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people's VOICE

World Cup
games & protests

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NO!

*to NATO's new
Cold War threats*

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Complete solidarity with BC teachers

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Youth jobless still high

With jobless rates stuck at high levels, the new president of the Canadian Labour Congress demands government action to tackle the ongoing crisis of youth employment and underemployment.

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"Journalists"?

For some political commentators and writers, the best way to get bylines is to ape the politics of the military/corporate ruling class.

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Election in El Salvador

Many years ago, Nanaimo's Gilberto Mayen had to flee El Salvador's notorious death squads. This spring, he went back as an international observer to help ensure free and fair elections.

Québec budget slammed by labour, left, indigenous groups

By Johan Boyden, Montreal

Québec's new Liberal budget, unveiled in early June, has received a strong condemnation by the major trade union confederations, social movements, and the left political party Québec Solidaire. The budget, delivered by Finance

Minister Carlos Leitaó, comes after a landslide victory for the Liberals led by new leader Philippe Couillard in the April 7 election.

Pushing out the incumbent Parti Québécois, who saw their lowest share of the popular vote since the PQ's first election in 1970, the Couillard Liberals re-captured a

majority with 70 seats. The far-right Coalition Avenir Québec also made gains in the National Assembly, while left-wing Québec Solidaire fought several hard battles in Montreal ridings coming out with three seats in total.

Calling it his "budget of hope," the centerpiece of Leitaó's financial plan is to impose close to \$3 billion in cuts to the public service by a staffing freeze and reducing small and medium business tax rates. The Liberals will also re-launch plans for economic development in northern Québec - Plan Nord - which is as controversial as it is extensive.

Plan Nord is in many ways complimentary with the federal Harper Conservative framework of increasing export of primary resources and opening up new corridors and routes to the transportation of raw materials. The plan was originally launched in 2011 under then-Premier Jean Charest's Liberal government, and re-branded "the North for all" by the PQ. It aims to "open up" the vast northern regions (72% of the province) with new railways,

roads, deep sea ports, and massive forestry and mining exploration.

But while "Québec is open for business," as Leitaó told Global News, both previous plans were rejected by many Aboriginal communities, nicknaming the project "Plan Mort" (plan death). Protests and actions by First Nations and other indigenous peoples groups have drawn attention to the unilateral disregard for treaty rights and Aboriginal sovereignty as well as the crisis of fresh drinking water, unemployment, housing, and other living conditions in northern reserve communities. Ecological and social movements have also expressed concern about the environmental impact of these major mines and highways.

In general, the new Couillard Liberal budget met with praise from employers and business lobby groups like the Manufacturing and Export association, but was condemned by labour and social movements.

The budget "keeps the cap squarely on austerity" the president of the Confederation of National

Trade Unions (CSN), Jacques Létourneau said in a release. "It hides significant reductions in public services that will hit hard the people of Québec this year... The government continues to talk about productivity gains of 2% of payroll. But what is it talking about? Schools and hospitals are not assembly lines and statistics health and safety show exhausted workers."

The left party Québec Solidaire called the budget "a passport to permanent austerity."

"This is science fiction to believe that this budget will not affect services to the population... To be clear, the people waiting for months to meet with a psychologist or a speech therapist in the public system will have to wait much longer!", QS co-spokesperson and MNA Francoise David said. "What the majority of Québécois wishes for are not tax cuts, but the public service they pay for!"

The budget has also been condemned by the Parti Communiste du Québec which will present analysis in its forthcoming edition of the newspaper Clarté. ●

Communists campaign in Ontario for People's Needs



Ontario went to the polls on June 12, just after this issue went to press. Candidates and supporters of the Communist Party (Ontario) were out campaigning for "People's Needs, Not Corporate Greed." Above, candidate Mariam Ahmad in the riding of Davenport, and below, campaign workers mainstreeting in Toronto. See our next issue for analysis of the outcome.



CLC hits youth jobless figures

Far too many young Canadian workers are unemployed or underemployed, and governments must come up with a strategy to solve the problem, says Hassan Yussuff, the new president of the Canadian Labour Congress.

"Young people want to work and contribute. They want to build lives for themselves but too often they can't find work, or they are stuck in short term, part-time, and poorly paid jobs. Governments have let them down by failing to

work, with a net gain of 112,000 part-time jobs. This May more than 1 million workers in Canada were working part-time jobs but wanted full-time work - the highest number in May since Statistics Canada began collecting this information in 1997.

Job losses continue in the public sector. Compared to May 2013, there were 6,000 fewer workers in educational services and 23,000 fewer workers in public administration. The construction industry saw the largest year-over-year decline in employment, with a loss of 39,000 jobs.

The unemployment rate for persons who have been landed immigrants for 5 years or less was 12.4% in May. For newcomers who have been landed immigrants for 5-10 years, the rate was 8.7%, higher than the 7.0% jobless rate for Canadian-born persons. ●

Statistics Canada reported a loss of 29,000 full-time jobs in May, and a gain of 55,000 part-time jobs. Over the past 12 months, all job growth has been in part-time

work, with a net gain of 112,000 part-time jobs. This May more than 1 million workers in Canada were working part-time jobs but wanted full-time work - the highest number in May since Statistics Canada began collecting this information in 1997.

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Mariela Castro Espín

Director of the Cuban National Centre for Sexual Education (CENESEX), and Cuban MP



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BC injured workers give WCB failing grade

The B.C. Federation of Labour marked June 1, Injured Workers' Day, with a renewed call for improvements to the workers' compensation system and a restoration of benefits for injured workers.

"Workers' Compensation Boards across Canada have buckled to corporate pressure to cut benefits and compensation in order to lower premiums," said Jim Sinclair, President of the B.C. Federation of Labour. "These one-sided changes leave injured workers without adequate coverage, directly in contravention of the principles set out by Sir Chief Justice Meredith in what's known as the 'historic compromise' agreed to by labour and business over 100 years ago."

Approximately one hundred injured workers, advocates and supporters from around the province gathered on May 31 in Vancouver to examine how BC's Workers' Compensation Board (WCB) measured up to Meredith's principles. The result was a resounding "F" on all six principles. The meeting demanded that the BC government amend the Workers' Compensation Act to reflect Meredith's principles.

"Injured workers will no longer accept half measures", said Patti MacAhonic, Advisor for the Canadian Injured Workers' Alliance (CIWA). "Injured workers and survivors in BC are organizing for action, in alliance with injured workers across Canada."

For more information on Meredith's principles please visit www.meredith100.ca

Injured Workers' Day commemorates the events of June 1, 1983, when over 3000 Ontario injured workers, family members and advocates travelled to Queen's Park to oppose the Ontario government's proposal to eliminate the permanent disability pension. The Ontario government retracted its proposal as a result of the outcry. ●

"Complete Solidarity with B.C. Teachers!"

Statement from the Young Communist League-Vancouver, June 5, 2014

There has been a troubling current in the student movement's response to the current labour dispute between the British Columbia Teachers Federation (BCTF) and the BC Liberal government, most obvious in the June 4th "BC Student Walkout for Students." Many students view themselves as caught in middle of a battle between equally powerful and dangerous camps, when in reality nothing could be further from the truth! In every set of collective bargaining talks between the BCTF and the government since the Liberals took power in 2001, the government has been the aggressor and has made it their explicit mission to curtail and even destroy teachers' bargaining rights.

Earlier this year their actions were ruled unconstitutional by the BC Supreme Court (and not only in the case of teachers: the Supreme Court of Canada ruled against BC legislation restricting the collective bargaining rights of health care workers in 2007!), and the government is at it again this time around. The fundamental goal of the government and its right wing agenda is to privatize the education system and to privatize health care. In Coquitlam alone, 632 teachers are getting layoff notices. One of the intentions of this act is to initiate bigger classroom sizes with fewer resources.

Additionally, nearly 200 schools have been shut down as a result of government cuts in education. Therefore, students have fewer schools in their neighbourhood, fewer teachers and fewer resources to help with their education. Students that require more needs and more resources for learning are especially hurt by the cuts because there are fewer

resources for them to use and fewer educators in departments for students who require more assistance. BC has been targeted more than any other province in Canada.

This means that it is harder for children to learn and harder for parents to ensure quality education for every student in this province. While those with money can afford top notch private education, the majority of families cannot provide that for their children. Meanwhile, the government is still providing funding for private schools while cutting funding for public education. For these reasons, education is becoming less accessible for the people of British Columbia. These cuts are not just an attack on teachers but a direct attack on students who need their teachers for an education. The problem stems more than just decreased wages but taking away the rights of the workers all over Canada, particularly in British Columbia.

It is clear that this is not just about 'balancing the budget', or whatever other excuses the government has parroted out - it is about attacking public sector workers and obliterating their rights to organize and fight for better working conditions! But what does this mean for students?

In capitalist economies, education has two basic functions. The first is the one we're most familiar with: the accumulation of different kinds of knowledge that will help us navigate the social worlds that we inhabit. The second, however, is the more important objective. The education system is designed to invest youth, in the form of skills and knowledge, with the social capital necessary for developing our labour-power and entering the workforce. The capitalist mode of production, the same basic framework that all of us work under, creates value, and thus wealth, by extracting labour-



June 6 student rally at the Vancouver Art Gallery in solidarity with BC teachers. (Photo: K. Cariou)

power (the time and energy that a worker puts into her work) from the worker and embodying it in the commodity that is being produced.

This commodity can be steel at a foundry, t-shirts at a factory, or even the relationships and knowledge offered by a teacher in a classroom. The most important thing is that no matter what commodity is produced, the owners have to pay their workers

less than what the workers have produced so as to turn a profit. In Marxist terms, this is called exploitation.

All workers under capitalism are exploited. In order for workers to fight this exploitation and make better lives for themselves, all workers must band together in solidarity. As students, you may not have jobs yet, but you are still an essential element in the cycle of

capitalist production and reproduction. Soon enough, you will be waged workers. Recognize the common situation that you find yourselves in and take a stand with teachers now. There is strength in numbers! Only together can we create a more just and equitable world!

To contact the Young Communist League-Vancouver, email YCL_BC@outlook.com •

Political storm over Vancouver LGBTQ+ policy update

PV Vancouver Bureau

With five months left until the Nov. 15 municipal elections across British Columbia, another political storm is raging at the Vancouver School Board (District 39). This time, it's not over the impact of funding cuts and downloaded costs imposed on school boards by Christy Clark's Liberal government.

The latest battle is over a long-awaited revision of the VSB's policies to protect the rights and interests of LGBTQ+ students. Adopted by the COPE-led school board during its 2002-2005 term, the policy was a groundbreaking step to help achieve a safe and welcoming learning environment for all students. Now, the revised policy has become the target of a group of right-wing, homophobic Christian fundamentalists, hoping to find a wedge issue to win more political influence over the Board.

After 2005, it became clear that more action was necessary to address the serious problems faced by students who identify as trans or gender non-conforming, particularly around access to washrooms, or assignments to gender-divided sports teams. Many trans and gender-variant youth face threats and even violence for attempting to use facilities which match their own identity. Some even avoid going to the bathroom for the entire school day, to avoid the dangers of harassment in such locations.

Former COPE school trustee Jane Bouey led the effort to adopt the original policy during her 2002-2005 term. Elected again in 2008, she took the initiative to press for an update, a process involving in-depth consultations with the Board's broadly-based Pride Advisory Committee. An initial

draft was submitted to the Trustees in mid-2011. But Bouey did not win re-election that fall, and progress on the revised policy slowed down.

