Palestinian people, such as by classifying support for the Boycott, Disinvestment and Sanctions (BDS) campaign against Israeli apartheid as "hate speech" or even potentially as terrorism under the terms of police state Bill C-51. It remains to be seen whether these threats will result in specific legislation or perhaps criminal charges under current Canadian laws, but the immediate effect is to create a "free speech chill," discouraging participation in the BDS movements. The unfortunate fact that the NDP, Liberal and Green parties all to varying degrees oppose the boycott campaign reinforces the attempt by the Tories to impose a so-called "zero tolerance" strategy.

But what is the real hate crime in this situation? A new World Bank economic update notes that Israeli blockades and wars have strangled Gaza's economy, creating an unemployment rate of 43% (the highest in the world), and over 60% among youth. The Israeli blockade in place since 2007 has shaved around 50 percent off Gaza's GDP. Exports have virtually disappeared and the manufacturing sector has shrunk by 60 percent. Gaza's population of 1.8 million suffers from poor access and quality of basic services such as electricity, water, and sewerage. Most are confined to an area of 160 square kilometres, unable to travel outside without Israeli permits. Well over one-third of Gaza's children suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder.

The conclusion is inescapable. Israel's official policies constitute a new form of apartheid, as veterans of the South African liberation struggle have pointed out for many years. The true criminals are those who impose this racist system on the Palestinian people - and their backers who justify such appalling racism, including politicians in Canada.

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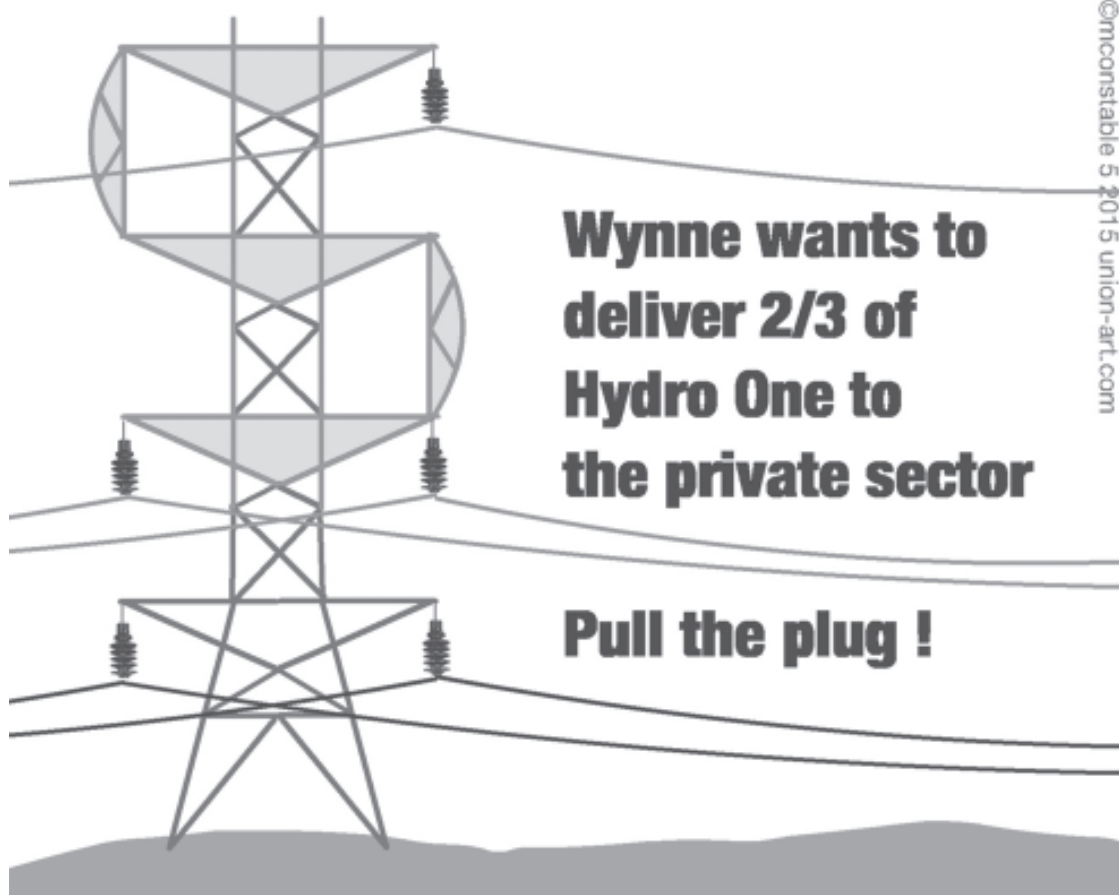
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Ontario Liberals scheme to privatize Hydro One

By Liz Rowley

The battle against privatization in Ontario is gathering steam as the Liberal government moves to sell Hydro One – the largest supplier of publicly owned and controlled electricity in North America. The privatization was hidden in the budget presented in April with little fanfare. The government knew the move would be unpopular, as the Harris Tories had tried to do the same thing in 2002, only to be forced to back off by an irate public.

So Premier Wynne proposed to sell off 60%, and "keep" 40%, claiming this would allow for public control, while "unlocking the value" tied up in Hydro One to pay for the government's unfunded 10 year, \$130 billion infrastructure program.

Indeed this is a valuable asset: debt-free, unencumbered with Ontario's nuclear plants, and generating a tidy profit of \$1 billion a year for the provincial treasury. It also produces a reliable stream of relatively cheap and reliable electricity for residents, industry, and business. So why sell it off?

The bankers - Don Drummond and Ed Clark - recommended the sell-off, in answer to Wynne's request for proposals to restructure public services and assets, to pay for the infrastructure plan which was the centerpiece of the Liberals' 2014 election platform. The plan could have been paid for by

increasing the corporate tax rate, which is the lowest in the industrialized world, and much lower than the Great Lake states around Ontario. But the Liberals have committed to further reduce corporate taxes, while also eliminating the provincial deficit.

Just one thing is left to do: liquidate public services and assets, and reduce public sector jobs, wages, benefits and pensions. This fits with the government's "big picture" austerity plans and the overarching goal to make government smaller.

The Liberals are currently attacking unionized public sector workers (and non-union workers as well), and have already sold off land and buildings in Toronto and other big cities. The privatized Service Ontario is now operating out of Canadian Tire stores. Public hospitals are being closed and replaced with P3 hospitals and private clinics. School closures ordered by the Liberals are also part of the picture, as School Boards are expected to use those assets in lieu of capital funding from the province, to repair and rebuild aging schools.

The sell-off of Hydro One is being described as the cornerstone of the Liberals' privatization agenda. There are so many things wrong with this plan, it's hard to know where to start. First is the loss of \$1 billion a year in income to fund social programs and public services.

Second is the hand-over of a highly profitable crown corporation to the private sector, which will immediately turn it into a profitable cash cow and raise residential and industrial rates.

Third is the loss of control of electricity production in Ontario. The 2004 blackout due to private ownership and control of the US electrical grids, and Ontario's reliance on those grids, should be enough reason by itself to keep Hydro public. Add in provincial Ombudsman Andre Marin's report exposing massive over-billing problems, compounded by a massive cover-up in 2014, and the facts speak for themselves.

The issue of the public interest

and control, which the Premier says are assured with 40% control, is another ruse by the Liberals. In fact, the public's "representatives" need not be accountable to the government or the public. They could easily end up being bankers or corporate hedge fund managers whose interests are diametrically opposed to the public interest.

This is a very bad deal for Ontario. And the government knows it, so they are hurrying to push the budget Bill through the Legislature as quickly as possible.

The Electricity Coalition, which led the fight against the Harris Tories, is reconvening. The labour movement, Council of Canadians, the NDP and Communist Party, among many others, are mobilizing public opinion. These were the forces that stopped the Tories in 2002, and they can stop the Liberals in 2015.

One immediate battle is to force the government to hold public hearings, which will provide the opportunity to widely expose the folly of the privatization of Hydro, and provide more time to mobilize opposition.

For information, contact the Communist Party (Ontario) at 416-469-2446, www.communistpartyontario.ca.

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Iran: nuclear “deal” a timid, imperfect step in a better direction

By Dave McKee

The recently-concluded Joint Plan of Action (JPA) nuclear deal between Iran and the P5+1 countries (US, Britain, France, Russia, China and Germany) represents a positive step on a number of levels. At the same time, however, the agreement is extremely limited and fails to address many key issues. It is crucial that the peace movement renew its longstanding effort to achieve global, comprehensive nuclear disarmament and the abolition of all nuclear weapons, as a key factor in building genuine and lasting peace.

The Iran/P5+1 deal demonstrates that an effort based on diplomacy and transparency can achieve positive results. This stands in obvious contrast to the longstanding approach taken by the US and its allies in NATO and Israel – military buildup, provocation, interference and outright aggression – which have only yielded death, destruction and instability.

The JPA helps to defuse regional tensions and relieve Iran's isolation within much of the international community. Of immediate importance for the Iranian people, the deal promises to eliminate many of the harsh, decade-long economic sanctions that have helped cripple their country's economy.

Significantly, the negotiations and outcome have drawn increased international attention to the question of nuclear disarmament. This is an important, and hopefully lasting, development. Since the end of the Cold War, the focus on disarmament has severely diminished. Furthermore, much of the ongoing discussion has been dominated by a sweeping mish mash of analysis that lumps all states as having equal responsibility with the US and NATO for nuclear proliferation. As the JPA continues to be analyzed, it is possible – even

likely – that clearer, anti-imperialist positions will attract more attention, and this will help the broad peace movement to develop strategies for stronger disarmament campaigning.

