



**Defeat Bill C-51**  
*See page 7*

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# people's **VOICE**

## **International Women's Day 2015**

**“Empowering  
Women,  
Empowering  
Humanity:  
Picture It!”**

*- page 6 -*



Photo: rankandfile.ca

### **Quebec trade unions gear up to challenge austerity**

*At a mid-February meeting of the labour movement in Montreal, trade unionists spoke in support of an action plan to challenge the austerity policies of the Quebec government. The next stage of the campaign will culminate with a big May 1 action which may include economic disruptions and strikes. It appears that the Quebec labour movement is preparing to give capital a run for its money...*

**Report on page 2**

**3 & 5**

#### **Child poverty in BC**

Child poverty rates remain stubbornly high in British Columbia, where the right-wing Liberal provincial government remains committed to putting the interests of the rich ahead of everyone else.

**INSIDE**

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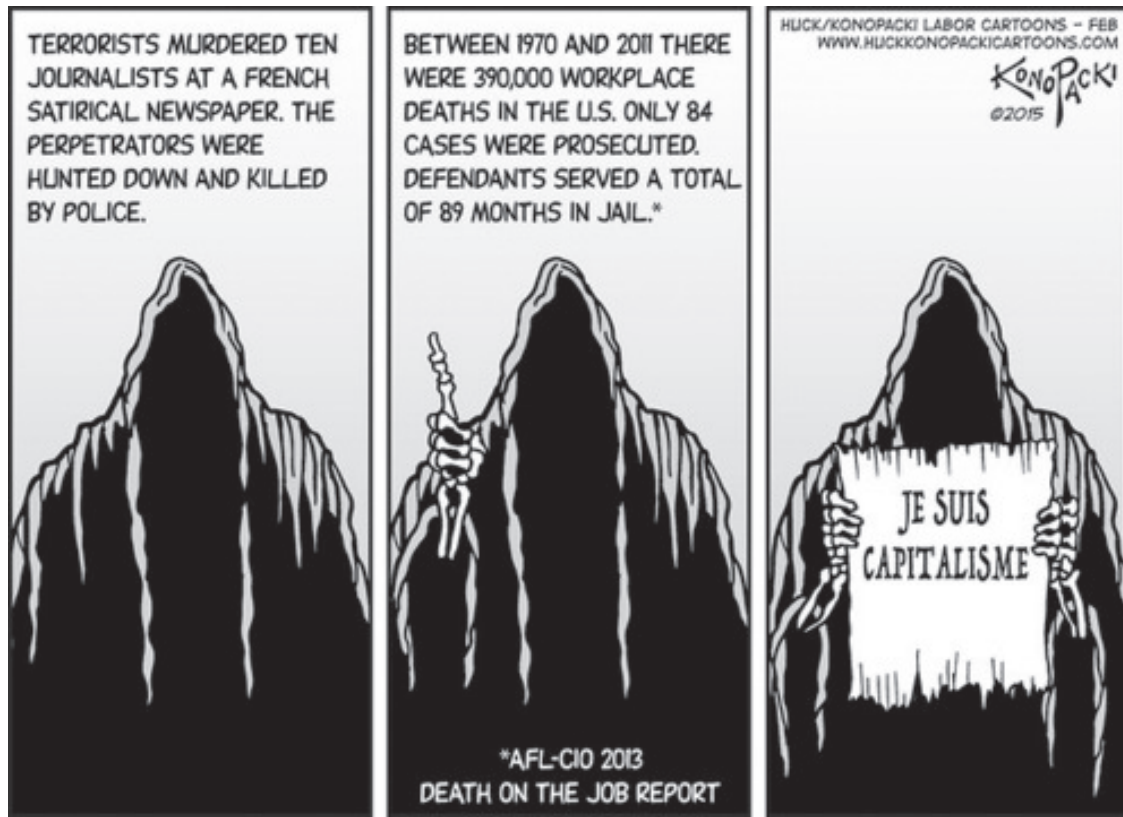
#### **"Public Inquiry Now"**

Valentine's Day saw thousands rally to call for an independent public inquiry into murdered and missing Aboriginal women.

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#### **Fascism in Ottawa**

The proposed "Tribute to Liberty" in Ottawa draws increasing fire as a massive waste of public funds for a monument dedicated to promoting pro-fascist ideologies and lies about the Second World War.



## PV Fund Drive for \$50,000

### We will not be silenced by C-51!

Every year, People's Voice appeals to readers and friends for material support. This time-honoured tradition goes back to the era of *The Worker*, which began publication on March 15, 1922, the *Canadian Tribune* (launched 75 years ago, on January 15, 1940), and then the *Pacific Tribune*.