This spring, the Advisory Committee was finally able to present the Board with a "Proposed Policy Revision on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identities". The draft is grounded in the existing policy, with updated guidelines to protect trans and gender-variant youth.

This sparked a backlash by a fundamentalist Christian group led by Cheryl Chang, chair of the Parent Advisory Committee at Lord Byng Secondary in Vancouver. Chang is also an outspoken Conservative activist.

Taking the name Protecting All Children In Schools (PACIS), this group accused the VSB of inadequate consultations. Public hearings into the draft, initially slated for one evening at a VSB Committee 3 meeting, stretched over three nights during May. Chang circulated a public letter on behalf of the Lord Byng PAC, attacking the policy update but without even consulting that body. PACIS also circulated a petition containing a wide range of falsehoods and misstatements about the policy.

Initially, much of the media coverage of the issue was sympathetic to the claim that "the process was too rushed", despite having been several years in preparation. As the hearings continued, it became clear that PACIS is deeply opposed to policies which aim to improve safety for LGBTQ+ students.

Another argument is that the city's large Chinese-speaking population is being bullied into accepting policies which conflict with their "cultural norms". But at

the hearings, a number of powerful speakers in favour of the policy update were of Chinese ethnic backgrounds.

Supporters of the new B.C. Safer Schools Coalition also mobilized to attend the hearings and make presentations. While PACIS urged the Board to ask the BC College of Physicians and Surgeons to consider the update, a wide range of medical and psychological experts spoke eloquently about the importance of adopting the changes. Not a single speaker with medical credentials opposed the update.

Chang was dealt a devastating rebuke at a May 20 meeting of the Lord Byng PAC, when a huge turnout of parents voted overwhelmingly to direct her to withdraw the letter which sparked the controversy.

The next step in the process is a June 11 meeting of Committee 3, which will consider recommendations for further amendments to the policy update. A June 16 full meeting of the VSB's nine trustees will vote on these recommendations and then adopt or reject the policy. Given their track records, it appears that the vote will likely split between six Vision trustees who support improving the current policy, versus three right-wing NPA trustees in opposition. However, important provisions to protect the confidentiality of students who approach school staff for advice on sexual orientation and gender identity questions may be watered down.

Whatever happens on June 16, it seems certain that the issue will spill over into the civic election. Two of the NPA trustees, Ken Denike and Sophia Wu, used the

see LGBTQ+ debate, p. 11

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EDITORIALS

Chilling critics into silence

Virtually every day, disturbing new evidence emerges regarding the vast scale of government/corporate/police surveillance into the lives of Canadians. In one sense, this phenomenon is nothing new; in the late 1940s, the RCMP was tasked with compiling an enormous database of Communist leaders. "PROFUNC", as the operation was called, expanded to 50,000 names over the next three decades, including almost anybody who came into contact with the Communist Party or other progressive movements.

PROFUNC was finally cancelled, but its roots were never eradicated. Speaking to a gathering of far-right organizers in Toronto on May 30, PM Stephen Harper dug up the Cold War to rail against Communists and "terrorists", a term which seems to cover nearly anyone opposed to the corporate destruction of Canada. His chilling speech coincided with revelations that the government and police forces aim to gather reports about every single demonstration which takes place in this country. In other words, whether you rally against the tar sands pipelines or in solidarity with striking workers, expect to be photographed and catalogued as a potential threat to national security.

Some supposed "threats" are already feeling the impact of this brutal attack on civil rights and democratic liberties. Here's just one case. On June 3, 16 cops raided a house in East Vancouver, under the pretext of investigating the "crime" of people spraying anti-pipeline graffiti during 2013. The four residents, and a guest, were removed one by one at gunpoint. While the state is targeting "radicals" (such as indigenous activists), the real intention of such tactics is to terrify any voices of resistance into silence and submission. We condemn every such action as an escalation of the capitalist state's psychological and political war against the people of Canada. Freedom and democracy must be defended against this attack - before it's too late!

Figures don't lie, but...

The so-called "independent" Parliamentary Budget Office, headed up by PM Harper's pal Jean-Denis Fr chet, tells us that Conservative tax cuts have "saved" Canadians \$30 billion, including personal income tax reductions of \$17 billion, and the federal share of revenue loss GST/HST of \$13 billion. That works out to about \$800 per resident of Canada.

However, figures can be twisted for a political agenda. Canadians for Tax Fairness notes that the top 20 per cent of income earners got \$10.9 billion, or 36 per cent of the total. Meanwhile, while the bottom 20 per cent got \$1.9 billion, or only six per cent. The lowest income group gain less than \$500 in tax reductions annually, while the top 20 per cent rake in almost \$2,000 a year.

Nor did the Budget Office suggest that \$30 billion could pay for affordable child care or housing, or cut post-secondary tuition, or improve our medicare system, or provide clean drinking water for Aboriginal communities. Sadly, none of the parties in Parliament used the report to raise such ideas. Instead, even the NDP remains committed to the neoliberal dogma of tax-cutting and "balanced budgets", which allow the wealthy and the corporations to keep widening the income gap.

And it gets worse. That \$30 billion figure does not include the ongoing impact of the huge tax cuts brought in by (then) Finance Minister Paul Martin in 2000. Nor does it count Conservative cuts to corporate taxes. Canadians for Tax Fairness calculates that the total lost revenues from all these sources adds up to nearly \$80 billion annually. The federal government today has annual revenues of about \$230 billion - not the \$310 billion which it could be receiving. In our next issue, we'll examine what could be done with that amount of extra revenue. Until then, PV readers can probably come up with some excellent suggestions!

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706 Clark Drive, Vancouver, BC, V5L 3J1 or
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Ottawa Statement on Mass Surveillance in Canada

This statement was crafted May 9-10 in Ottawa, where an international group of academics and advocates met to debate strategies for challenging mass surveillance, protecting civil liberties and advancing democratic rights.

We are entering an age of big data and ubiquitous surveillance. We know:

- That governments and private corporations routinely collect and sort massive amounts of personal data for multiple reasons from national security to marketing;

- That there is extensive targeting and profiling of individuals and groups on grounds of race and ethnicity, political and religious views, social class, age, gender, sexual preference and disability;

- That Canadian privacy and data protection laws and regulations are regularly bypassed, undermined or broken, and are inadequate for dealing with information and privacy rights in the age of big data and ubiquitous surveillance.

We the undersigned are agreed:

1. That all levels of government in Canada must fully respect the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms including the right to privacy, freedom of thought and expression, freedom of association and security against unreasonable search and seizure.

2. That all proposals for changes to information and privacy rights must be presented, justified and debated in a transparent manner. No changes to information and privacy rights and statutory privacy law should ever be embedded in omnibus bills or otherwise hidden in legislation relating to other issues.

3. That the extension of "lawful access" regimes allowing government bodies to collect and/or purchase and store personal data without specific judicial permission, should be halted. All such proposed changes must be subjected to tests of necessity, proportionality, minimality and effectiveness, with the burden of proof being on the government.

In addition, security vulnerabilities in communications systems must be addressed and fixed rather than exploited by government agencies.

4. That the powers of provincial and federal privacy commissioners should be commensurate with the quasi-constitutional status of privacy law. Commissioners should have extended powers and appropriate financing and staffing, to initiate investigations, as well as react to complaints, and prosecute and fine state bodies and private companies for breaches of that law.

5. That all state security, intelligence, policing and border agencies must be brought fully under proper legal regulation, judicial authorization, transparency and democratic accountability. While it is necessary for the government to have some secrets and conduct some secret activities, this does not mean that these should be governed by secret law or exceptions from law. In particular:

- That government agencies must fully disclose the legal definitions of the terms employed for surveillance, the kind of data they gather and the full justifications for surveillance and data gathering.

- That the government must publically acknowledge all secret international security treaties, agreements and memoranda that require the sharing of personal data, affect free movement and personal security, or place Canadian state surveillance in the service of other sovereign states, international agencies or the private sector.

- That the government must implement the recommendations of the O'Connor Inquiry into the case of Maher Arar including the introduction of integrated oversight and review mechanisms.

6. That negotiations for all new international treaties, agreements and memoranda, including international trade agreements, which might affect information and privacy rights, must be transparent, consistent with the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and privacy law, subject to parliamentary and public scrutiny,

and if necessary referred to the Supreme Court.

7. That a full, transparent and participatory public process must begin to create a comprehensive legal framework for information and privacy rights and freedoms, built on the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and acknowledging the United Nations' reaffirmation of privacy as a fundamental human right.

Signing organizations include:

OpenMedia.ca, B.C. Civil Liberties Association, National Council of Women of Canada, Surveillance Studies Centre at Queen's University, Amnesty International Canada, Canadian Internet Policy and Public Interest Clinic, FACIL, International Civil Liberties Monitoring Group, Privacy and Access Council of Canada, National Council of Canadian Muslims, Privacy International, North American Association of Independent Journalists, Free Dominion, B.C. Library Association, B.C. Freedom of Information and Privacy Association, Pirate Party of Canada, Canadian Civil Liberties Association, Green Party of Canada, Ontario Humanist Society, John Wunderlich & Associates, Inc, Canadians Defending Democracy. The Communist Party of Canada has added its name to this list. •

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The Ukraine Crisis and the New Cold War

Statement from the United Electrical, Radio & Machine Workers of America (UE, www.ueunion.org), May 27, 2014

On February 22, the elected president of Ukraine was overthrown in a coup which was supported by the Obama administration. Since then, the country has been torn apart and violence has escalated. On May 2 in the southern city of Odessa, supporters of the new unelected Kiev government, including members of the violent extremist Right Sector party, surrounded peaceful, unarmed anti-government protestors who had taken refuge in the city's main union hall. The right-wing crowd then set the union hall on fire, and 46 people died by being burned alive or jumping to their deaths trying to escape.

We are troubled by this horrific atrocity, and by the fact that mass murder was committed by burning a union hall. We are concerned about the conflict in Ukraine, by the massing of Russian troops near Ukraine's eastern border and U.S. and NATO troops and planes in neighbouring Poland, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia, which signal the return of the Cold War and the threat of a much hotter war.

A defining period in the history of UE was our union's courageous opposition to the Cold War. At the end of World War II there was great hope among union members and other Americans for a continuation of FDR's New Deal, with progressive social and economic policies including national healthcare, expanded Social Security, and progress

against racial discrimination in employment. What we got instead was the anti-union Taft-Hartley Act and the Cold War. Military spending, including the nuclear arms race, continued to trump all other priorities. Local conflicts all over the world were treated as global showdowns between the U.S. and the USSR. In the name of

Labour voices...

"fighting communism," the U.S. sided with the French and British colonial empires against independence movements, and backed many brutal dictators against their own people. The 40-year-long Cold War included some very hot wars - notably Korea and Vietnam. The CIA organized coups that overthrew democratic governments that dared to disagree with the U.S. government or corporations. On the domestic front, the Cold War was a massive attack on civil liberties and an effort to wipe out organizations, including UE, that refused to enlist in the Cold War.

UE said the U.S. government should direct its resources toward making life better for its own people. UE favoured negotiations to resolve differences between the U.S. and the Soviets, and to end conflicts such as Vietnam. UE said the arms race robbed human needs on both sides of the Cold War divide. As UE President Albert Fitzgerald often said, "You can't

have guns and butter."