With all of this in mind, it is

65 year-old “Stockholm Appeal” still points the way: Abolish all nuclear weapons!

critical to note that the Joint Plan of Action remains a timid and imperfect step that will quickly fail to live up to its promise if it is left to its own devices. The deal is scheduled to be in effect for six months, while the parties negotiate a “comprehensive agreement” on Iran's nuclear program. However, there is no guaranteed timeline for the elimination of sanctions, nor a clear agreement on which sanctions will be lifted and which may be continued. The fact that officials from Iran and the US are referencing and circulating different versions of the agreement indicates that they remain far apart on what the JPA allows and requires.

Far from setting the stage for a comprehensive agreement, the JPA avoids the key issues that drive instability, militarization and nuclear proliferation in the Middle East region. There is no discussion of the role of Israel, an aggressive ally of the US that possesses nuclear weapons but has not signed the Non-Proliferation Treaty. This is rather perverse, given that the JPA's focus – Iran – is a signatory to the NPT and does not, in fact, possess a nuclear weapon.

Similarly, the JPA does not discuss the issues of military buildup in the region by the US and its allies, foreign interference in the domestic affairs of sovereign states, or any of the main aspects of imperialism's New Middle East strategy. As a result, the JPA avoids engaging the fundamentals of the overall confrontation between the

US and Iran. In so doing, the agreement actually allows these key issues to continue to build and become a greater threat to Iran, the region and beyond.

To emphasize this point, only one month after inking the Joint

Plan of Action the US unveiled a Missile Defence Strategy for the Gulf Cooperation Council. Under this agreement, the Gulf monarchies would receive a flood of missile defence (MD) technology from the US, as well as streamlined weapon sales and increased joint military exercises, with the express purpose of protecting them against Iran. Deploying MD, which is a vital aspect of the US first-strike strategy, is an enormously provocative action that immediately undermines the JPA and risks escalating tensions further.

The pretext used by the US and its allies to justify the sanctions against Iran was that the country's program for the peaceful development of nuclear technology was cover for a nuclear weapons program. Many countries all over the world, including Canada, have nuclear energy and nuclear medicine programs; but only a few of these countries are identified as targets for sanctions. There is more clear evidence, for example, to argue the case that Canada's nuclear industry is linked to the nuclear arms industry (of the United States), than there is for the case of Iran. Recently, the Harper government agreed to sell uranium to India, a nuclear weapons state that has not signed the NPT. Furthermore, by virtue of its NATO membership, Canada is unquestioningly part of a military organization that possesses nuclear weapons and maintains a first-use strategy. Yet, Iran is singled out

for sanctions and harassment, while Canada continues to participate in nuclear arms development.

This selective treatment must end. A truly comprehensive agreement would explicitly defend a country's right to develop peaceful nuclear technology. It would also clearly enforce a prohibition on nuclear weapons development and use by all countries, regardless of economic or political status.

Nuclear disarmament – indeed, all disarmament – is a critical issue that must be achieved if humanity is to survive. To effectively pursue this goal, the countries of the world must commit to comprehensive, universal disarmament – of nuclear weapons, weapons of mass destruction and conventional weapons – not single, one-off agreements that are tentative, fluid and fleeting.

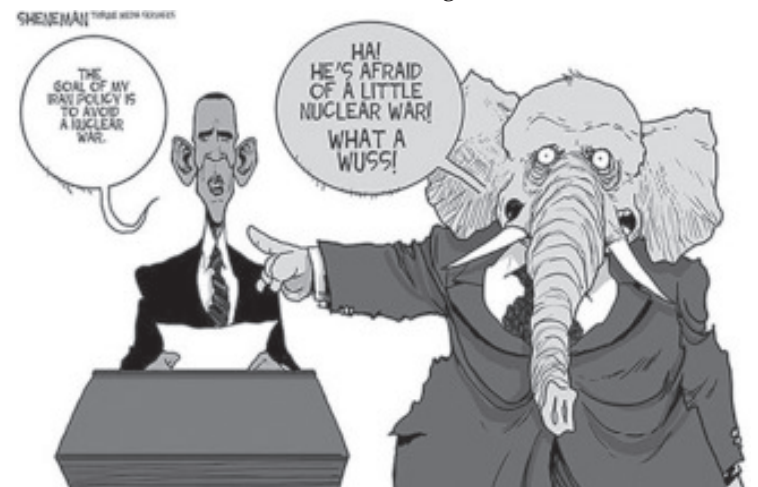
In March 1950, following the end of World War II, the international peace movement founded the World Peace Council and launched the Stockholm Appeal for Peace. The Appeal was signed by over 270 million people around the world, and called for nuclear weapons to be abolished.

Now, 65 years later, the text of the Stockholm Appeal still points the way forward for nuclear disarmament:

“We demand the outlawing of atomic weapons as instruments of intimidation and mass murder of peoples. We demand strict international control to enforce this measure. We believe that any government which first uses atomic weapons against any other country whatsoever will be committing a crime against humanity and should be dealt with as a war criminal. We call on all men and women of good will throughout the world to sign this appeal.”

In the spirit of Stockholm, peace activists and groups in Canada need to call on the government to reorient its foreign policy away from provocation, interference, aggression and war. Canada needs a new, independent foreign policy based on peace. This country can and should disengage from the imperialist camp, including withdrawing from NATO and halting its military trade with the United States and NATO countries. Canada should normalize relations with Iran and end all sanctions. The Canadian government should become a voice promoting comprehensive disarmament.

Dave McKee is President of the Canadian Peace Congress. This article first appeared in Canadian Peace Bulletin, quarterly publication of the Peace Congress. ●



Conservatives pushing to criminalize Israeli boycott campaign

By Kimball Cariou, Vancouver

The Harper government is signalling its intent to crack down against the movement for Boycott, Disinvestment and Sanctions (BDS) against Israel. But it remains to be seen whether criminal penalties will be imposed against BDS activists before the October 19 federal election.

This controversy has been building up for several years, as the Conservatives make Canada the most vocal international supporter for Israel's occupation of Palestinian lands. PM Harper and his cabinet ministers have become increasingly shrill in their backing for the policies of the Netanyahu government.

Meanwhile, the rest of the world is moving in the opposite direction, in support of full Palestinian statehood, and recognizing that Israel's racist policies resemble the apartheid system created by the minority white South African regime which held power until

1993. Last month, 16 European foreign ministers denounced the “expansion of Israeli illegal settlements in the Occupied Territories,” demanding that any imported goods originating in the settlements be distinctly labelled.

Here in Canada, there is rising support for the Palestinian cause, particularly in the wake of Israel's bloody military assaults against Gaza, the growth of settler communities on expropriated Palestinian areas, and the “apartheid wall” which slices the shrinking Palestinian areas of the West Bank into ever tinier, unsustainable chunks.

The Harper Tories have condemned public opposition to these racist policies as “hate speech.” The Conservatives and their allies (and many leading Liberals and NDPers) have spoken out strongly against campus events to mark the annual Anti-Israeli

Apartheid week, and in particular against the BDS campaign which was begun in 2006 at the request of Palestinian non-governmental organizations.

Last January, in one of his final actions before jumping Harper's ship to begin a new life in the corporate sector, Canada's previous foreign affairs minister, John Baird, signed a “memorandum of understanding” with Israeli authorities in Jerusalem. The MOU pledged to combat the BDS movement, which it calls “the new face of anti-Semitism.”

Speaking a few days later at the United Nations, Canada's Public Security Minister, Steven Blaney (the official cabinet point person on Bill C-51), claimed that boycotts of Israel were the same as anti-Jewish hate speech and violence, such as the terrorist attacks on the Charlie Hebdo magazine and a kosher

supermarket in Paris. Blaney said the Harper government was taking a “zero tolerance” approach to BDS.

Not surprisingly, since Blaney is responsible for federal law enforcement, his speech set off alarm bells among groups that support the BDS campaign or specific boycotts as a tactic to oppose Israel's occupation of the West Bank and Gaza. Many pointed out a change last year to the Criminal Code definition of hate speech, adding the criterion of “national origin” to race and religion.

Micheal Vonn, a lawyer for the British Columbia Civil Liberties Association, says the expanded definition is clearly “a tool to go after critics of Israel.” Civil liberties groups argue that boycotts are a long-recognized type of political expression, and therefore a constitutionally protected form of free speech.

Bill C-51 added to the tensions, with its extremely broad definition of terrorism, including “under-

mining” the national security of another country – a term which in the current political context many activists understood as a reference to Israel.

On May 11, senior CBC News Washington correspondent Neil Macdonald reported that the Conservatives were preparing to use hate crime laws against advocacy groups that encourage boycotts of Israel. While the government has disputed Macdonald's report, a clear pattern has been emerging.

The federal government does have the authority to assign priorities to the RCMP, such as pursuing certain types of hate speech. Blaney's aide Josee Sirois wrote to CBC News, pointing out that provisions in the Criminal Code criminalize the promotion of hatred against an identifiable group, including any section of the public distinguished by “among other characteristics, religion or

How we see it...

"Canadian troops have no place in Ukraine conflict"

We reprint here a speech by organizers of the Victory Day commemoration held in Vancouver, BC, May 9, 2015

On May 9, 2015 and the days surrounding it, progressive humanity celebrates the 70th Anniversary of the end of the World War II. It was the bloodiest war in history; 46 million people perished, among them 30 million were unarmed civilians. In May 1945, the Nazi regime of Germany capitulated, conceding defeat by the Allied Forces. These forces were made up of the armies of 53 countries, notably the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the United States of America and Great Britain. Canadian military were part of the Allied Forces, too.

World War II began on September 1, 1939 when Nazi Germany invaded Poland. Meeting weak resistance, the Third Reich in a short time occupied most of continental Europe. It established there its "new order" and took control of the human and material resources. Hitler and his clique were getting ready for their main task – to destroy the Soviet Union, to enslave and eliminate its peoples.

On June 22, 1941, without declaring war and in violation of the Treaty of Non-aggression signed by Germany and the Soviet Union in 1939, the armed forces of Nazi Germany attacked the territory of the Soviet Union all along its western borders. Along with the military actions against the Red Army, German air forces carried out massive air raids on Soviet cities, industrial facilities and transportation hubs. It marked the beginning of the Great Patriotic War of the Soviet Union against the German-fascist occupants. This bloody and merciless fight with the enemy continued for almost four years, resulting in the defeat of the Third Reich. In May 1945, the Red Army hoisted the red banner of Victory on the top of the Reichstag in Berlin. May 9 was declared the great national

holiday.

This great and long awaited victory was achieved by the peoples of the Soviet Union at a cost that is today impossible to measure. As a result of the German aggression and occupation, over 26 million Soviet people died. That includes 8 million Red Army soldiers who fell in the battlefields. The German command carried out a scorched-earth policy in the war against the USSR. Cities and villages as well as industrial, scientific and transportation infrastructure were subjected to the total destruction. Nazi Germany caused staggering damage to the Soviet Union and its peoples – some 30% of the national wealth was destroyed; in the occupied regions the number was about 67%.

Today, we celebrate the great contribution the Allied Forces made to defeat Nazi Germany and its allies. At the same time, we should not forget that the main burden of war against German Nazism and fascism in Europe fell on the shoulders of the peoples of the Soviet Union and its Red Army. For three years until the Anti-Hitler Coalition opened the Second Front, the Soviet Union had been fighting the Wehrmacht's military might practically alone. In four years of war, the Soviet Red Army destroyed over 80% of the German's military machine. Not only did the Red Army push the invaders off the Soviet territory, but, at the cost of the Soviet soldiers' lives, it liberated the major part of Eastern and Central Europe from the German occupation. Here are the numbers of the Soviet warriors fallen for the freedom in Europe:

Poland - 600,212, Romania - 68,993, Czechoslovakia - 139,918, Austria - 26,006, Hungary - 140,004, Germany - 101,961, Norway - 3,436, Yugoslavia - 7,995, Bulgaria - 977.

We will never forget the soldiers-liberators of the Red Army and the Allied Forces!

Yet, along with joy and sorrow,

the celebration of today's Victory Day brings a feeling of bitterness and alarm. There are relentless attempts to rewrite the history of World War II, to whitewash and rehabilitate fascism and Nazism. Last year, the USA and the Harper government along with NATO installed in Ukraine a neo-Nazi junta. Presently, this country is reigned in lawlessness and terror. People are arrested on the slightest suspicion of disloyalty to the "new" authorities. Many disappear without a trace. The open opponents of the regime are murdered demonstratively. Tens of prominent public activists and journalists have become targets of the political terror in Ukraine. The Kiev regime has launched a ruthless military offensive against the regions which declared their independence from the "New Order" in Ukraine. As a result, over 6,000 have died, tens of thousands have been wounded and over one million have been displaced.

Currently, a ceasefire is being

observed in Ukraine. However, the Poroshenko government is not keeping secret that it is preparing for revenge. Its plans they are being pushed by the United States and NATO. The Harper government alone has already given Kiev over half a billion dollars to continue the war and has announced that it will deploy to Ukraine 200 Canadian troops. These actions do not help at all to normalize the situation in Ukraine, and a smallest spark is enough to turn this local conflict in eastern Ukraine into a regional war.

In World War II, Canada was fighting Nazism and fascism along with the Allied Forces. The sons and daughters of Canada were giving their lives for peace and freedom. However, today, the Canadian government is on the wrong side of history. The Harper government, is supporting the neo-Nazi regime in Ukraine in every possible way. In November 2014, out of all countries on the globe, it was only Canada, the United States and Ukraine which voted against a

United Nations resolution combatting the glorification of Nazism.

On this 70th Anniversary of the Great Victory, in the memory of the Canadians who died fighting Nazism and fascism, in the memory of all the victims of World War II, we demand that the government of Canada in no uncertain terms condemn any forms of neo-Nazism and neo-fascism, including those that are happening in Ukraine. We also strongly declare: NO Canadian money, NO Canadian weapons for the war criminals in Kiev! Canadian troops have no place in the conflict in Ukraine!

Dear friends. In conclusion, please allow us to congratulate you on the Day of the Great Victory. Long live the victory of the anti-Hitler coalition in World War II! Our eternal gratitude goes to the soldiers-liberators of the Red Army and the Allied Forces! The memory and the glory of their feat will live for ages! Long live world peace! ●



Participants at a similar Vancouver rally held in June 2014

"MOSCOW APPEAL" by international democratic organizations

We, the representatives of international democratic organizations - the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU), the World Peace Council (WPC), the Women's International Democratic Federation (WIDF), the International Association of Democratic Lawyers (IADL), the World Federation of Democratic Youth (WFDY), the International Federation of Resistance Fighters' Association of Anti-Fascists (FIR), who have gathered in Moscow for the celebration of the 70th anniversary of the Victory over Fascism, hereby declare:

It is 70 years since our great common victory over fascism, under the banner of Victory, progressive, anti-imperialist, anti-fascist forces of the world have united for joint actions to prevent a repeat of the tragedy that carried away tens of millions of lives by fighting together against the root causes of war and oppression.

The victory over world fascism and militarism gave a powerful impetus to the spread of the ideas of social justice and national equality. The year 1945 saw an upsurge of the movement for national liberation of many countries from the dominance of imperialism and colonialism as well as universal social transformations aimed at solving acute social problems and democratization of social and political life along with creating new societies. The lessons from the Victory over fascism as well from the causes which have led to the war are present today in a period of growing imperialist aggressiveness, occupation and threats to the sovereignty of the peoples, in a period of deep global economic crisis of capitalism. We declare our vehement opposition and denounce under this light the role of NATO, the armed wing of imperialism which is committing for more than 66 years crimes against humanity under old and

new pretexts. We condemn likewise the efforts for the further militarization of the EU, with the plans to establish a permanent EU army.

The activities of our international organizations over the seven decades of their existence contributed greatly to the preservation of world peace, to the achievement of national independence by many countries, to social and political progress of humankind. The relevance of our experience is particularly evident in our day in the year of the 70th anniversary of the Great Victory. The events of recent years have shown that peace has not grown stronger. Wars are raging in various regions, neo-fascists and extremists are rearing their heads, and efforts are being made to pervert the history of the Second World War and rehabilitate fascism. The forces which at the end of 1945 were hiding like cowards in European forests or were secretly harboring their evil

designs now openly take to the streets of European cities perpetrating barbaric acts of violence with regard to the civilian population. In some countries of the world medieval customs and procedures are being revived that violate the social and political rights, especially of women. The call "People, Be Vigilant" is relevant again. There is greater need for joint actions by all the progressive forces.

We condemn all efforts of rewriting and falsification of history, including the one of the 9th May and call upon all people to denounce and condemn the glorification of Nazism, neo-Nazism and other practices that contribute to fuelling contemporary forms of racism and xenophobia.

We, the representatives of international organizations, are launching an appeal to defend historical memory. We call for a decisive end to the propaganda of the ideas of racism and genocide.

We are sure that the experience of seven decades of the struggle against fascism and war, for peace and democracy, for social and political rights may once again provide a powerful impetus to protecting humanity from new threats to its existence.

We bow our heads in memory of those who gave their lives in the struggle for our freedom. We bow our heads to the courage and the heroic feat of the Soviet people who have made the decisive contribution to Victory. We remember the names of the best sons and daughters of European peoples who fought in the Resistance units. We call on the peoples of the world to make their historic contribution to the struggle for peace, for freedom from tyranny, for a world where the peoples will be the masters of their fortunes, without imperialist domination and exploitation.

Moscow, May 7, 2015 ●

Fighting Chevron in Washington DC

By Drew Garvie & Peter Miller, May 19, 2015,
<http://rebelyouth-magazine.blogspot.ca>

In late April, we, along with three other members of the Young Communist League of Canada, had the honour of attending a historic event in Washington DC. We were part of a caravan of buses leaving from Ontario to attend a rally and conference in solidarity with indigenous peoples in Ecuador fighting the oil giant Chevron.

The place and time of the solidarity events were chosen by Chevron. The corporation has been trying to avoid paying for one of the worst environmental disasters in history, that it created by dumping billions of gallons of toxic sludge in the Ecuadorean Amazon. In 2011, it was ordered to pay \$9.5 billion dollars to clean up the mess. Chevron has yet to pay up. There is an ongoing case in Canada where the indigenous plaintiffs could receive justice through assets in Canada. What brought us to Washington, the heart of the leading imperialist power, was the result one of Chevron's latest dirty tricks it is using to avoid cleaning up its mess. It has decided to take Ecuador to court through the World Bank's International Center for Settlement of Investment Disputes.

Chevron is trying to use this closed tribunal, built on imperialist principles, to wiggle out of paying its debt. To combat this maneuver the "Committee in Solidarity with the Affected Communities by Chevron in Canada" joined activists from the U.S. outside the World Bank headquarters on April 21st.