The Cold War supposedly ended with 1991 breakup of the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact, which had been composed of the U.S.S.R. and its Eastern European allies. A key event was the 1990 agreement between the U.S., West Germany and the Soviet Union allowing the reunification of Germany. In those negotiations, President George H.W. Bush promised Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev that NATO - the U.S.-led anti-Soviet military alliance - would not expand any further east than Germany.

Yet despite that promise, and despite Russia and its former allies no longer having communist governments, NATO has moved steadily eastward toward Russia. NATO now includes the former socialist states of Hungary, Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Slovenia, Romania and Bulgaria, as well as three former republics of the U.S.S.R. which border Russia - Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia. Two more former Soviet republics, Ukraine and Georgia, have been promised eventual NATO membership. NATO is now clearly an alliance against Russia, sitting on Russia's doorstep.

In late 2013 the U.S. began expressing hostility toward Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich, and sympathy with the often violent anti-government protestors in Kiev. Yanukovich was not an exemplary leader - we now know that he'd been feathering his own nest - but he was elected in a fair election, and the U.S. supports many governments that are more corrupt and undemocratic than his.

What made Yanukovich a target for regime change was his decision in November to reject harsh loan terms from the European Union (EU) and International Monetary Fund (IMF) - including the kind of pension cuts and austerity that have driven Greece into poverty. Yanukovich instead accepted a more favourable offer of economic aid from Russia. His proposal that Ukraine have good economic relations with both Russia and the EU was rejected by the EU and the U.S., which wanted a Ukrainian government hostile to Russia.

U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Victoria Nuland met in December 2013 with Oleh Tyahnybok, head of the far-right Svoboda Party. In a 2012 resolution the European Parliament had called Svoboda "racist, anti-Semitic and xenophobic" and appealed to democratic parties in Ukraine "not to associate with, endorse or form coalitions with this party." In May 2013 the World Jewish Congress labeled Svoboda "neo-Nazi" and called for the party to be banned. Svoboda leader Tyahnybok has called for ridding Ukraine of the influence of "the Moscow-Jewish mafia." Svoboda is also anti-gay, anti-black, and hostile to equal rights for women.

But since the overthrow of Yanukovich, Svoboda holds four cabinet ministries in Ukraine's "provisional government" (including deputy prime minister.) In a Feb. 4 conversation caught on tape, Nuland and the U.S. ambassador to Kiev discussed who would get which positions in the new government, including cabinet seats for Svoboda.

In Europe since the end of World War II, there has been a

political taboo against allowing fascist and neo-Nazi parties into any government. The Obama administration has now broken that taboo and allied our country with fascists in Ukraine. According to German media reports, about 400 elite mercenaries from the notorious U.S. private security firm Academi (formerly Blackwater) are taking part in Ukrainian military operations against anti-government protesters in southeastern Ukraine. News that Vice President Joe Biden's son Hunter Biden has joined the board of directors of Ukraine's largest private gas company adds the element of conflict of interest. Obama's policies toward Ukraine and Russia have significantly increased the chances of military confrontation between the U.S. and Russia, the world's two nuclear superpowers. This threatens world peace.

It is unclear whether the presidential election conducted on May 25, under conditions of near-civil war, will help to defuse the crisis in Ukraine.

We reaffirm UE's historic position. We favour peace and friendly, equitable economic relations between nations. We favour negotiations rather than military confrontation to resolve disputes, including this one. We believe the countries that defeated Nazism in World War II, including the U.S. and Russia, should work together against any resurgence of racism, anti-semitism and fascism in Europe.

Bruce Klipple, General President; Andrew Dinkelaker, General Secretary-Treasurer; Bob Kingsley, Director of Organization •



Marxist Theory

Missing the class in wealth distribution

Capital In The Twenty-First Century, by Thomas Piketty, Harvard University Press. Review from the Morning Star, by Photis Lysandrou

Capital In The Twenty-First Century by the French economist Thomas Piketty has recently received a great deal of attention, not only in academic publications but in newspapers too.

Those reviews, generally positive, contain some criticisms and the same applies here.

Of the book's many strengths, two stand out. The first is its methodologically concise, but not overly technical, exposition of the huge growth in income and wealth inequality in recent decades.

Piketty provides a wealth of data not only as regards the uneven dispersion of wealth across different sections of the population but also the massive and obscene degree of concentration of wealth in the hands of a vanishingly small number of people.

To take just one example Piketty provides, the wealth held by the world's richest 225 people rose from an average of \$1.5 billion in 1987 to one of \$15 billion in 2013 - a sum greater than the annual output of most countries.

The second major strength of

the book is its policy conclusion that governments should impose stricter taxes on wealth to secure its more equitable distribution.

Mindful of criticisms that such a proposal would be extremely difficult to implement, given the fierce resistance it is likely encounter, Piketty goes out of his way to emphasise the point that governments should co-ordinate their wealth tax policies rather than try to implement them in a piecemeal, go it alone, manner.

Of the book's weaknesses, two stand out. One is that it contains no detailed explanation of the economic, as opposed to social or moral, impact of global wealth concentration.

This omission is serious because it makes even more daunting the already difficult task of persuading governments to adopt the kind of co-ordinated wealth taxes that Piketty so correctly calls for.

An easy way to rectify this omission is to show how the world's super-rich have been instrumental in causing the recent financial crisis by virtue of the downward pressure on US bond yields they helped to exert, a development which in turn led to the mass creation of the US high-yield toxic securities that were at the epicentre of the crisis.

The other major weakness of

Piketty's work is its take on the central driving force behind the growth of income and wealth inequality in the current era.

While identifying several important enabling factors, such as the marked shift towards neoliberal economic policies on the part of the



leading Western governments, Piketty argues that the main cause of rising inequality boils down to the fact that the rate of return on capital currently exceeds the rate of growth of output.

Piketty is certainly right to point to the close statistical correlation between historical trends in inequality on the one hand and the historical trends in economic growth on the other.

But correlations in themselves tell us nothing about the order of causality. Piketty has the order running from growth to inequality but any Marxist economist would

have the order running in the reverse direction, from inequality to growth.

This difference centres on sharply contrasting definitions of capital.

For Piketty, capital comprises all non-labour assets. Virtually any individual owning just about any

income generating asset, whether it be non-financial ones such as real estate or machinery or financial assets such as equities or bonds, is classified as a capitalist.

But for Marxists, capital is a distinct class category - capitalists are those who deploy labour power together with the means of production to generate profit.

It is only after a surplus has been generated through the exploitation of labour power that there is then a redistribution of this surplus to other sections of the non-wage earning population.

It is this crucial distinction

between the production of a surplus and its distribution, which Piketty does not make, that explains why Marxists see the rate of exploitation as the key driver of inequality, with the rate of growth being the key transmission route linking the two.

It is the fact that workers in the aggregate are paid far less than what they produce that explains the contradiction between the capitalists' ability to extract massive profits on the one hand and their inability to fully realise these profits on the other.

Unable to plough all of these profits back into investments for productive purposes - due to the tightening spending constraints on wage earners, an inability that then accounts for continuing low growth - capitalists are instead redistributing these profits among themselves.

That has been witnessed by the huge growth of CEO pay and managerial bonuses, also the case with other owners of the claims on the surplus output produced by the world's working population.

Piketty's book has serious weaknesses yet they are not enough to outweigh its considerable strengths. It must be read by anyone concerned about the global human condition in the 21st century. •

Stop Kiev's bloody offensive against civilians!

The crisis in Ukraine continues to deepen with every passing day, and the danger that this conflict could spread beyond its borders and spark a direct confrontation between the U.S./NATO forces and the Russian Federation - both with vast nuclear arsenals - is very real. It is absolutely vital therefore that the peace forces across Canada and around the world act in unison to demand that the NATO military build-up in Eastern Europe, and in the Baltic and Black seas be stopped and reversed immediately. The peace forces must act to block the threat of a new Cold War, and to call for a negotiated political solution to the current crisis, to prevent any further escalation and to preserve world peace.

The conflict in Ukraine stems from the unconstitutional power-grab which ousted the previous, elected government at the end of February. As our Party has already noted, the crisis was precipitated by an orchestrated campaign by right-wing opposition and neo-fascist forces inside Ukraine - with massive financial backing and guidance from Washington and other Western imperialist powers - to overthrow the government of President Yanukovich and seize power. Far from being a popular, pro-democracy "people's uprising", this coup d'État was a highly organized operation, carried out with military precision, and masterminded from abroad, with the aim of bringing Ukraine entirely under the influence and domination of the Western imperialist centres. This has been a long-standing imperialist objective which, among other things, would weaken the Russian Federation economically and politically, and give US and NATO

Demand a negotiated political solution to the crisis in Ukraine

another firm foothold along Russia's sensitive Southern flank, strengthening the military/strategic encirclement of this rival power.

The coup in Kiev has been met by increasing popular resistance. The people of Crimea voted by an overwhelming majority to secede, and have since joined the Russian Federation. In other parts of Eastern Ukraine, pro-autonomy forces have taken over more than 20 cities and towns in defiance of the pro-Western putschist regime in Kiev, and are now facing a brutal military offensive by the regime to regain control. Artillery barrages and air strikes have been launched against Slovyansk, Luhansk, Mariupol and other centres in the East, killing a large number of unarmed civilians.

Furthermore, a number of atrocities have been committed by the newly-formed Ukrainian "National Guard", made up largely of pro-Nazi and neo-fascist "volunteers. In one of the most outrageous examples of these war crimes, supporters of the illegitimate Kiev government - including members of the violent extremist Right Sector party - surrounded peaceful anti-government protestors in the southern city of Odessa who had taken refuge in the city's main union hall on May 2. The right-wing crowd then set the union hall on fire, and 46 people died by being burned alive or jumping to their deaths trying to escape.

Civilian casualties are climbing as residential areas, hospitals, schools and kindergartens come under artillery attack during this punitive and bloody offensive.

The U.S. Canadian and other NATO governments are virtually silent about this spreading humanitarian tragedy, as is the corporate-controlled mass media. Indeed the Western imperialist camp has given its "go-ahead" to the Kiev regime to carry out this assault, and is providing funds and increasingly sophisticated weaponry to undertake it.

Meanwhile, the NATO military build-up of both personnel and advanced weapons systems is expanding in Eastern Europe right up to the Russian borders. NATO warships are plying the Baltic and Black seas, and Canadian and other

NATO countries are carrying out surveillance overflights inside Ukraine on behalf of the Kiev regime.

Recently, the United Electrical Workers of America (UE) issued a brave statement expressing the union's deep concern about the conflict in Ukraine, the inclusion of fascist and neo-Nazi parties in the new Kiev government, and the danger of a "return of the Cold War and the threat of a much hotter war" between the U.S./NATO countries and the Russian Federation.

"We favour peace and friendly, equitable economic relations between nations. We favour negotiations rather than military confrontation to resolve disputes, including this one. We believe the countries that defeated Nazism in

World War II, including the U.S. and Russia, should work together against any resurgence of racism, anti-Semitism and fascism in Europe," the UE statement concluded.

Our Party warmly welcomes this statement, and calls on the broad peace forces, the trade union movement and all concerned citizens to follow this example by speaking out against the deepening Ukrainian crisis and to demand a peaceful, political solution.

At this critical moment, the Communist Party of Canada:

condemns the military offensive by the Kiev regime in the Eastern part of the country and demands its immediate cessation;

demands that NATO stop its provocative military build-up in areas and countries adjacent to the Russian Federation, and remove its naval presence in the Black Sea;

calls on the UN Security Council to intervene to stop the aggression inside Ukraine and prevent a humanitarian disaster;

supports the call for political negotiations to reach a settlement in Ukraine that addresses the legitimate concerns of the peoples in the east and their desire for greater autonomy, while maintaining the territorial integrity of the country;

demands that Canadian CF-18s be withdrawn and that the Canadian Government end its belligerent stand and rather speak out for a peaceful political solution to this crisis.

- demands that Canada withdraw from the aggressive NATO military alliance.

Issued by the Central Executive, Communist Party of Canada, June 9, 2014

How much does Stephen Harper care about the dangers of a NATO war in Europe?



Harper should apologize to the people of Canada

Statement from the Central Executive Committee, Communist Party of Canada, June 9, 2014

At a May 30 dinner in Toronto hosted by far right political activists, Prime Minister Stephen Harper launched a vicious Cold War-style attack against communism. The Communist Party of Canada condemns Mr. Harper's lies and baseless accusations. His slanderous speech aimed to build support for the growing NATO military build-up against Russia, and to create the political conditions for accelerating the wide-ranging Conservative attack on the trade union movement and democratic rights and freedoms in Canada. We call upon all Canadians to reject the Prime Minister's anti-communist rhetoric, and to rally in defence of peace, democracy, labour rights and civil liberties.

Mr. Harper spoke at a fundraising event held by the so-called "Tribute to Liberty" organization. The Conservative party's support for this group goes back years, to the start of their campaign to erect a "monument to the victims of communism" in the

National Capital Commission area of Ottawa. Unable to raise sufficient funds privately, the group will be given millions of taxpayer dollars by the Conservative government for their highly political project, in violation of the principles of the NCC.

The Communist Party of Canada has spoken out against this reactionary initiative on

At a May 30 dinner in Toronto hosted by far right political activists, Prime Minister Stephen Harper launched a vicious Cold War-style attack against communism....

several occasions. As we stated recently, "the monument project is a throwback to the sordid era of the Cold War, which resulted in a wave of anti-communist frenzy, RCMP spying, witch-hunts, blacklisting, social ostracism, imprisonment and deportations against many progressive-minded Canadians. Such policies had a

terrible chilling effect on public discourse and sharply curtailed the freedom of expression and associated democratic and trade union rights of all Canadians. The sponsors of this monument are now attempting to revive this tragic McCarthyist era of red-baiting, which had been tossed into the dustbin of history."

The "Tribute to Liberty" organizers spread many outrageous falsehoods, most notably by including the 25 million Soviet citizens who died in the Second World War in their bizarre count of the supposed "victims of communism." By repeating these lies, the Prime Minister aligns himself with those who still believe that it would have been better for the world if Hitler Germany had defeated the Soviet Union on the eastern front. This view is a shocking attack on the families of the 47,000 Canadian soldiers who died fighting as allies of the Soviet people in the war against Hitlerism. Harper's statements are a brutal boot in the face for all who suffered under fascism, including the millions of Jews, Roma, people with disabilities, homosexuals, Communists, anti-fascists and

others murdered in the Nazi death camps. By falsely equating communism with fascism in his May 30 speech, the Prime Minister callously slandered all those who gave their lives to liberate Europe and the entire world from the menace of fascism.

We therefore call upon the Prime Minister to issue an immediate full apology to the people of Canada for his historical lies and his support for the pro-fascist forces in the "Tribute to Liberty" group.

But his May 30 speech has further frightening implications.

By using this occasion to repeat his support for the coup regime which overthrew the elected government of Ukraine several months ago, the Prime Minister signalled again that he backs the spread of ultra-right movements in Europe. The shock troops of the NATO-backed February coup in Kiev were violent activists of neo-fascist parties, which were immediately rewarded with cabinet posts and other official positions. The US, Canada, and other NATO powers are whipping up today's crisis in Ukraine, with the strategic aim of isolating Russia and crushing any geopolitical alternative to the military-economic domination of the NATO-EU imperialist countries. This is an important factor behind

Mr. Harper's ludicrous accusation that Prime Minister Putin - a strong backer of the new capitalist class in Russia - is supposedly a Communist. Ever since the October Revolution of 1917, such accusations by leaders of the imperialist powers have been used to prepare public opinion for military interventions, blockades, trade embargoes and other forms of "big stick" intervention against countries which refuse to follow the agenda of transnational capital. We condemn the Prime Minister's dangerous Cold War militarist blustering, which raises international tensions and increases the threat of a catastrophic war in Europe. We also condemn the opposition NDP and Liberal parties in Parliament, which have eagerly joined Harper's Russia-bashing in their opportunist grovelling for voter support.

The other element behind Mr. Harper's May 30 speech is the Conservative party's relentless propaganda campaign against working people, in particular the organized sections of the working class in Canada, which has the organizational strength to be at the centre of a broad-based people's resistance movement against the

Boot-licking Journalism...

By Zoltan Zigedy, Tuesday, June 3, 2014 (Excerpts from the original, which can be read in full at mltoday.com)

...The concentration of media corporations coupled with the centrality of profitability and the narrow band of dissent offered by the two-party system result in a uniformity and conformity in the media that would be the envy of any banana republic.

We can thank media critics like Extra! - the magazine of Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting - for serious disclosure of the most egregious abuses of independence and objectivity... But they often overlook the commonplace banality of media's slavish conformity to the government line and corporate dictate. While we all enjoy reading about the big lies, it is the everyday boot-licking that holds the US myth together.

* On May 29, the Los Angeles Times published a news story reporting Edward Snowden's NBC News interview. The author, Richard Serrano casually writes that "The disclosures have sparked outrage in some countries..." Have they? Where? And why? Serrano relies on the readers gullibility to slip in what appears to be a reasonable assumption, but an assumption nonetheless. While the reader will likely find the claim believable, no reason is actually

Donetsk, Ukraine that "While there is no immediate indication that the Kremlin is enabling or supporting combatants from Russia... Moscow may have to dispel suspicions that it is waging a proxy war..." Why does Moscow need to dispel suspicions when there is admittedly no evidence for those suspicions?

Following good journalistic practices, Leonard seeks to locate the Ukrainian crisis in a context, in recent events. Unfortunately, he slants that context to coincide with the US/EU interpretation of those events. He notes the "election" of a billionaire candy mogul to the Ukraine's presidency without mentioning that Eastern Ukraine strongly opposed the election and rejects Popochenko's legitimacy. Instead, he innocuously states: "He replaced the pro-Moscow leader who was driven from office in February."

[D]riven from office? By referendum? By the Supreme Court? By Parliament?

Or, as the historical record would confirm, by violent street actions that physically threatened the former president. Demonstrations richly endowed with Western funding. Actions encouraged by the West and betraying a recent agreement brokered with the EU. But to cast doubt on the legitimacy of what could justifiably be called a coup

of the Eastern populace. Without contrary evidence, responsible journalism would designate the opposition as "anti-Kiev" or "pro-independence" rather than in the fashion of US State Department handouts. Not surprisingly, Western journalists have resisted the tendency of consistently calling the actions and actors on the other side as "pro-US." To do so would betray their sanctimonious posture as serving only the interests of the Ukrainian people...



"Damascus blogger" Amina Arraf became a Western media sensation, only to be quietly dropped when it was learned that she was a 40-year-old American.

* By the profoundly low standards of US journalism, a Washington Post article datelined May 29 from Yarze, Lebanon established a new low. The aptly named Liz Sly twists events prior to the Syrian election beyond recognition. The reigning assumption held by Western reporters portrayed Syrian refugees as fleeing the evil Bashar Assad. Thus, it came as a shock when refugees in Lebanon flocked in overwhelming numbers and with enthusiastic Assad partisanship to the Syrian embassies in order to vote ahead of the domestic elections. Despite police thuggery and long lines, Syrians spent long hours to cast votes. Most observers conceded that it took on the appearance of an Assad election rally.

As Sly affirms: "...desperate people fought to gain admission to the embassy grounds... Roads were clogged for miles by people arriving in buses, in cars and on foot... Many voters were diehard Assad supporters who showed up in convoys, honking horns, waving the president's picture and shouting slogans." Undeterred by what appeared to contradict the State Department line on the sentiments of Syrian refugees, Ms. Sly wrote: "Syrians thronged their embassy in Lebanon on Wednesday to cast ballots for President Bashar Assad, offering a forceful affirmation of his tightening grip on power after three years of conflict." Never mind that Sly never explains how she determined the refugees' vote prior to the vote tally. But how does the refugees' enthusiasm for Assad - while presumably residing safely in a separate country - affirm "his tightening grip on power"? What

power does he have over them in Lebanon?

But there is more... a "rumour" serves to address the question: "The large turnout was spurred in part by a widespread rumour that those who do not vote will not be allowed to return home..." So we

must believe that those who do not show up will not be able to return to Syria, but those who do and choose to vote for one of the two other candidates will not be similarly punished by Assad. This is indeed a strange twist. Moreover, if the refugees are really anti-Assad, but intimidated by his "tightening grip," why would they want to improve his electoral fortunes by voting for him?

Sly concedes that "Syrians did not say this would be the case, but with all voters having to submit their identity papers to the embassy for registration, it is feasible that the government will know who voted and who did not." But this is absurd. Certainly the government could know who voted if they simply record the names that are on identity documents, but how could they possibly know who didn't vote from an amorphous community of refugees? And surely it makes sense to ask for identity papers to keep Lebanese

Should we be surprised at Liz Sly's sly attempt to swap a demonization of Syria's Assad for an inconvenient truth?

Not really. Liz Sly was the Washington Post writer who brought to world attention the plight of the unfortunate gay woman in Damascus who was supposedly brutally oppressed by the Assad regime. On June 7, 2011 she wrote "Gay Girl in Damascus Blogger Detained", a news article that merged claims from a blog post with what appeared to be independently gathered facts in a way that suggested that youthful, attractive Syrian-American, Amina Arraf, was grabbed off the street along with 10,000 other Damascus citizens by the evil Assad forces. On June 8, the Washington Post retracted the story and on June 10, a 40-year-old US citizen confessed that the person, the story, and the blog were a hoax that he concocted. The damage had been done - liberals recoiled from Assad's brutality - few saw the retraction....

May 29 was little different from any other day in the hustle of news in the Western media - no better, no worse. It is important that we do not minimize these sins by laying them only at the authors' doorsteps. Editors and management accept and encourage this servility to the US government line, endorsing biased articles that belong on the op-ed pages and not in the news section. It is the institutional acquiescence that makes a mockery of a free, independent, and objective media.

It is the nuances - the word play - that infect nearly every news article in our press: the lost subjects ("It is believed that..." It is thought that..." By whom?), the anonymous sources ("Many believe..." "Some say..."), the stealth use of the passive voice ("hundreds were killed in the confrontation" Who



"Right Sector" neo-Nazis carrying out one of their assaults on the doors of the Ukraine Rada (parliament).

citizens (and US and Israeli agents!) from voting in a Syrian election. Sly witnessed a common sense procedure and not a conspiracy.

Astoundingly, Sly contradicts herself twelve paragraphs further: "The rules for voting were lax, with many people casting multiple ballots." Casting multiple ballots? Lax rules? Would that not make it impossible for Syrian officials to determine who will be allowed to repatriate and who will not? Does consistency matter to Liz Sly?

killed them?), the simple, slanted labels ("pro-Russian," "anti-American," "insurgents," "militants," "opposition"), the speculative leaps, and the tortured logic.