What made this solidarity action historic was the meeting of indigenous peoples from North, Central and South America. From

the North, over 100 people from the Haudenosaunee communities located in Ontario travelled for more than 12 hours to stand in solidarity with their sisters and brothers from the South.

From Central America, Dr. Rigoberta Menchú, the renowned Mayan leader from Guatemala and Nobel Peace Prize winner, spoke strongly at both the rally and the conference. Over a thousand other people, many of whom are South American, including indigenous peoples, also made long journeys to add their voices to the chants of

"Justice for Ecuador!"

The events were very powerful to the participants due to both the justness of the cause and because of the existence of the Eagle and the Condor Prophecy. This is a shared prophecy that foretells the coming together of indigenous peoples from North and South America. The indigenous speakers stressed the importance of unity in the face of a common enemy; corporations and their governments.

In her keynote address Menchú outlined the goals of the campaign: "...I want to greet the indigenous people from the Amazon that have suffered from the ecocide

committed by Chevron. Greetings to the First Nations of Canada. They know what destruction means, and I want to give a big hug, to the brothers and sisters of the First Nations of Canada. We want to greet all the indigenous cultures that are here. We have to say that we have to protect our mother, our mother earth, and that any offence against our mother means that we are affecting life. The offence made against mother earth, is an offence against all life, including each one of our lives. That is why we are here.

"We are witnesses of the destruction made to the Amazon in Ecuador. Chevron during many

years has polluted the rivers, the waters, the plants, and taken many lives. This is a struggle against Chevron, and Chevron has to compensate, or pay back the people who have been affected in the Amazon. We are witnesses to the damages caused to the Amazon region in Ecuador. We are witness that there are many people that are sick, that have many illnesses. We know that we have seen the 'dirty hand'. You can see it and you can prove for yourself what happens in the Amazon. You go to the Amazon and you put your hand into the land, into the earth, your hand will come out black with oil, with all the toxic waste that is found in the Amazon. That's why we have come here to demand justice. We speak on behalf of the peoples that are the real victims.

"Now Chevron wants to become the victim after it destroyed mother earth and took out all the resources. It's not possible for humanity to be deceived by this double standard for a company. That is why we demand justice. We cannot let Chevron go unpunished, also for the acts that it has [committed] against the sovereignty of Ecuador. This is not the first time I have heard about the crimes that Chevron has committed. I have heard the same story in many indigenous communities all around the world. And so that's why we are here: so there can never again be ecocide crimes going unpunished. I'm sure that all of you have the same information that I have. And I am sure that we are here because we are convinced, that Chevron must compensate and pay for the damages caused. And also because we are convinced that they want to turn justice around. And we are not going to allow that." ●



Solidarity rally demands justice for Ecuadorian natives.

Venezuela rejects attacks against Cabello

By Rachael Boothroyd,
venezuelanalysis.com

Caracas, May 21, 2015 - Venezuelan members of parliament and spokespeople for state institutions have come together to vehemently reject a *Wall Street Journal* report which claimed that National Assembly President, Diosdado Cabello, is being probed by US federal authorities for alleged links to international drug trafficking.

The *Wall Street Journal's* May 18 article echoes recent reports in the Spanish newspaper *ABC* that allege that Cabello is implicated in an international drug ring, citing the top legislator's ex-bodyguard Leamsy Salazar, who has defected to the United States.

The article also alleges that federal prosecutors in New York and Miami and an "elite" Drug Enforcement Agency Unit have opened up an official investigation into the claims, based on interviews with renegade Bolivarian officials as well as Venezuelan and Colombian drugs traffickers under arrest in the US.

The government hit back at the report, entitled "Venezuelan Officials Suspected of Turning Country into Global Cocaine Hub," branding rumours of the US investigation as yet another international rightwing campaign aimed at smearing the Revolution's

standing on the global stage.

"We will activate a national and international campaign in defence of Diosdado Cabello... just as we defend our country from rightwing attacks," announced the president on his weekly TV show, "In Contact with Maduro".

"Whoever goes after Diosdado Cabello is going after me. We cannot accept these slanders against him... He is one of the loyal cadres (to the revolution)".

So far, the rumours hinge on the testimony of Cabello's ex-bodyguard, yet the veracity of his claims has been widely questioned due to reports that the statement was offered in exchange for a U.S. visa and asylum. The accusations have caused huge controversy at home and abroad, having targeted one of the most powerful and steadfast loyalists to the Bolivarian Revolution.

As former socialist leader Hugo Chavez's righthand man, ex-soldier Cabello participated in Chavez's underground Revolutionary Bolivarian Movement 200 (MBR-200) and participated in the attempted 1992 coup against the repressive government of Carlos Andres Perez that launched Chavez into the public spotlight. Cabello also briefly assumed the presidency of the country during the April 2002 US-sponsored coup which ousted Chavez for a period of 47 hours.

"I am unyielding in the face of any media aggression... I will not surrender... not today or tomorrow," confirmed Cabello on his weekly television programme. "I want to express my love and gratitude, up until my last breath, to our people. Thank you for so many messages of support and solidarity in the face of these attacks, which are not against Diosdado Cabello, but against the country's institutions".

ABC and the Venezuelan press which republished the reports are all currently being sued for defamation by Cabello, who re-issued a previous challenge to his detractors to "publicly show proof" against him.

The Venezuelan Supreme Court of Justice (TSJ) also echoed Cabello's sentiments that the press reports constitute an attempt to undermine Venezuela's state institutions internationally, and are

linked to ongoing efforts to unseat the government.

"They claim to reflect situations that aren't based on any plausible or possible foundations," replied the head of the TSJ, Judge Gladys Gutiérrez.

The accusations against Cabello are just the latest of many that have been levelled at Venezuelan government officials by US

see VENEZUELA, p. 11

"Venezuela is Palestine's most important ally," says Palestinian FM

By Lucas Koerner,
venueuelanalysis.com

Palestinian Authority (PA) Foreign Minister Riyad al-Maliki arrived in Caracas on May 18 for bilateral talks with his Venezuelan counterpart Delcy Rodriguez.

Speaking at a press conference marking his first official visit to the country, al-Maliki noted that Venezuela "is Palestine's most important ally". "It's a country that gives without asking for anything in return," he added.

Rodriguez reaffirmed her country's solidarity with Palestine, asserting that Venezuela is "ready at any moment to throw itself into the battle for [Palestinian] inde-

pendence and sovereignty."

Under the leadership of the late former president Hugo Chávez and his successor Nicolas Maduro, Venezuela has emerged as one of the most vocal champions of Palestine solidarity worldwide. In recent years, the South American nation has led the diplomatic charge against Israeli occupation and apartheid as well as forged close diplomatic and economic ties with the Palestinian Authority, including oil deals, emergency aid, and scholarships for Palestinian medical students.

Al-Maliki's visit coincides with period of heightened tensions between Venezuela and Spain over an April 14 resolution approved by the Spanish parliament calling for the release of jailed far right leaders it alleges to be "political

prisoners".

At the behest of Spanish Foreign Minister José Manuel García-Margallo, the Palestinian diplomat agreed to help mediate between the two countries, vowing to do "everything possible" to "bring Venezuela and Spain closer together".

As part of his visit, the PA diplomatic chief convened the first ever meeting of Palestinian ambassadors from throughout South America.

The Ramallah-based Palestinian Authority exercises civil and security control over a series of non-contiguous zones comprising 18% of the West Bank. The remainder remains under military jurisdiction as part of Israel's occupation of Palestinian land. ●



GLOBAL CLASS STRUGGLE

Swazi labour group registration

The Swaziland Federation of Trade Unions, the Swaziland Federation of Labour, and the independent Swaziland National Association of Teachers came together in March 2012 to form the Trade Union Congress of Swaziland (TUCOSWA). But shortly after the founding congress, TUCOSWA was informed that the labour law did not allow the registration of federations. As a result the country's two main employers' federations were also subsequently deregistered.

Some government officials accused the new federation of political aspirations after the TUCOSWA congress decided to boycott elections if political parties remained banned in Swaziland. At the International Labour Conference (ILC) of the ILO in 2014, the Swaziland government brushed aside accusations of repression centred on the unresolved issue of TUCOSWA's registration, in real terms constituting a ban on the federation.

The deadline of May 15, 2014, passed to meet five benchmarks - including registration of trade union and employer federations - for Swaziland to continue to benefit from preferential trade access to the US under the African Growth and Opportunity (AGOA). The US announced the withdrawal of Swaziland's AGOA eligibility effective January 1, 2015.

The situation worsened last July, with the conviction of human rights lawyer Thulani Maseko and journalist Bheki Makhubu for contempt of court. Both were given two year jail sentences after a drawn out trial. Pressure has continued in 2015 after several thousand jobs have been lost as a result of the withdrawal of AGOA eligibility, and campaigns to release Maseko and Makhubu.

The registration of TUCOSWA was finally granted before the 2015 ILC. However the focus has now moved to the imprisonment of Maseko and Makhubu, which has highlighted the plight of other political prisoners. Their supporters hope that widespread pressure will result in condemnation from African governments as well as concrete actions to get Swaziland to comply with international standards on human and labour rights.

Layoffs hit Brazil autoworkers

Thousands of workers in Brazil's auto industry have been placed on mandatory leave, the result of a major economic downturn. The industry is mired in a slump in an economy that is in its fifth year of low growth, with the IMF forecasting that GDP will contract by 1.0 percent in 2015. Sales nosedived 20 percent between January and the end of April over the same period last year, and 250 of Brazil's 8,000 car dealerships have closed their doors since the start of the year, with 12,000 jobs lost.

As recently as 2013, the industry had record sales of new cars

reaching 10,000 units a day. But the following year saw a steady fall as the government withdrew several tax sweeteners from the sector. Major automakers such as Ford, General Motors, Mercedes and Volkswagen have placed thousands of employees on mandatory leave as they respond to the falloff in sales.

Based just outside business hub Sao Paulo, Brazil's auto industry employs 139,580 people, 9.5 percent less than just 13 months ago. In mid-May, Mercedes Benz announced it was laying off 500 workers and putting a further 7,000 on mandatory leave at its plant at Sao Bernardo do Campo, a city of



800,000 boasting a long tradition of union membership. It was also a stronghold of former president Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, a union leader before the Workers Party he co-founded took power in 2003.

Budapest demo backs education

Despite pouring rain several hundred protesters participated in the "We won't give over the future!" demonstration organized in Budapest, Hungary, on May 22 by the Teachers Democratic Trade Union (PDSZ) and civil umbrella organization Human Platform. Most Hungarian teachers must live on HUF 69,000 (USD 250) a month. Among other things, PDSZ is demanding immediate wage increases, a stop to school closures, and restoration of the autonomy of universities.

The opening speech was by Mária Sándor, the initiator of the Nurses in Black protest movement, who expressed solidarity with the teachers. She said that as a parent she was also affected by the dismemberment of the quality school system, warning that the training of nurses had virtually ended in Hungary.

Civil activist Zoltán Vajda addressed the crowd in his capacity as a father as well as one of the authors of a referendum against the government announced in March. If the referendum is successful, it will be used to "stop [Prime Minister Viktor] Orbán" and to protect the school system, he said, calling on the demonstrators to support their efforts.

Well-known educator and poverty activist Nóra Ritók gave an emotional account of the growing crisis in schools in northeast Hungary, where more and more teachers and school directors are experimenting with segregation of Roma students. She demanded to know how many disadvantaged

students the religious schools were teaching, as the number is very few in her estimation.

Cathay Pacific cabin crew sit-in

Hundreds of Cathay Pacific cabin crew marched to the the Hong Kong company's headquarters at Chek Lap Kok on May 21, demanding senior management meet them to discuss their grievances over pay and benefits. Earlier, members of the 6300-strong Flight Attendants Union ended a marathon round-the-clock sit-in at Terminal One of the Hong Kong airport before taking their protest to Cathay City.

The flight attendants have threatened to carry out a summer strike if management does not scrap a new policy to reduce salaries for cabin crew. "If [chief executive Ivan] Chu Kwok-leung decides not to respond, we have no other choice but to start promoting the strike," said Dora Lai Yuk-sim, head of the Cathay Pacific Flight Attendants Union.

Lai said the union is preparing to launch a strike, possibly between August 18 and the end of that month. The union rejects the company's argument that 11 percent pay cuts are the result of "market adjustment". Under new contracts renewed after April 2, rates per flying hour have dropped from HK\$176 to HK\$159, while the ground duty allowance has also dropped from HK\$88 to HK\$79. The union estimates at least 1,100 members will be affected.

Sri Lanka health worker strikes

The All Ceylon Health Services Union said on May 24 it will continue to strike if the Minister of Health fails to meet to discuss their demands. The union's president, Samantha Koralearachchi, told the media that "last week, we carried out several strikes based on 10 demands. Over 40,000 health service workers belonging to several grades, assistant healthcare workers, lab assistants have had several issues related to salary anomalies, promotions and transfers."

Koralearachchi said that many health service workers are also being deployed in work unrelated to their assigned jobs. Despite their demands, for over 120 days, the Minister of Health has been avoiding the union workers and has failed to hold discussions.

Health services workers in all Colombo hospitals held a four hour work stoppage on May 20. They marched from the Colombo General hospital to the health ministry and managed to meet the Secretary to the Ministry of Health, who failed to provide them with a solution. Health service workers also continued to strike in central and provincial government hospitals covering several districts.

Union activist sues BP Oil

Colombian trade unionist Gilberto Torres was going to be

murdered by his captors, but now he wants justice from one of the world's biggest oil firms. Torres is taking multinational British oil giant BP to court in the UK over alleged human rights abuses, funding of paramilitaries, and complicity in kidnapping and torture, *The Guardian* reported on May 22.

Torres is seeking damages for his kidnapping 13 years ago, claiming the oil firm was involved in his abduction and murder plot. He was captured in eastern Colombia's Casanares region and released 42 days later when oil workers pressured BP with the threat of a major strike. The case represents a historic landmark, and Torres' lawyers expect it could open the door for other victims to seek justice.

The leader of a 400-worker strong union of Ocesa oil pipeline workers, Torres was kidnapped at gunpoint by paramilitaries in 2002 after organizing production disruptions to protest the disappearance of fellow union members. He claims Ocesa, and its partner BP, ordered his capture. While in captivity, Torres was tortured and interrogated, and urged to admit to being a member of revolutionary guerilla forces. He also witnessed his kidnappers torture and eventually kill and dismember a fellow captive who confessed to being a FARC rebel after torturous interrogation. While Torres had come to expect the same fate, he told *The Guardian*, he was then released.

Thousands of labour activists have been murdered and disappeared in the last 30 years in the Casanares region, home to rich oil fields and about 500 miles of pipelines. Paramilitaries were

deployed in the region as part of the country's "dirty war" targeting suspected leftist dissidents. The role of right-wing paramilitaries in forced disappearances was long hidden from the international public eye, but was a factor in the 50 year conflict between left-wing FARC and government forces.

Renault workers still out in Turkey

The Turkish arm of French carmaker Renault on May 23 offered concessions including a cash lump sum to strikers if they return to work, but the workers rejected the offer and announced that they would continue their labour action. The workers said they were ready to accept Oyak Renault's initial offer, but the Metal Industrialists' Union of Turkey (MESS), made revisions to the deal that were rejected by the workers.

Oyak Renault said workers would not face disciplinary action and would receive a cash payment of 1,000 Turkish liras (\$370) if production resumed at midnight on May 25. The company added that results of financial improvement studies would be announced ahead of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan, due to start in mid-June.

Production at the company's joint venture Oyak Renault has been halted since May 14 in a dispute over pay and working conditions, which has also affected other producers in the northwestern city of Bursa, including Tofas and Ford unit Ford Otosan. Production in Tofas and Ford Otosan as well as several auto part makers started again by May 22.

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

Join the Communist Party of Canada



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

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B.C. Committee CPC
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NATO foreign ministers sing "We Are The World"

Some People's Voice readers might be tempted to think this story is just a rather heavy-handed bit of satire, not even particularly funny. Unfortunately, this incident is quite true - google the New York Times or the UK Telegraph to read about it for yourself.

In a scene captured on video, a group of NATO foreign ministers and European officials performed an after-dinner version of "We Are the World," the 1985 charity single, after a summit meeting in the resort town of Antalya on Wednesday, May 12.

Video taken from a report by Turkey's state-run Anadolu Agency showed the foreign ministers of Turkey and Greece — Mevlut Cavusoglu and Nikos Kotzias — swaying arm in arm and singing the line, "There's a choice we're making — we're saving our own lives." Just to their left, a singer encouraged NATO's secretary-general, Jens Stoltenberg, and the European Union's foreign policy chief, Federica Mogherini, to join in.

According to Hurriyet, a Turkish newspaper, Mr. Cavusoglu, host of the dinner, invited his colleagues to join him onstage with members of a local band to sing a "song for peace."

The Communist Party of Greece (KKE) issued the following commentary on the incident.

It did not take many NATO summits for the "left-patriotic" government of SYRIZA-ANEL to enter the spirit of things. The Foreign Minister of the SYRIZA-ANEL government, N. Kotzias, in Antalya, Turkey, arm in arm with the rest of the NATO hawks sang "We are the world, we are the children..", as the lyrics of the song go.

As we learn from the reportage, N. Kotzias led the dancing. He played a leading role in presenting NATO with a halo...

The government's adjustment, which has seen it become a leading propagandist for NATO, for imperialist barbarity itself, should not surprise us. In any case, the Foreign Minister, N. Kotzias, and



NATO foreign ministers joining in song.

his government have worked hard in these few months to confirm that they will toil for the interests of the bourgeoisie. This is made apparent by the existence of the US-NATO bases in Suda, Aktio and elsewhere that will continue unimpeded to be the launching pads to attack the peoples, wherever the interests of the imperialists demand it. This is also obvious from Greece's participation in extensive military exercises in partnership with the USA and Israel. This is obvious from the country's participation in the EU's military plans in Ukraine, Africa, the Middle East etc.

Just as it implements the EU's strategy, the government also implements NATO's with the pretext of "combating the jihadists" and "defending the Christian populations", something which entangles the country and Greek people in great dangers. This is also demonstrated by the payment of 500 million dollars for the upgrading of airplanes, which are used in the naval cooperation with NATO. This is double the amount that is provided for by the government's law for the so-called "humanitarian crisis", i.e. the blunting of the most extreme consequences of poverty.

In addition, the Defense Minister of the SYRIZA-ANEL government, P. Kammenos, offered to hand over a Greek island in the Southeast Aegean to the US, so that it could be transformed

into a new airforce base.

So no surprises! Whatever illusions remain must be discarded... The SYRIZA-ANEL government worthily represents the bourgeois class and the EU, and states through song that "We are...(also) NATO."

Thousands of demonstrators

expressed their opposition to all this, through their participation on May 17 in the 35th annual peace march (42 kilometres) from Marathon to Athens that was organized by the "Greek Committee for International Détente and Peace" (EEDYE).