Mindful that these sins are castigated in high school journalism classes, their ubiquitous commission in the monopoly mass media signals an unprincipled, opportunistic obedience to power and wealth, a calculated fealty to the seats of power matching the worst days of the Cold War. ●

Editors and management accept and encourage servility to the US government line, endorsing biased articles that belong on the op-ed pages and not in the news section. It is the institutional acquiescence that makes a mockery of a free, independent, and objective media.

given to believe the claim. Could it be that Serrano means that US officials are outraged?

In the same article, Serrano reports accurately that Snowden claimed he was a "spy" for US security agencies, using aliases and working undercover. Serrano adds: "Those agencies routinely issue aliases for Americans working overseas, and his work for them [CIA, NSA] was previously known." Serrano is dismissive of the revelations because they were "previously known." Once again, by whom? How is the fact that someone unnamed knew about Snowden's previous clandestine work relevant to reporting on the interview? Serrano's claim about the "routine" use of aliases leaves the interesting, newsworthy question of who works for the agencies and why and when do they need aliases unanswered. There is not a hint of distrust of US security agencies' motives. He only injects the comment in order to minimize the importance of Snowden's interview and not to share any newsworthy information.

Serrano cannot resist stirring antipathy towards Snowden. His editors can't either.

* In an Associated Press dispatch the same day, Peter Leonard writes dateline

would cast the so-called "pro-Moscow insurgency" in a different light.

Leonard goes on to explain the sequence of events: "That ouster led to Russia's annexation of the Crimean Peninsula in southern Ukraine, which triggered the sanctions, and a violent pro-Moscow insurgency in the east." Describing Ukrainian events in this deceptive way is akin to describing the US Revolutionary War as a violent pro-French insurgency spawned by the defiance of Parliament's trade policies. Interpretation is posing as reportage.

Surely it is notable that the previous violence in Kiev's Maidan Square - Molotov cocktails, street fighting, baiting security forces - are characterized blandly ("driven from office," "ousted") while defensive acts on the part of anti-Kiev activists resisting the military and police in Eastern Ukraine are characterized as participating in a "violent...insurgency."

Like the entire Western media, Leonard characterizes the opposition in Eastern Ukraine as "pro-Russian" (a recent picture in the *Wall Street Journal* characterized two armed men in fatigues pausing for a smoke as "pro-Russian," as though the caption writer could read that



GLOBAL CLASS STRUGGLE

Unions slam Qatar World Cup deaths

International unions have slammed 2022 World Cup host Qatar over the treatment of migrant labourers, and condemned the systematic exploitation of workers at sporting events worldwide.

"Qatar is a slave state," said Sharan Burrow, head of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) on June 5. Speaking outside the annual congress of the International Labour Organization, Burrow said little real action had been taken to improve working conditions.

Migrants, mostly from South Asia, form over 90 percent of the labour force in Qatar, where 88 percent of the population is from outside the country. At current rates, as many as 4,000 workers might be killed on construction sites by the time the tournament kicks off.

The energy-rich emirate is also facing claims that corruption played a role in the surprise decision by world football's governing body FIFA to name it host of the 2022 showcase. Unions fear the corruption issue may overshadow the situation of workers on the ground.

Workers' living conditions in Qatar are all often squalid, with inadequate food and medical care. Qatar's "kafala" visa-sponsorship system handcuffs foreigners to their local employer. South Asian workers pay middlemen huge sums to win a work permit, and fear that complaining will mean getting fired and deported - if their employer even agrees to an exit visa.

Domestic workers, mostly women, who suffer abuse also struggle to free themselves from employers.

"How can we allow, as human beings, that Qatar can have a World Cup when they are still abusing domestic sector and contract workers," said Myrtle Witbooi, chair of the International Domestic Workers Network.

The International Transport Federation has also filed a complaint against Qatar Airways at the ILO over its treatment of white-collar employees.

Under mounting pressure, Qatar in February issued fresh guidelines on workers' rights, but the ILO has urged it to go further. The emirate has said it plans to abolish the kafala system, but it remains to be seen what will replace it.

Unions say Qatar is an extreme example of a wider problem surrounding increasingly expensive sports events, as workers pay the price for high-pressure, multi-billion dollar drives to get ready.

Nine workers have died on stadium projects in Brazil, where the 2014 World Cup kicks off on June 12. The picture was similar for the 2012 European football championships in Poland and Ukraine. Six died in Poland and 14 in Ukraine, where shadow employment left many workers unprotected, said Vasyly Andreyev, head of Ukraine's construction union.

In contrast, the stadium toll for the 2010 World Cup in South

Africa was two, and zero for the 2006 edition in Germany. Five have died on 2018 World Cup host Russia's stadium sites, but concerns are rising because of the use of exploited migrant workers.

Nanomaterials workplace hazard

A recent article in the American Journal of Industrial Medicine details the first fully documented case of workplace illness arising from nanomaterials, that of a 26-year-old female chemist "working with nickel nanoparticle powder



weighed out and handled on a lab bench with no protective measures." Within a week of handling small quantities of the powder the worker developed throat and nasal symptoms and skin irritation. Working with the tiny particles for the short period had led her body to develop nickel sensitization. The symptoms persisted even when she moved to a different floor, improving only when she left the building entirely.

Nanomaterials - the product of manipulating natural and synthetic materials at the atomic and molecular level - carry a heightened toxic potential by virtue of their size alone, because they are potentially more reactive than their larger-scale counterparts. Particles at the nanoscale can be more readily absorbed by the body and can pass the blood/brain barrier. There is still no known method for limiting, controlling or even measuring human exposure to nanomaterials and processes in or outside the workplace. Despite these risks, new products containing nanomaterials are being rapidly introduced and thousands of workers face exposure.

An estimated 3-4 food products containing nano materials are coming on line daily. A new study from Friends of the Earth (Tiny Ingredients, Big Risks) contains an extensive list of food and snack products containing unlabeled nano ingredients from major transnationals, including Coca-Cola, Danone Hershey, Kellogg's, Mondelez, Nestle, PepsiCo and Unilever. These products contain nano titanium dioxide, which studies have shown to damage DNA, interfere with cell function and the immune system and may be carcinogenic when inhaled, among other risks. As with asbestos, the damage may only be manifest with time. The potential risks are already leading to calls for a moratorium on the commercialization of nano products and processes.

Millions lose voting rights

Approximately 4.5 million Indonesian migrant workers outside the country might not be able to vote in the July 9 presidential election as their names are not included on the General Elections Commission's list of eligible voters. A spokeswoman for presidential candidate Jokowi Dodo said that based on the data of the National Agency for the Placement and Protection of Indonesian Overseas Workers the number of migrant workers has reached 6.5 million, far below the Commission's two million.

"Their political rights should be fought for," she said during an event with migrant workers who declared their support to Jokowi and vice-president candidate Jusuf Kalla. "Until now, the KPU has yet to take the necessary, concrete measures to deal with this fact."

The sluggish process of data collection of eligible voters was evident in the cities of Riyadh and Jeddah in Saudi Arabia, in which some 857,000 Indonesian migrant workers currently reside. The KPU only recorded around 203,000 voters in those cities.

Inmates organize

Inmates at the Berlin Tegel jail in Germany have to work at regular shifts inside the prison. Now, they have formed a union to represent their interests as workers.

Starting next year, Germany will have a minimum hourly wage of approximately \$11.56 (USD). But prisoners earn only about \$12-20 per day. Their union hopes to raise wages and provide for a pension scheme so that elderly inmates do not emerge from prison penniless. Under the current law, prisoners are not allowed to participate in Germany's national pension plan.

While there have been past attempts to set up union-like structures within prison walls, they have usually ceased to exist once individual inmates were released. In Britain, Preservation of the Rights of Prisoners (PROP) was set up in the early 1970s but eventually faded away.

The cell of the organizer of the union was recently searched by prison staff, who reportedly confiscated documents relating to the foundation of the union. He was sentenced in 2009 for his involvement in the left-wing organisation "militante gruppe", which committed arson attacks on government buildings between 2001 and 2009.

Regression to S. Korea's past

The IndustriALL global union and its affiliate Korean Metal Workers' Union have called on South Korean President Park Geun-hye to stop labour repression by the Samsung corporation, and ensure it collectively bargains to conclude a living wage and collective agreement.

The unions condemned the illegal snatching of the body of Samsung labour martyr Yeom Ho-seok and imprisonment of trade

unionists, including the recent high profile arrests of the KMWU Samsung Electronics Service Workers' Local on May 18-19.

It appears South Korean President Park Geun-hye and Samsung bosses want to take the country back to its authoritarian past. The Korean Metal Workers' Union (KMWU) local representing 1600 workers employed by Samsung is on strike calling for respect for trade union rights and a first collective bargaining agreement.

Yeom Ho-seok, the KMWU chapter chair, committed self-immolation on May 17 in protest against Samsung's continuing labour repression. Three hundred police stormed his wake, arrested 25 mourners and absconded with his body.

Outsourcing hits U.S. workers

Across the U.S., public services are increasingly outsourced to private contractors. But a new report from the non-profit research group In the Public Interest (ITPI) shows that outsourcing hurts communities as well as workers.

The report, "Race to the Bottom: How Outsourcing Public Services Rewards Corporations and Punishes the Middle Class," makes the case that when private contractors make huge profits from taxpayer dollars, money is sucked out of local communities. Dollars that used to go to employees are sent to shareholders instead, so local workers have less to spend. Taxpayers take another hit when employees, who used to have access to health care and good wages, now have to rely on food stamps and Medicaid to survive.

The "Race to the Bottom" report

documents how when federal, state, and local governments pay hundreds of billions of dollars to contractors for jobs that pay so little, they leave employees dependent on the social safety net. These costs are not taken into account by governments. For example, the report cites a 2010 study that showed contracted school cafeteria employees in California received an average of \$1,743 in public assistance - in effect, an additional public subsidy for a private contractor's low wages.

Decades ago, the public sector offered stable jobs with family-supporting wages and important benefits like health insurance, sick leave, and pensions.

"Government historically created a ladder of opportunity by paying family-supporting wages and providing important benefits," said Shar Habibi, author of the report. "This is especially true for women and African-Americans, allowing millions of them to reach the middle class."

There is a growing body of evidence that outsourcing leads to a downward spiral as that ladder of opportunity disappears. Reduced wages and benefits not only make it harder for working people to enter the middle class, they also hurt local economies as those workers have less to spend, reducing the stability of working and middle class communities.

As the report notes, privatization and subcontracting is becoming a force in growing inequality. By 2013, according to a study by Demos, the number of contracted employees working on behalf of the federal government who earned less than \$12/hour had already reached 2 million - more than the number of low-paid workers at Walmart and McDonald's combined.

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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A Canadian observer in El Salvador

By Alan Boyden, Nanaimo

In February and March of this year Gilberto Mayen, a member of the Nanaimo Club of the Communist Party of Canada, served as an International Observer during the first and second rounds of the presidential elections in El Salvador.

Gilberto was born in the small village of La Libertad, close to San Salvador. During the bloody clampdown by the military he was a union leader; however, he was compelled to seek asylum in Canada after his son, a teenager at the time, had been "detained" by the dreaded National Police. Hundreds of "detainees" had become "desaparecidos" so it was a terrifying time. Thanks to the courage of a doctor, a very close friend, the young man was released.