KKE leader Dimitris Koutsoumpas participated in the event and made the following statement to the media.

"The government in three months has found the time and money to sign a deal with the US company Lockheed, worth 500 million dollars, for the maintenance of old airplanes for the needs of NATO. The ministers of the government find time for singing and dancing, they find time to say that the Suda base will be expanded, that a new NATO base must be built on an island in the Aegean, they find the time to say that our country's armed forces

are available for US and NATO imperialist interventions in the region of the Mediterranean. However they do not find time to solve the people's problems, to abolish the memoranda and the application laws. On the contrary, they are preparing a new shameful agreement, with new anti-people measures, indeed blackmailing the people with false and misleading dilemmas in order to make them complicit in their political line.

"The Marathon March today, as well as the other militant mobilizations and acts of resistance, which are being carried out in our country in this period, show the path - both historically and in terms of their content - which every militant must follow, every well-intentioned person, against the imperialist wars and interventions, against the EU and NATO, against the monopolies and their power." ●



The annual anti-war march held by the Greek Committee for International Détente and Peace

US studying Cuban medical breakthrough

As a result of the 55-year blockade imposed by the US, Cuba was forced to research and implement many of its own medical treatments. Now, according to a report by Adam Withnall in the UK newspaper *The Independent*, US researchers are about to be given access to a lung cancer vaccine developed in Cuba, proving the benefits of improved relations for both countries.

Cimavax, a drug which suppresses the growth of tumours in the lungs, has been available for free to all Cuban citizens since 2011. The drug is believed to have minimal side effects and can prolong the life of a patient in the late stages of the disease by as much as six months.

A ground-breaking study of Cimavax will take place at the Roswell Park Cancer Institute in Buffalo, New York. The centre's CEO, Candace Johnson, calls the chance to evaluate a vaccine like this "a very exciting prospect".

During the economic blockade, and after a string of serious disease outbreaks, Cuban leader Fidel Castro made biotechnology and medical research a key priority for the allocation of government funds. The country ranks lung cancer as its fourth biggest cause of death, and experts in Havana worked for

25 years on the Cimavax vaccine before it was made available to the public.

Johnson said: "They've had to do more with less, so they've had to be even more innovative with how they approach things. For over 40 years, they have had a preeminent immunology community."

The opening up of Cuba's medical breakthroughs comes as part of a wider improvement in relations with the US. A charter flight service from New York to Cuba has been announced, and licences for six direct ferry services with Florida have been approved.

But the specific decision to allow Cimavax to be studied in the US comes after a trade mission led by New York Governor Andrew Cuomo. According to the Bloomberg news agency, Cuomo oversaw the deal between Roswell Park and the Centre for Molecular Immunology in Havana in late April. Cuomo said afterwards that it reaffirmed his belief that normalising relations with Cuba was "the exact right way to go".

As part of the deal, Manhattan-based company Infor will provide healthcare software to a Cuban university. Infor CEO Charles Phillips said he was "surprised and impressed in the level of

expertise they have in healthcare technology" during the trade mission, when a deal was agreed over a dinner of rice and beans.

Cimavax is reported to help lung cancer patients by encouraging the body's immune system to attack a hormone known to encourage growth in tumours. It is not a miracle cure, but it is cheap and easy to administer, and a small study suggested it could significantly prolong the life of patients.

"The idea is that the Cimavax vaccine induces a immune response [to stop production of the hormone]," Roswell Park's Dr Kelvin Lee told ABC News. "The tumour is being starved."

Dr. Lee said the first step will be to win the approval of the US FDA for a phase 1 study covering the next six to eight months and involving a small number of patients. There may be potential for the technology to work with other diseases that involve the same hormone - including breast cancer and pancreatic cancer.

Dr Elizabeth Mittendorf, an immunotherapy expert at the MD Anderson Cancer Centre in Houston, hailed the potential for progress with Cuban advances. She said: "Politics certainly should not prohibit good science from being further evaluated." ●

Modi government extends child labour exploitation

The Communist Party of India (Marxist) has condemned the move by Prime Minister Modi's cabinet to legalise child labour in "family enterprises", calling this "a retrograde measure which legalizes the exploitation of the labour of children below the age of 14."

To suggest that "poverty and the social fabric of India" justify the use of child labour is to punish children for their poverty, says the CPI(M), which points out that people had instead expected the Modi government to take meaningful measures to ameliorate growing poverty of the majority of Indians.

A statement from the Party goes on to say, "the Modi government's economic reforms promote outsourcing. Many developed industries farm out work to contractors who further farm out work to families who work round the clock at exploitative rates. This is in addition to other trades such as bidi making (Indian-style cigarettes), agarbattis (incense), carpet weaving etc., where children are forced to work. Since it is impossible to regulate 'family enterprises' such an amendment will open the floodgates for the rampant use of child labour.

"Coming as it does in the wake of the severe cuts in the budgetary allocations for children's development, the proposed amendment exposes the callous approach of this government to children's rights. The CPI(M) calls upon all democratic minded citizens to join in forcing the government to withdraw this anti-child amendment to our laws."

The 2011 national census of India found the total number of child labourers, aged 5-14, to be 4.35 million, out of the total 259 million in that age group. Worldwide, about 217 million children work, many full-time, reports Wikipedia. ●

History, looking forward

By Seán Edwards, Socialist Voice (Ireland)

When Eduardo Galeano died, the Uruguayan parliament held a special session to honour him; a previous regime put him in jail. This reflects the changes in Latin America, which Galeano's writings helped bring about.

He wrote *The Open Veins of Latin America* in 1971, reclaiming history for the people. The book is a historical account of how Latin America was pillaged over the centuries. After the wars of liberation from Spanish colonialism, those who came to power were not the people who fought in the wars but oligarchs who preferred to ally themselves with the British Empire rather than pursue a real independence, as they were not strong enough to rule on their own. They later transferred their allegiance to the new imperialist power, the United States of America.

The book is written in a lively style, easy to read, and committed. It recounts terrible tragedies and



defeats but never loses hope. It was an immediate hit with those involved in the struggle for a real independence and social progress, especially in Chile, where the Socialist government of Salvador Allende was elected. As Isabel Allende recounts, "this breath of hope is what moves me the most in Galeano's work. Like thousands of refugees all over the continent, I also had to leave my country after the military coup of 1973. I could not take much with me: some clothes, family pictures, a small bag with earth from my garden, and two

books: an old edition of the Odes by Pablo Neruda, and the book with the yellow cover, *Las Venas Abiertas de América Latina*."

There followed a decade of major counter-attack: "Operation Condor." Following coups d'état made in the USA, brutal military-fascist regimes were installed, covering most of South America. The open veins bled more than ever. Galeano himself was jailed in Uruguay, moved to Argentina, and had to flee the fascist coup there in 1976.

He continued to write - about sport, politics, and everything. Much of his work is light and cheerful, especially when he writes about football. (According to him, every Uruguayan child is born shouting "Goal!") He had a talent for writing short pieces, witty, pithy, entertaining, but always with a serious purpose. An example: he recounts how the conquistadores, arriving in America, decided that the native people must be Muslims, because they washed themselves a lot, unlike Christians.

He continued to be an inspiration to the people's resistance, and contributed to their victories. This was acknowledged by Hugo Chávez when he presented Barack Obama with a copy of *The Open Veins of Latin America*, though I suspect that particular copy remained unread.

Galeano was a great writer, and a great hero of the Latin American people. ●

La Trova Nuestra
Friday, June 26, 8 pm
"La Peña Nuestra"
Centre For Socialist Education, Vancouver
706 Clark Drive (Clark and Georgia st)
\$10 Entry

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



Feb. 15, 2003: March of the majority

WE ARE MANY, directed by Amir Amirani, review by Ian Sinclair, Morning Star

February 15, 2003 "was the single largest mobilisation of people in the history of humanity, bar none," notes US analyst Phyllis Bennis in *We Are Many*, Amir Amirani's brilliant new documentary about the global anti-war movement against the Iraq war.

Beginning with the terrorist attacks on 9/11, Amirani uses stirring archive news footage and original interviews with key figures like Tony Benn, Clare Short, Jesse Jackson and Noam Chomsky to tell the story of that momentous day.

Around 30 million people marched in 789 major cities in over 72 countries across the world. A small rally even took place at the McMurdo research station in Antarctica. Over 1,000,000 people marched through London in the biggest protest in British history. (*Hundreds of thousands marched in Canada, including about 200,000 in Montreal.*)

The film includes many important and interesting snippets of information and analysis, such as US air force veteran Tim Goodrich blowing apart the fiction that war was a last resort. The US bombing of Iraq increased by over 500 per cent in autumn 2002 "with the purpose of trying to goad Saddam Hussein into retaliating to give us a reason to go to war," he says.

Elsewhere Hans Blix, the chief UN weapons inspector from 2000 until 2003, amusingly explains that the US and UK "were 100 per cent sure that there were weapons of mass destruction" in Iraq though "they had zero per cent knowledge of where they were."

And who knew that Virgin boss Richard Branson had made an unsuccessful attempt to stop the war by flying Nelson Mandela to Baghdad on the eve of the invasion?

The film ends by exploring the long-lasting impact of February 15, 2003, including its role in shifting British public opinion so much that it made it impossible for

the coalition government to go to war against Syria a decade later.

Amirani also tells the unknown story of how the global movement against the Iraq war inspired Egyptians to start protesting against President Hosni Mubarak. "That's exactly when I was thinking, and others, that if we were triple that number, or four times that number, we could take down Mubarak," notes one Egyptian activist about the March 2003 protest in Tahrir Square against the war.