In December 2013, shortly after campaign started, Gilberto was contacted by the Electoral Tribunal and asked to become an official international observer. He accepted without hesitation and soon received the necessary papers, becoming one of about 500 observers selected. (Eight were from B.C. and included Kevin Neish from Victoria.)

Upon arriving in El Salvador the observers underwent procedural training to ensure that the elections would be free, fair and democratic. They also received a copy of the National Constitution and the "togs for the job" i.e. the official vest (not bullet-proof), hat, shoulder bag and accreditation certificate.

Gilberto was assigned to a north ward of Santa Ana, the second largest city in El Salvador, for the Feb. 2 first round of voting and the March 9 second round run off. His work was ultimately rewarding, but not without frustrations, and real and implied dangers.

While the electoral process itself was apparently free and fair, the circumstances leading up to the voting were more than subtly skewed against the FMLN, the left-wing governing party. The mass media in El Salvador is almost completely controlled by corporate entities notoriously hostile to the aims and aspirations of the FMLN. Thus, the people receive information or, more commonly, misinformation from private radio, television and newspapers which receive generous corporate funding. This is particularly true of the three leading national newspapers: *El Mundo*, *El Diario d'Hoy* and *La Prensa Graphica*. The only objective reporting is found in the co-op newspaper, the *Diario Co. Latino*.

The bias in the media facilitated manipulation of the electoral rules by ARENA (the opposition), enabling the right wing to present its political platform under the guise of five apparently different parties. These morphed into ARENA in the final round of voting, allowing them to siphon off votes from some easily guiled and unsuspecting center left voters.

This worked against the FMLN which had been ten points higher than ARENA in round one. Big money, as always, was able to "persuade" and/or bribe poor people. Various gifts were given or promised, such as t-shirts, bottles of drinking water with the

ARENA logo, children's toys, gizmos, kitchen brooms etc., all bearing the ARENA colours and slogans. In some villages every household received a "free" chicken.

Larger gifts included lucrative jobs and even pickup trucks. Bribes of cash were offered in the usual way; the recipient was given a small down payment with the promise of much more money to follow after an ARENA victory.

Where these ploys were unlikely to work, strong arm and thuggish tactics were applied. In a country where decades of violence has resulted in hundreds of thousands of dead and disappeared, this approach was cruelly effective. The unfortunate individuals were warned that their jobs would disappear if they voted for the FMLN, or they or a family member would "disappear". This may have caused votes to leach away from the FMLN in some areas, but it did not prevent thousands of loyal FMLN supporters in dangerous areas from casting their ballots.

On the election days there were many irregularities. "Ballot stuffing" was tried, and attempts at voter list tampering occurred at some polling stations. Some ARENA voters tried to cast ballots under assumed names - even the dead were "resurrected" for this purpose.

Gilberto, being politically astute, didn't just witness these attempts at electoral fraud, but was able to photograph many of them. A "nice" lady has her handbag



Gilberto Mayen in his official election observer kit.

checked - oh dear! Some extra ready-marked ARENA ballots are inside! An angry ARENA lady is caught as she tears down the official list of registered voters - not so fast young lady! Some toughs in ARENA t-shirts and waving party banners are flexing their muscles under the noses of little people right outside a polling station! Looks impressive, but it is a violation of the rules, so please move on.

These were just a few examples in one area in north Santa Ana. It was heartening to see though how many people were obviously delighted to cast their votes at stations where there were international observer teams. Gilberto recorded many dozens of positive comments.

One disappointing aspect of the

final tally was the much lower than expected acceptable ballots from the expatriate community. This is mainly composed of families who fled from the violence perpetrated by the National Army, National Police and associated right-wing vigilante gangs. (During this period an estimated 500,000 people were brutally killed.)

The expatriates are spread throughout Latin America and other, mainly Spanish-speaking parts of the world. (The USA only accepted less than 4% of the total number of refugees from the death squads.) For obvious reasons, the "out-of-country" people eligible to vote support the FMLN.

However, language and semantic problems related to the way in which the official instructions for "out-of-country"

voters was couched resulted in widespread errors. Over half of the estimated 10,337 voters failed to understand that the marked ballot for the first round had to be sent in a separate envelope from the ballot for the second round. In their enthusiasm many FMLN supporters sent their ballots in the same envelope, thereby invalidating both votes. This resulted in the loss of more than 60% of the important external support for the FMLN.

Despite this major set-back, the "nail biting" final count resulted in a victory for the FMLN and for the freedom-loving people of El Salvador.

Gilberto was ecstatic! Surrounded by family, and by old and new friends, they started celebrating.

The grand victory celebration was held in San Salvador on Saturday, March 15th, attended by over a million people. Gilberto walked through throngs of happy people, past lines of buses which brought supporters from the west and north lining the pavements. The Electoral Tribunal declared that the election was the most free, fair and transparent ever in the history of El Salvador. For all involved it had been very hard work. Long distances had to be walked to numerous polling stations in weather which was frequently in the 34 degree range.

An exhausted but happy Gilberto returned to Canada on March 18, to the great relief of his family, friends and comrades. ●

Radical left gains in Euro elections

By Tom Gill

It wasn't just the far-right but the radical left and new anti-austerity parties that delivered a rejection of the EU agenda in the European Parliament elections which took place May 22-25.

In Portugal, the radical left vote topped 17 per cent, with the Communist-Green coalition (CDU) emerging as the third political force with 12.7 per cent of the vote and three seats. For the Portuguese Communist Party, the most eurosceptic of all the continent's radical left parties, with the exception of Greece's KKE, this is the best result for 25 years.

PCP general secretary Jeronimo de Sousa said the government's electoral setback "clearly shows it was censured by the Portuguese people."

The Left Bloc (Bloco de Esquerda), less Eurosceptic than the communists, saw its share of the vote fall to 4.7 per cent, from 10.7 per cent in the previous European poll.

The Socialist Party (PS), which has upped its anti-austerity message in recent times despite becoming a co-signatory to the hated 2011 troika memorandum that imposed one of Europe's most brutal "stabilisation" programmes on Portugal, won the election with 31.5 per cent of the vote.

That compares with 27.7 per cent for the coalition of the right-wing Social Democratic Party and CDS party. The two parties together recorded their worst-ever

score due to their zealous slash-and-burn policies.

Also notable is the rise of the Party of the Earth, an ecologist movement of right-wing origin calling for greater food "sovereignty" and which campaigned for a referendum on the EU's Lisbon Treaty of 2007 that



Election banner of the CDU, Portugal's Communist-Green electoral alliance. The CDU made gains in the Euro Parliament voting last month.

introduced new curbs on national sovereignty, particularly on budget-setting. On the back of its green and Eurosceptic-lite politics, it won a surprise 7.1 per cent.

For the Socialists, their victory was too narrow and this has triggered a war of leaders in the Socialist Party, including heavyweight, Mayor Antonio

Costa of Lisbon, who said he was ready to challenge party leader Antonio Jose Seguro.

The most significant positive result was in austerity-and-recession-capital Greece.

Syriza, led by EU presidential candidate Alex Tsipras, topped the poll. It garnered 26.5 per cent of the vote, against the ruling conservative New Democracy's 22.7 per cent and a catastrophic 8 per cent for its coalition partner Pasok, once the country's main social democratic party until it became enslaved to the hated IMF-EU-ECB troika, with its "centre-left" alliance Elia.

Syriza's advance was foreshadowed in its impressive local election performance earlier in the month where it won the governorship of Attiki, the country's largest region.

As Panagiotis Lafazanis, a Syriza MP, told Bloomberg: "It's the first time in Greece's political history that a party of the radical left wins an election with a real margin. The result of the Greek election brings hope to the country and is positive for Europe."

Coupled with the 6 per cent score for the communists (KKE) - which, however, refuses to work with Syriza - that's a third of the electorate clearly on the "transformational" left. Syriza immediately called for early elections - a step rebuffed by Athens. But the ruling coalition may be not be able to resist for long.

Before the austerity crisis, ND and Pasok governed Greece interchangeably since the return

to democracy in 1974 with a combined vote of around 80 per cent, but together they now only command some 30 per cent of the vote.

In Spain, home to six million unemployed and a 130 billion euro bank bailout, the non-socialist left vote rose to 18 per cent. The communist backed United Left (Izquierda Unida) added 900,000 votes, bringing its total to 1.5 million, or a 10 per cent share, its best result since 1996. And the Republican Left of Catalonia is the wealthy north-eastern region's top vote-getter for the first time since the 1930s.

But the big surprise was the success of a three-month-old party linked to the country's "indignados" occupy movement, Podemos (We Can), which scored a remarkable 8 per cent after a low-budget but high-profile campaign led by 35-year-old political science professor and TV presenter Pablo Iglesias.

Both United Left and Podemos agree on cancelling most of the debt, halting evictions, nationalising subsidised banks and ending privatisations, so it made sense that following the election results United Left sought an alliance with Podemos.

However, there may be resistance to this among Podemos supporters in Spain's Occupy movement who will be suspicious of United Left's co-operation with

Dramatic Contradictions: 2014 Report of the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Indigenous People

By Pamela Palmater, from indigenounationhood.blogspot.com

In May, the United Nations Rapporteur on the rights of Indigenous Peoples in Canada James Anaya released his advanced, unedited report on "The Situation of Indigenous Peoples in Canada". The Rapporteur based his report on research, various sources, a visit to Canada in October 7-15, 2013, meetings with federal and provincial government officials, and meetings, visits with and submissions from Indigenous peoples.

There is a disturbing underlying theme in the report - one which speaks of "dramatic contradictions":

(1) The continued "abysmal" social conditions in First Nations in the context of increasing wealth and prosperity in Canada; and
(2) The numerous laws and protections for First Nation rights versus the many human rights violations committed against First Nations.

Anaya noted that while some First Nations have risen up against these injustices with the Idle No More movement, others are starting to give up attempts to resolve their claims. Anaya concluded that the relationship between Canada and First Nations has become much worse since the last visit to Canada in 2003. It doesn't take a rocket scientist to figure out that this is during Prime Minister Harper's term.

Anaya's most serious concerns relate to the "striking" statistics related to the poverty in many First Nations. Of the bottom 100 communities in Canada - 96 are First Nations. "The most jarring manifestation of these human rights problems in the distressing socio-economic conditions of indigenous peoples in a highly developed country."

He found that there has been no improvement in the gap between First Nations and Canadians in terms of housing, health care, education, welfare and social services. Given the significant needs of First Nations, Anaya had expected that the cost of social services would have been higher and was shocked to find that it was lower. He cited Canada's own Auditor General who pointed out that the failure to address poverty on reserve is due to the lack of appropriate funding from the federal government.

This led Anaya to conclude: "One of the most dramatic contradictions indigenous peoples in Canada face is that so many live in abysmal conditions on traditional territories that are full of valuable and plentiful natural resources."

It's not like there isn't enough money to go around. Canada is one of the wealthiest countries in the world because of the lands and resources which belong to Indigenous peoples. The mining industry alone brought in \$44 billion in 2013.

That figure doesn't include the hundreds of billions in other natural resources that come straight from Indigenous lands. Anaya noted that while governments and private interests are the ones that profit from resources on Indigenous

lands, it's the Indigenous peoples who suffer all the negative consequences in health, economy and culture that comes with the resulting environmental degradation.