Writing in the *New York Times*, journalist Patrick Tyler commented that the global demonstrations were "reminders that there may still be two superpowers on the planet: the United States and world public opinion."

Taking its name from the last line of Shelley's 1819 poem *Mask of Anarchy*, *We Are Many* is itself a moving and timely reminder of the power of activism and protest - the perfect antidote to the despair created by the new Tory majority government. ●



MUSIC NOTES

By Wally Brooker

Musicians boycott Crown

Like all good trade unionists, organized musicians can be counted upon to act in solidarity with fellow workers. Case in point: the response of the Canadian Federation of Musicians (CFM) to the boycott of Crown Holdings, the multinational that makes beer and pop cans and reports annual sales in excess of \$8.7 billion. United Steelworkers Local 9176 in Toronto has been on strike for 18 months against this union-busting outfit that hires scab labour, demands wage cuts of 33%, and seeks to impose a two-tier wage structure. Last month CFM President Alan Willaert called upon musicians to look for the Crown logo on beer and pop cans. Crown's main Canadian customers are Molson Coors, Labatt, Creemore, Steam Whistle, Cott, and President's Choice. Beer and pop drinkers are urged to visit <http://bottlesnotcans.ca/> and sign the boycott pledge.

Pianist Lisitsa won't be silenced

In April, two sold-out concerts by Ukrainian-American pianist Valentina Lisitsa were cancelled by the Toronto Symphony Orchestra because she dared to criticize the brutal campaign the U.S.-backed regime in Kiev is carrying out against Russian-speaking peoples in East Ukraine. Just weeks later, Lisitsa demonstrated that she will not be intimidated. On May 2, the pianist spoke at a rally in Paris. The occasion was the first anniversary of the notorious Odessa Massacre, where 46 peaceful anti-Maidan protesters were murdered by fascist gangs. Here's part of what Lisitsa said: "In Ukraine people are being groomed to hate. That's the biggest humanitarian disaster of all. That's the biggest war crime, a crime against humanity. That is what the current government of Ukraine is perpetrating, unfortunately with the help, or at least with the ignorance, of Western governments." Watch the full interview at <http://newcoldwar.org/>

Lauryn Hill cancels Israel concert

Last month American R&B singer Lauryn Hill became the latest prominent musician to join the cultural boycott of Israel. The former lead singer of The Fugees cancelled her scheduled May 7 concert in Tel Aviv after more than 11,000 fans signed a petition urging her to honour the boycott. In a statement on her Facebook page Hill expressed hopes for "healing, equanimity, and the openness necessary for lasting resolution and reconciliation". The U.S. Campaign to End the Israeli Occupation praised Hill's decision, and advised her fans that "now is the time to thank her for taking a stand for peace, justice, and equality." The Hip Hop superstar is not shy about speaking out. In August 2014, as reported here last October, the singer released the single "Black Rage", a powerful expression of anger after the police shooting of black teenager Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri. Check her out at <http://www.lauryn-hill.com/>.

Oakland's ILWU Drill Team

Oakland's dock workers celebrated May Day this year with a work stoppage in solidarity with Black Lives Matter and the protests against police brutality in Baltimore. One highlight of the day was the International Longshore Workers Union Drill Team, a remarkable cultural group that combines militant call-and-response chants with percussive marching and a unique sense of humour (they execute manoeuvres with names like "double to the rear with a fake" and "contract negotiation"). The Drill Team has been around long enough to have performed for Martin Luther King Jr and César Chávez and it still performs regularly at union affairs, picket lines, and civic events. It's worth noting that the Bay Area ILWU, one of the most inspiring union locals in North America, does not strike on May Day. It takes the day off. For a sample of these brothers and sisters in action look for "ILWU Drill Team Oscar Grant Rally" on YouTube.

Guy Carawan: 1927-2015

Folksinger and musicologist Guy Carawan, who died on May 2nd, is best known for his association with the song "We Shall Overcome". Here's the song's story. The earliest version of "We Shall Overcome" is the slave song "I'll Be Alright Someday". In 1901 it was published as the hymn "I'll Overcome Someday". Years later, in 1947, it was adapted and brought to the Highlander Center (an interracial training center for grassroots activists in rural Tennessee) by striking agricultural workers from South Carolina. Zilphia Horton of the Center heard it and taught it to Pete Seeger, who changed the name to its present title. Carawan, who had become musical director at Highlander in 1959, heard it from Seeger, sped it up a little, changed a few words, and added the chords that are used today. He subsequently passed it on the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee. The rest, as they say, is history. Guy Carawan spent the rest of his life working with his wife Candie at the Highlander Center (<http://highlandercenter.org/>). They researched and recorded a vast trove of Southern folk music and oral history. It's safe to assume that he would've been pleased to be remembered as a "link in the chain".

Quebec's PKP phenomenon...

continued from page 2

his party, demoralized after the 2014 Liberal landslide, with a bold call beyond just "sovereignty" and instead clearly championed independence. Unity of all forces to win independence - first above all other causes - a project "neither right, nor left, but now."

It was a call that convinced singer Paul Piché and writer Jacques Lanctôt, whose leftist credentials date from the 1970s. The Steelworkers, while not supporting PKP, called on its members to support the PQ. André Parizeau's group, ten years after acrimoniously parting from the Communist Party of Canada, also chose this moment to ditch Quebec Solidaire and demand "all-out for PKP."

But the more class or socially-oriented voices like the Parti

Communiste du Quebec and, generally, the vast majority of Quebec Solidaire, are critical of this approach. For the Parti Communiste, Quebec sovereignty is best realized through an equal and voluntary confederal republic enshrined in a new constitution with English-speaking Canada, which must also guarantee Aboriginal national rights, and includes the right of separation. But supporting PKP shows how the independentist project is, just like Canadian nationalism, a form of class collaboration says the PCQ.

Polls show that some on the left will likely now vote QS and not PQ. But PKP's victory has created a wave of renewed interest and support, mainly rushing out of the right-wing populist Coalition Avenir Québec of François Legault (who pioneered the Charter concept), and not Philippe

Couillard's ruling Liberals.

That party continues its calculated pro-austerity attack. The student movement is licking its wounds after this spring's defeat, which continues with expulsions, injunctions and the threat of heavy-handed cops. Labour is planning strike action which will likely begin in the fall.

The Liberals are sly, and trying to isolate labour. They just negotiated a package deal with the province's doctors. Pharmacists may be next, leaving only the workers without an agreement and vulnerable to a government decree.

But certainly all is not quiet on the united front. The tenant rights group FRAPRU recently hounded PM Harper and Couillard around town, and set up two tent occupations in Montreal for social housing. While quickly shut down, they pushed the issue into public debate. Mass public action with labour at the core is still the way forward.

Johan Boyden is the central organizer of the Communist Party of Canada, and a member of the National Committee of the Parti Communiste du Quebec. Pierre Fontaine helped with this article. •

Constantine "Kosty" Kostaniuk

One of the oldest supporters of People's Voice, Constantine "Kosty" Kostaniuk, passed away in Winnipeg on May 17, age 99 years. There will be an obituary in our next issue. The family is hosting a "Remembrance Reception" to honour Kosty, at the Ukrainian Labour Temple (corner of Pritchard and McGregor) on Monday, June 15, at 11:00 am.

Tories vs. BDS...

continued from page 5

national or ethnic origin."

However, any resulting prosecution would require an assent from a provincial attorney general, and would undoubtedly face a legal challenge under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Moreover, Parliament will soon break for the summer and the fall election campaign, making it difficult to bring in specific legislation on this topic.

Still, this does not mean BDS supporters (including this newspaper) have nothing to fear in future, especially since the federal Liberal and NDP leaders also oppose BDS. Even Andrew Weaver, the BC Green Party MLA, recently denounced a pro-boycott billboard on Vancouver Island as "hate speech." (See the May 16-31 PV for details, including a photo.)

At this point, it appears that none of the major parties will oppose the Conservative push to criminalize support for the BDS campaign. It will be up to the Communist Party's candidates and those of some other smaller parties to stand up for free speech, including the right to criticize the racist policies of the Zionist Israeli state.

(The author is the editor of People's Voice, and the Communist Party federal candidate in the riding of Vancouver Kingsway.) •

What's Left

Vancouver, BC

La Trova Nuestra, monthly social evening of Latin American music and food, 8 pm, Friday, May 29, admission \$10, at the CSE, 706 Clark Drive.

Picket Jewish National Fund dinner and speaker John Baird, Sunday, June 7, 5 pm, Four Seasons Hotel, W. Georgia & Howe St.

"Eyewitness report from the war zone of eastern Ukraine," Friday, June 12, 7 pm, SFU Harbour Center, with speaker Roger Annis (newcoldwar.org website), sponsored by Institute for the Humanities at SFU.

Celebrate the 94th Birthday of the Communist Party of Canada, 6 pm, Sat., June 20, dinner and music at the Centre for Socialist Education, 706 Clark Drive, tickets \$20, sponsored by Montivero Club CPC, ph. 604-254-9836 for details.

Toronto, ON

Injured Workers Day Rally, Monday, June 1, 11 am-1 pm, Queen's Park, followed by June 1-2 conference at Steelworkers Hall, 25 Cecil St. For info, see <http://injuredworkersonline.org/events>

Cuba Solidarity in Canada, Five Decades of People-to-People Foreign Relations, with author & editor Nino Pagliccia, long-time activist and former organizer of the Che Guevara volunteer Work Brigade, Friday, May 29, 7:30 pm, OISE, 252 Bloor St. West, Peace Lounge—7th Floor. Also present will be some authors of the book's 12 chapters outlining solidarity across Canada. Free admission, light refreshments.