This situation is not just an unfortunate, but inevitable consequence of western "progress" - it's a calculated policy choice to impoverish First Nations for the benefit of others. Anaya notes that Canada's consistent failure to consult with First Nations, take unilateral actions against their rights and portray them in negative light to the public is an "affront" to Canada-First Nation relations. Anaya explains that the federal public discourse on First Nation rights is presented as a burden to tax-payers instead of educating Canadians about the "vast economic benefit" they receive from First Nations. Harper's continued negative comments against First Nations risks "social peace".

First Nations could be completely self-sufficient economically if they controlled only a fraction of their lands and resources. Yet, in pursuit of maximized profit, Canada continues to ignore the legal rights and interests of First Nations. Canada (both federal and provincial governments) maintain their legal and physical blockades against First Nations to prevent them from accessing and benefiting from their own lands and resources. Anaya notes that despite the fact that treaties are constitutionally protected and allows Canadians to enjoy immense wealth, 30% of Justice Canada litigation is fighting treaties. Canada uses all of its power - its laws, policies and programs to maintain First Nations in poverty, while partnering with private interests to maximize government and corporate profits.

Part of the dramatic contradiction which is so striking to outside observers. As noted by Anaya: "It is difficult to reconcile Canada's well-developed legal framework and general prosperity with the human rights problems faced by indigenous peoples in Canada that have reached crisis proportions in many respects."

Canada presents a façade of human rights but commits numerous violations against Indigenous peoples - with apparent impunity. Although Anaya did not do a complete accounting of which laws and violations, he noted several

human rights violations that have received "insufficient" attention by governments including the well-being gap, housing crisis, murdered and missing women, overrepresentation in Justice system, gender discrimination in Indian status, and lack of education to name a few.

Anaya concluded that Canada could address these human rights violations if it wanted to do so. Let's hope Canadian officials take a good hard look at Anaya's observations and recommendations and take the necessary

action to end these human rights violations against Indigenous peoples.

A highlight of some of Anaya's key recommendations:

- Sufficient funding for education, health, and child welfare;
- Focus on Indigenous-run social and judicial services;
- Urgent, increased funding to address the housing crisis;
- Enhance education, funding and consult on any proposed legislation;
- Comprehensive, nation-wide inquiry into murdered and missing

Indigenous women and girls;

- Consent for all laws impacting Indigenous peoples;
- Address gender discrimination in the Indian Act;
- No resource development without free, informed and prior consent of Indigenous peoples; and
- Maximize Indigenous control and benefit from any extractive operations on Indigenous lands.

"Indigenous peoples concerns merit higher priority at all levels and within all branches of Governments, and across all departments." ●



On June 8, United Nations World Oceans Day, over 2000 people from First Nations and allies joined the Union of BC Indian Chiefs against the Enbridge Northern Gateway proposal to build a pipeline to transport bitumen from the Alberta tar sands to a tanker port at Kitimat, BC. The participants marched from Vancouver's Sunset Beach, over the Burrard Street Bridge, to a rally at Vanier Park. The event sent a message to governments that First Nations will not jeopardize children's future for corporate profit, and that "the continued infringement of Aboriginal Title, Rights and Treaty Rights will not be tolerated."



Captain America fights at home

Captain America: Winter Soldier, review by Manuel E. Yepe, a CubaNews translation, edited by Walter Lippmann.

Captain America: Winter Soldier, is one of those blockbuster movies in vogue, such as Oblivion, Ender's Game, The Hunger Games, and Star Trek: Into Darkness, which critically denounces the trend that is leading the country to become a repressive police state from its proclaimed war against terrorism. Only this one has the peculiarity of focusing the fight against Fascism as an internal phenomenon rather than unloading it on external enemies.

According to political scientist Lucas Bowser on his website Victory Post, "It is exciting that a very symbolic and mainstream franchise is carrying such a heavy political load, as it juxtaposes the

modern U.S. national security state with Nazi Germany. The messages of the film point neither toward the political left or right, and instead easily reach out to dissenters from multiple orientations having common concerns about the degradation of civil liberties and abuse of power. Rather than serving as a tool of state propaganda by fighting foes from the list of Washington's contrived enemies in the real world, Captain America is instead fighting fascism where it poses its greatest threat: 'here at home'."

Captain America is a fictional character created in the 1940s by Marvel Comics for its cartoons and comic strips which were distributed in many countries as propaganda for the United States during World War II. In several Latin American countries, children of my generation knew him as "Capitan Maravilla" or "Captain Marvel"; perhaps to conceal the obvious propaganda purpose in favour of one of the contenders in the war.

The protagonist is Steve Rogers, a fragile young man changed to human perfection by an experimental serum that turns him into Captain America, a superman who helps the United States in the war. Captain America was the most famous comic strip character during the war, but when it ended the popularity of the character faded and it was discontinued in 1950. This film is a sequel to Captain America: The First Avenger (2011).

The main story in Winter Soldier is that the dominant intelligence structure has fallen into the hands of fascist forces that act as a network within the government trying to establish an authoritarian and totalitarian empire, euphemistically

identified as the "New World Order." Thus, the plot centers around the rogue network orchestrating the implementation of a long term agenda for such a "New World Order".

The chronicles of Captain America have been incorporated into real world events and politics since the comic's creation in 1941; but in this new film the superhero awakens to a more sophisticated conception of patriotism in the face of the monumental corruption of power which mirrors modern America.

Naturally, this superhero movie - one we could classify as a political conspiracy/spy thriller - touches many current issues: drone warfare, helicarriers to spy satellites designed for pre-emptive punishment of threats, state-secret whistleblowers, Obama's targeted assassination list, mind controlled government assassins, NSA-style surveillance, the U.S. government's operation for recruiting former Nazi scientists, and the ever-present proposition of sacrificing liberty for the promise of security.

The film talks about Project Insight, essentially a system of interlinked mega-drones which collect and analyze the population's private information in order to designate people as future threats and to preventively kill them. Steve Rogers becomes a fugitive, forced to fight the very system he worked for in previous films and comics.

I must warn you that this 2 hour and 16 minute movie has many of the characteristic sins of Hollywood entertainment: especially the belief that problems and crises are caused by individuals and not by the system; or that the solutions will come from the heroes and not the masses. ●



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

Harper should apologize....

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Tory corporate agenda.

It is no accident that the Prime Minister vented his rage against communists - those who led many historic struggles to build the trade union movement in Canada, and who played key roles in the fights to win unemployment insurance, universal public medicare, old age pensions, pay equity, and other key elements of the social safety net. Several times in Canadian history, the ruling class banned the Communist Party, jailed its leaders and seized its assets, trying repeatedly to crush a party which spoke out fearlessly for democratic rights and civil liberties under the most difficult circumstances. Mr. Harper's speech was a transparent attempt to divide and weaken the opposition against his reactionary agenda, just as Cold War red-baiting and blacklisting was a key tactic in the ruling class drive to smash the most militant trade unions and to weaken public resistance to the imperialist assault of the post-WWII years.

In today's conditions, Mr. Harper's Conservatives at both the federal and provincial levels are moving to smash the trade union movement, impose "right to work for less" laws, destroy the remaining elements of the social safety net, and to privatize all public assets such as the Post Office and the CBC. For Stephen

Harper to accuse the Communists of being "undemocratic" is the height of hypocrisy, since he and his government are the real threat to democracy, human rights and the living standards of working people in Canada. It was Mr. Harper, not the Communist Party, who attempted to remove voting rights for hundreds of thousands of Canadians, in a brazen attempt to steal the next federal election before the campaign even begins. The Tory party, not the Communists, are conducting massive surveillance operations against those who dissent against their agenda.

Much more needs to be said about the Prime Minister's cowardly, bullying speech at the May 30 dinner. We join with many others in pointing out, for example, that Canada does need a monument - to the victims of capitalism. The history of capitalism in Canada and the western hemisphere is a story of mass murder by the colonial powers, a genocide which cost some 90 million lives of indigenous peoples. The slave trade and the imperialist occupation of colonies in Africa and Asia resulted in similar slaughters. During the 20th century, tens of millions of people died in wars launched by capitalist powers in their relentless imperialist re-division of the planet. Every year, some two million workers die as a direct

result of job "accidents" and diseases related to the work environment. Most recently, hundreds of coal miners in Turkey were killed in a massive explosion caused by the profiteering of capitalist owners. In Canada, the annual death toll of workplace accidents is nearly one thousand. Relentless capitalist expansion in pursuit of higher corporate profits threatens the entire global environment, endangering billions of human beings.

Why is there no talk by Mr. Harper's government about a monument to these victims of an economic, social and political system based on exploitation for the sake of private profits?

To ask the question is to know the answer. Mr. Harper is the representative of big capital, of the big banks and resource corporations which rake in enormous profits at the expense of the working class of Canada and other countries. His anti-communism is nothing but a tactic to confuse the public and to smash popular resistance against the neoliberal corporate assault. Our answer will be to expose Harper's lies, and to redouble our efforts to help build a powerful People's Coalition against the right-wing agenda. Our goal remains a socialist Canada, based on the collective interests of working people and the environment, rather than the murderous pursuit of private profit. ●

Euro elections analysis...

continued from page 9

the discredited Socialists in the Andalusia region.

In Europe, Podemos and its ponytailed leader say they want to work with Greece's victor, Syriza. Some believe it will focus more on an apolitical anti-establishment approach, typified by Italy's Five Star Movement.

The elections were a massive blow to Spain's Socialist Party, whose support dropped to just 23 per cent down from 39 per cent five years ago. Party chief Alfredo Perez Rubalcaba has resigned after admitting he'd failed to provide an adequate response to the onslaught from the ruling Popular Party of Mariano Rajoy.

Rubalcaba's resignation has led to much internal factional turmoil within the party, underlining the sense that Spanish social democracy - which kicked off the austerity fest that was subsequently sharply accelerated by Rajoy's Popular Party - is now fighting for its survival.

Italians broke with the southern European trend by voting for a mainstream party. The Democrats - described as "centre-left" but pursuing neoliberal reforms with more enthusiasm than any of their sister parties - took a historic 40 per cent of the vote, a success not achieved by any party since the early days of the Christian Democrats in the 1950s.

Indeed as the party is the result of a "historic compromise" between the heirs of the right-wing party of the late Christian Democrat leader Giulio Andreotti and those of Italy's other great

movement - the communists of Togliatti and Berlinguer - this perhaps shouldn't surprise us at all.

Observers say Democrat voters, swayed by the fresh face at the top, have returned to the fold after flirting with Beppe Grillo's Five Star Movement, which failed to maintain its top spot.

Although the bearded loud mouth, as he's now oft-described, Grillo shouldn't be written off as he still commands a fifth of the vote and holds second place on the back of an anti-corruption, anti-establishment and Eurosceptic platform (he's called for a referendum on Italy's membership of the euro).

No doubt Matteo Renzi's newcomer status, his positioning as an party outsider and his tax cuts for those on lower incomes just ahead of the polls have helped his fortunes. But becoming the largest delegation in the European Parliament is no substitute for power in Rome.

And in the Italian capital, co-operation is needed from the ever unreliable Silvio Berlusconi, who is undeterred by community service for a tax fraud conviction and, although now trailing third, is still enjoying 17 per cent backing, thanks in part to a media stranglehold Renzi won't touch, as well as continued attacks on Germany and Chancellor Angela Merkel for lording it over Italy.