Hear special Cuban guests, Fernando González, one of the Cuban Five heroes, and now Vice-President of ICAP, and Dr. José Portilla Garcia, member of Cuba's medical mission fighting Ebola in West Africa, presented by Canadian Network on Cuba and CCFA Toronto, Sat., May 30, 7:30 pm, Steelworkers Hall, 25 Cecil St. (near College & Spadina).

CCFA Toronto Annual General Meeting, with guest speaker Jean Augustine, former Etobicoke-Lakeshore MP, and guests from Cuban Consulate. Saturday, June 13, 7:30 p.m., 519 Church St., Grand Ballroom 2nd floor (N. of Wellesley, East of Yonge). Reports of the past year's work, plans for the next year, election of next Executive Committee, free admission.

Maritime Labour Centre closing

By Peter Marcus, Vancouver

Most of the Vancouver and District Labour Council delegates at their May 19 general meeting were buoyant over the recent NDP victory over the Tories in Alberta. A couple of activists from Alberta spoke about the tactics of the NDP campaign. Anticipating the possibility that the results could translate into an NDP victory federally, delegates spent ten minutes discussing federal issues. In that connection, author Don Gutstein led the pizza educational, introducing his new book HARPERSM before the meeting.

The next VDLC meeting will likely be the last at the Maritime Labour Center. The Center is being sold due to a massive increase in building insurance after the second arson fire that took place in January this year. All the tenants including the unions will be moving out, if they have not already. The famous mural by Fraser Wilson in the auditorium, depicting the traditional waterfront activities of longshoreworkers, mariners, fishers, and forestry and millworkers, will be dismantled and either stored away or placed in a new site. •

Venezuela rejects attacks...

(from page 7) authorities in recent years. Others accused of being involved in international drugs trafficking ops include Venezuelan army general and diplomat Hugo Carvajal and former Minister of the Interior and Justice, Tarek El-Aissami.

Carvajal was controversially arrested last year by Aruba authorities during a visit to the island on the petition of the US, who quickly moved to request his extradition. He was eventually released after an Aruba judge finally overruled the arrest and declared it illegal under international treaties.

The latest reports are likely to further isolate the US and its increasingly discredited Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) in the region, which is banned from operating within Venezuela and Bolivia. Both countries severed ties with the DEA in recent years on the basis that the agency was spying on their progressive governments and paradoxically allied with international drug smuggling networks in the region.

The DEA courted further controversy earlier in March this year when the release of secret files revealed that DEA agents working in Colombia had engaged in illicit sex parties with prostitutes, including children, paid for by Colombian drugs cartels. •

OUR STORY
Stuff they don't tell you!

Women pacifist, not passive

In 1982, Halifax peace activist Muriel Duckworth led a delegation to Ottawa to present a petition of 125,000 demanding "nuclear disarmament now." Against a climate of renewed cold war nuclear sabre-rattling with Russia, grassroots groups around the world, led largely by women, mobilized local petitions. It was a stunning display of world-wide peoples' solidarity.



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People's Voice deadlines

June 16-30 issue: Thursday, June 4

July 1-31 issue: Thursday, June 18

Send submissions to PV Editorial Office,
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94 Years of Struggle!

Dinner and music to celebrate the birthday of the Communist Party of Canada



Saturday, June 20, 6 pm
Centre for Socialist Education,
706 Clark Drive, Vancouver

Tickets \$20 at the door.
Organized by Sergio Montivero
Club CPC, 604-254-9836 for info



BBQ

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Marxist Theory

Real, existing capitalism and the challenge for an alternative

By Eoghan O'Neill, Socialist Voice (Ireland)

There are times and certain processes in the production of human needs that have become the catalyst for change in society, a change in which the old order of doing things - whether it is ruling, governing, trading, building, creating, destroying, or a myriad of different complexities that steer human development - are incapable of satisfying, or can no longer satisfy, the new social and productive forces in society.

Over time, what once was the exception to the rule becomes the rule, and those that once dominated and steered the functions of society have, because of the development of society, been overtaken by new and more advanced forms of social and economic relations.

Primitive communal societies, slave societies, feudal societies, capitalist societies and socialist societies, and the transition from one type of society to another, have been the constant and turbulent advancement of mankind. Masterful inventions and ingenuities, such as the wheel, the

printing press, the steam engine and internal combustion engine, the harnessing of electricity, natural resources and the elements, exploration in the fields of science, mathematics, engineering and computing, all of which and many more have to one degree or another been developed to satisfy our basic human needs, are based upon the stage of development within a given society.

It is very easy to settle into the notion that what is shall for ever be, and that what has gone before must remain as it was, a relic of its time irrelevant to today's world. But humankind is not a victim of its own self-importance: there has been and continues to be a dynamic relationship between ourselves and the world into which we are born. The time and the age in which one lives is just a chance, a lottery of sporadic consciousness, untamed and uncontrollable.

Those who have been before us and those who will come after us, just as we are now, are conditioned by the environment in which they are brought up. The social and productive forces evolve and develop as we master and

manipulate the material world around us. But there are limits to what can be achieved by any given society, and that limit is set by its productive forces. This is the key to understanding the history and lineage of mankind, which Karl Marx and Frederick Engels correctly observed and first presented to the world in the *Communist Manifesto* of 1848.

To understand where we place ourselves now, in 2015, in the grand scheme of things, and how we may seek to shape and improve our future and that of our children, we must bring Marxist theory to the fore, as it alone can guide the majority of people, the working masses, away from the abyss of exploitation, poverty, and environmental destruction. Engels in his oration at Marx's funeral said: "Just as Darwin discovered the law and development of organic nature, so Marx discovered the law of development of human history." And it is these laws that we must study and develop to get a real understanding of our place within society at this time. Without this guiding theory to direct our practice we will continue to walk blindly into a struggle without knowing who or what we are struggling against.

To understand the development of human history we must first of all go back to the basics: human needs. These needs at the primary level are food, water, and shelter, and then we have more advanced needs, such as education, health, services, work, pastimes, relationships, etc. These needs are provided to sustain life physically and culturally, and they are both individual and collective needs.

Human needs are "conditioned by the stage of development" of society and are satisfied by goods and services, which are the material means by which we satisfy those needs. The ability, for example, to call an ambulance in case of a medical emergency is relatively new and is possible only because an array of different fields have been sufficiently developed and have merged to give us this one

vital service.

All the small links form this one chain for one particular service, and this chain is woven into countless other links and chains to form a social fabric, all servicing our human needs. This whole process, then, can only be thought of as social in both fabric and delivery and is a product of thousands of years of human development.

are aware of the distribution relations, in that they deal with this every day of their working lives: wages, rent, interest, etc.

From social relations (class division) emerge legal and political, moral and religious, philosophical, scientific and artistic ideas, which form a social consciousness. This, taken as a whole, forms an ideology. This ideology is an expression of the whole or a part of society, and in a class society the ideology of the dominant class, the class that owns the means of production, will reproduce its ideology and repress any alternative ideology, because it solely has the means of doing so.

The struggles of today, which may vary from country to country

and place to place, all come back to a class struggle, a struggle over the control, ownership and command of the means of production, i.e. the economy. Capitalism as a historically developed stage, and its adherents create and reproduce their ideology to maintain and to proliferate their privileged position in society.

The real existing conditions of poverty, hunger, homelessness, exploitation etc. can only be eliminated by depriving the possessing class of their privilege in our society. This has been and will continue to be the goal of communists, here in Ireland and around the world. We need a strong revolutionary party of working people that will challenge the dominant ideology of the 1 per cent and their lackeys, challenge for political power and economic power by setting about the dismantling of the capitalist system of private ownership of the means of production and its institutions and replacing them with the only viable alternative: social ownership of the means of production, i.e. socialism. ●



We are at a particular historical stage of development - capitalism, and, as Lenin critically observed more than a hundred years ago, the highest stage of capitalism - imperialism, where the competitiveness of industry has been replaced by the dominance of monopoly corporations. This has seen the merger of industry and finance, national and international business. The governments, groups or institutions that have a vested interest in the monopolies will ensure their dominance in the economy. The stage of development we are at now really is a dictatorship of the monopolies.

Being aware of this class divide brings us to one of the fundamental aspects of Marxism: class-consciousness. To be class-conscious is to know which class you belong to and, to that end, where your class interests lie. This raises the question, Why aren't people more class-conscious? Just as there is class-consciousness, there is also a social consciousness, and people in their daily lives are not made conscious of the social relations that have been formed—the class nature of society. They



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379-15/10

Some facts about real, existing capitalism

1. 3 billion people live on less than \$2.50 a day.
2. 500 people have more than \$3 billion each in wealth.
3. The richest 1 per cent have 46 per cent of the world's wealth; the bottom 50 per cent have just 1 per cent.
4. Half of all children in the world live in poverty
5. 13 per cent of birds, 25 per cent of mammals and 41 per cent of amphibians face extinction
6. Arctic temperatures have increased by 5°C over the last 100 years. There will be almost no summer sea ice left in the Arctic by 2020.
7. Five monopolies (ADM, Bunge, Cargill, Glencore and Louis Dreyfus) control 90 per cent of the global grain trade.
8. 21 per cent of land on earth is owned by a mere fifteen people, leaving the rest to all 7 billion of us.
9. The United States has militarily intervened in seventy-five sovereign countries since the Second World War—the most war-hungry state on earth.

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