What's for sure, the vote for Renzi isn't a vote for neoliberal "reforms", but is a vote for change. Unemployment in Italy is at a record 13 per cent and youth joblessness is an epidemic, as it is

in Greece and Spain.

And as in 17 other states, wages have been slashed, wealth inequality continues to widen, essential public services cut to shreds or otherwise sold off along with other public assets to privateers. And still the public debt is as big or bigger than ever.

The question is how long will it take before Italians realise that, just like their fellow Europeans, they won't get the change they want - and that they are being taken for a ride.

Tom Gill blogs at revolting-europe.com. ●

News for people, not for profits!



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

What's Left

Nanaimo, BC

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

Vancouver, BC

Memorial for Elspeth Gardner, 2 pm, Sunday, June 22, Ukrainian Hall, 803 E. Pender St. (see obituary below).

Memorial for John and Irene Niechoda, 2 pm, Sunday, June 22, Russian Hall, 600 Campbell.

La Trova Nuestra, evening of Latin American music and socialising, admission \$10, 8 pm, Friday, June 27, Centre for Socialist Education, 706 Clark.

Left Film Night, Sunday, June 29, 7 pm, at the Centre for Socialist Education, 706 Clark Drive, 604-255-2041 for info.

Toronto, ON

Fair Wages Now!, rally at the Ministry of Labour to demand a \$14 minimum wage, Wed., June 18, 12 noon, 400 University Ave., for details see www.raisetheminimumwage.ca

LGBTI Equality: progress and challenges in a changing

Cuba, with Mariela Castro Espin, director of Cuban National Centre for Sexual Education (CENESEX), Sunday, June 22, 2 pm, Steelworkers Hall, 25 Cecil St., admission \$10 (advance tickets from 416-469-2481), Sponsored by People's Voice, Rainbow-Sea of Red Collective, and Queer Commission of Communist Party (Ontario).

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

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

People's Voice deadlines

July 1-31 issue: Thursday, June 19

August 1-31 issue: Thursday, July 17

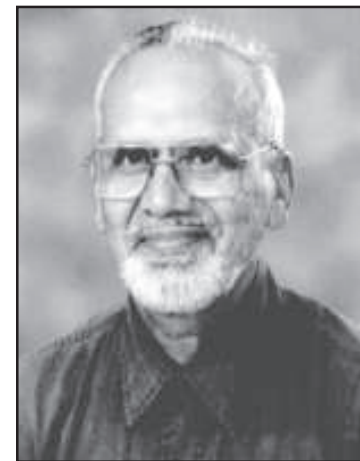
Send submissions to PV Editorial Office,
706 Clark Drive, Vancouver, V5L 3J1
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Harjit Daudharia receives literary award

Harjit Daudharia, a prominent writer based in Surrey, BC, was awarded with the prestigious Iqbal Arpan Memorial Award on June 14, by the Arpan Writers Association of Calgary, Alberta.

This occasion was held "to honour Harjit Daudharia's contributions to Punjabi Literature and to the advancement of Canadian Society."

His contributions include "Comrade Darshan Canadian" (in Punjabi & English), three books on Punjabi poetry, a book of essays in Punjabi, "Hold The Sky" (a book of poetry in English), and "Dr. D.S. Kutnis and Norman Bethune" (in English). Scholars Dr. Sukhdev Singh from Punjab University Chandigarh and Dr. Surjit Singh Brar from Moga, Punjab, India, were present with Harjit Daudharia to celebrate this great achievement, along with other literary scholars from across Canada. ●



Political storm at VSB...

continued from page 3

2011 election to launch a stealth campaign to mobilize voters from various fundamentalist churches. The current controversy seems tailor-made for a similar tactic, with the strategic goal of taking advantage of a growth in anti-

Vision sentiment around civic development issues to help the NPA take over the VSB. Such an outcome could threaten the Board's commitment to safer schools for LGBTQ+ students. It would also remove the most powerful voice against Liberal education policies among B.C.'s sixty school boards. ●

"There Will Be No World Cup": Brazil on the Brink

By Dave Zirin,
www.edgeofsports.com

The FIFA World Cup kicks off on June 12, shortly after this issue of PV goes to the printer. Many of our readers are passionate soccer fans, who also care deeply about the extent of poverty in Brazil, the host country. This commentary is by progressive U.S. sports writer Dave Zirin, who has just published a new book, called *Brazil's Dance with the Devil: The World Cup, the Olympics and the Fight for Democracy*.

For people just tuning in, the idea that people in Brazil would be

protesting the 2014 World Cup makes about as much sense as New Yorkers' rebelling against pizza. And yet here we are, less than one month before the start of the Cup, and demonstrations bear the slogan #NaoVaiTerCopa, or "There will be no Cup."

Protests, strikes and direct actions have been flaring up across the country as the 2014 FIFA World Cup approaches. Most notably, as many as 10,000 people in Sao Paulo under the banner of Brazil's Landless Workers Movement, or MTST, has occupied a major lot next to Arena Corinthians, site of the World Cup's opening match. They call their occupation "The People's Cup" and point out that the nearly half a billion dollars that went into building the "FIFA quality stadium" next door could have been used to combat poverty or improve healthcare. The slogan "we want FIFA quality hospitals and schools" still rings out as it did a year ago, when during the Confederation's Cup, Brazil saw its largest protests in a generation. Now there is an even sharper desperation as the cup approaches. Maria das Dores Cirqueira, 44, a coordinator for the MTST, told the Los Angeles Times, "When the government told us we would host the World Cup, we hoped there would be improvements for us. But they aren't putting on a Cup for the people, they're putting on a Cup for the gringos."

This belief that the lion's share of Cup expenditures are for foreign consumption, while the disruption

and pain will be shouldered by Brazil's masses, is widespread. Every protest, every rally, every cry of despair is connected to the "the three D's": displacement, debt and defense. The stats on displacement, debt and defense can be numbing or easy to disregard for outsiders. The numbers on people expelled from their homes vary wildly, but without question, hundreds of thousands of the most vulnerable residents in the country have been or will be relocated by either carrot or stick, whether through financial reimbursement or through the barrel of the gun.

As far as debt goes, this will be the most expensive World Cup in history, with a low-estimate price tag of \$15 billion. And then there is "defense." In addition to harsh new "anti-terror" legislation, Brazil's government will have more boots on the ground than any World Cup has ever witnessed: more than 170,000 security personnel, 22

percent more than South Africa saw in 2010. This brand of "defense" will drive up the displacement and debt on the ground in Brazil, as "safety" becomes the catch-all justification for President Dilma Rousseff and the ruling Workers Party's every step. It is also "defense" that is driving people and organizations into the streets to say Nao Vai Ter Copa. The "defense" operation has put the near-entirety of its focus on internal targets, which creates the appearance that all of this money is being spent to protect wealthy soccer tourists from the people of Brazil themselves. (Yet even some of the internal security measures are not immune from the discontent, as stadium security officers went on strike recently saying that they wanted "FIFA quality wages.")

As Brazilians suffer these unprecedented disruptions into their lives, the words of those in charge could not be more tone deaf. Brazil's Sports Minister Aldo Rebelo huffed in March that any anger would dissipate by the time the Cup was underway, saying, "People will be more concerned

Other voices...

Report from the protests in Brazil

(After Zirin published this article, he received the below message from his friend Dylan Stillwood who is living in Brazil. Stillwood wrote, "It's almost impossible to keep track of the wave of strikes and demonstrations taking place across Brazil, and it will only heat up more as the World Cup approaches. There were scenes of chaos across Brazil yesterday as the 'There Will Be No Cup' movement was repressed with tear gas and rubber bullets in major World Cup cities. In São Paulo, ten thousand public schoolteachers, who have been on strike for three weeks, marched to City Hall. Meanwhile, the Homeless Workers Movement (MTST) joined forces with the Landless Workers Movement (MST) and blocked highways near the Itaquerao stadium, where the opening game will be held, as well as in the west and south zones of the city. In Recife, which will host five games, the military occupied the streets with tanks as a strike of the police and firefighters entered its second day. Teachers are also on strike in Rio and Belo Horizonte, both Cup cities, and their unions officially joined the anti-Cup protests. Rio was paralyzed by a wildcat bus strike for two days, while subway workers in Sao Paulo are threatening to do the same. The list goes on: oil workers in Cubatao, armored car drivers in São Paulo, civil servants in Belo Horizonte, airport workers in Guarulhos, just to name a few. There have even been protests at Brazilian embassies abroad. Many Brazilians have fallen out of love with the World Cup after seeing the destruction it's caused. The word "FIFA" is about as popular as "FEMA" in New Orleans after Katrina. A web poll at Veja magazine showed that only 22% of readers would root for Brazil, while 34% planned to root against. Everyone has commented that the traditional pre-Cup festivities - painting the streets, hanging up green and yellow bunting - is hard to find this year...")



with celebrating rather than protesting." FIFA General Secretary Jerome Valcke seemed to pine for the dictatorial Brazil of yesteryear when he said that "working with democratically elected governments can complicate organizing tournaments." The foot-in-mouth Valcke also commented recently that FIFA has been "through hell" trying to keep the World Cup on schedule. It is safe to guess that the "hell" of having your home bulldozed or being beaten and gassed by police is slightly worse than anything Valcke has had to endure.

The calls for protest aim to highlight the pain as well as show

the world who is behind the curtain, pulling the strings. There is a highly sophisticated awareness that just as the government's World Cup plans for Brazil are designed for international consumption, there is also an unprecedented global spotlight. The great journalist Eduardo Galeano once wrote, "There are visible and invisible dictators. The power structure of world football is monarchical. It's the most secret kingdom in the world." Protesters aim for nothing less than to drag FIFA from the shadows and into the light. If they are successful, it will leave a legacy that will last longer than the spectacle itself. ●

Austerity hurts the neediest, warns ILO

The United Nations' International Labour Organisation (ILO) has denounced "premature" austerity measures brought in by governments around the world. It said that policies introduced during the financial crisis had hurt the world's most vulnerable people.

ILO director of social welfare Isabel Ortiz said on June 3 that in 2014 alone at least 122 governments had cut public spending, including in 82 developing countries.

In the European Union, where many states brought in big budget cuts, she estimated that as many as 123 million people — a quarter of the bloc's population — were now classified as poor because of cuts in social protection. Now, Ortiz said, more than 70 per cent of the world's population was inadequately covered.

Cuts to "pensions, health systems and social security... the removal of subsidies, downsizing among social workers and health personnel" had hit poor people at a time when they were most in need of support, said Ortiz.

People had been forced to pay

the cost "at a time when jobs are scarce and support more necessary than ever."

Between 2008 and 2009, 48 developed countries implemented stimulus packages worth \$2 billion, of which about a quarter was on social protection. But, from 2010, many governments changed tack and took "premature fiscal consolidation measures" despite the need to support the poor.

"Most people do not now have adequate social protection when it is most needed," said ILO deputy director-general Sandra Polaski.

Almost four out of 10 people worldwide do not have access to a healthcare system, while in poor countries that rises to nine out of 10. Globally, only 12 per cent of the unemployed receive benefits, ranging from almost two-thirds in Western Europe to less than 3 per cent in the Middle East and Africa.

Meanwhile, the ageing population in developed countries means many pensioners live below the poverty line. In at least 14 European countries, pensions are expected to fall. ●

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