Ninety years ago, radio was a new information technology, and working people relied on newspapers, leaflets, books and other print media to learn about politics and current events. Today, progressive movements increasingly depend on websites and social media platforms to reach millions of people. We are no exception, and our volunteers are busy expanding the People's Voice online presence (watch for details!).

But some things don't change. Socialists and progressives have always resisted imperialist war and aggression. That was true during the era of *The Worker* and the *Tribunes*, and today Canada is being plunged into yet another deadly war of occupation in Iraq and Syria. The labour movement was under constant threat by governments and corporate interests in 1922 and 1940, and again today under the Harper Conservatives.

There is another ominous parallel with earlier times. Today's Bill C-51 reminds us of the War Measures Act, which was invoked

several times to ban left-wing organizations, imprison labour leaders, shut down newspapers, and to incarcerate people on the basis of their ethnic origins. Bill C-51, the so-called Anti-Terrorism Act, allows arrests on mere suspicion of future criminal activity, expands the "no-fly list", creates a new speech-related criminal offence of "promoting" or "advocating" "terrorism offences in general," and criminalizes activities which "interfere with the economic or financial stability of Canada."

Look at the potential targets of this dangerous police state legislation: anti-war activists; Canadians of Muslim faith (portrayed as potential criminals by racist Conservative cabinet ministers!); supporters of national liberation movements; trade unionists exercising their right to strike and take other forms of collective action; Indigenous activists and environmentalists who engage in civil disobedience to resist tar sands extraction and pipelines.

With a federal election looming, the Conservatives and their right-wing backers want to shut down open debate. They hope to use the legal bludgeon of Bill C-51 to intimidate critics into silence.

However, People's Voice will always speak out against war, fascism, racism, bigotry, and Islamophobia. We support the

Boycott, Disinvestment and Sanctions campaign against Israeli apartheid policies. We stand shoulder to shoulder with trade unionists struggling for better pay and working conditions, and with those who oppose expanded greenhouse gas emissions. In the face of Harper's threats, WE WILL NOT BE SILENT.

We will keep giving prominent coverage to the campaigns to block C-51, to reject police state repression and surveillance, and to dismantle CSIS. We will stand for peace, solidarity with Palestine, free collective bargaining, Aboriginal rights, and climate justice. We will continue to call for an end to capitalist exploitation, and for a socialist Canada, in which working people democratically control the economy and hold political power.

But we cannot move ahead without your solidarity. People's Voice urgently needs to complete our annual \$50,000 Fund Drive, so that we can report on the huge political struggles building across Canada and around the world.

**To our amazing subscribers - when your mail appeal letter arrives in early March, please respond as generously as you can. Every donation is critical, no matter what you can afford.**

This year, we also want to pay a special tribute to friends who make significant donations to our Fund Drive. All those who contribute or raise \$300 or more will be recognized as People's Voice Supporters, and we will send you a copy of "Red Bait", the late Al King's wonderful book on the history of the Mine-Mill union in Trail, British Columbia. Contributors of \$500-plus will become "Editor's Circle" members, eligible to receive a copy of "Citizenfour," the important documentary on whistle-blower Edward Snowden. And those who donate \$1000 or more will be honoured with a Lifetime Sustainer subscription, either personally or for somebody of your choice.

Never has it been more important to help People's Voice stay in print. We know we can count on your support! ●

## LABOUR NEWS

### Unions gear up for a fight in Quebec

PV Montreal Bureau

Quebec's labour movement is gearing up for a big show-down against austerity, if the rhetoric at a mid-February special meeting opened to the public of the Central Council of Metropolitan Montreal of the CSN, is any indication. The meeting was the third general assembly of union militants held by the CSN since September, and took place in the context of the resistance against austerity measures adopted by the Liberal government.

One of those measures is Bill 10 which was just adopted a few days before. This legislation was initially proposed as a cost cutting measure combining different components of Health and Social Services administration by the current health minister, Dr Gaétan Barrette, a star candidate of the right-populist Coalition Avenir du Québec in the second-last election, who switched to the Liberals last year.

In fact, nobody other than the Liberals seemed to know the purpose of the convoluted Bill 10, the so-called "Barrette revolution". Then, as the bill neared the end of the parliamentary cycle of discussion, the Liberals introduced amendments which made clear the true reason for the legislation.

After a few upset and rather loud-voiced visitors interrupted business, the National Assembly approved the Bill by a 79 to 38 vote, following a marathon debate from 10 am Friday to midnight Saturday.

The poison pill among the amendments was new wording combining health-care workers formerly under separate organizations. That means the different trade unions will be forced to fight it out one against another for membership during the negotiations.

Suddenly the purpose of the Bill became clear. The same strategy was used by the Charest Liberal government to break the Front Commun in 2005. The resulting disunity put a wrench into the wheels of labour militancy in Quebec, from which the trade union movement only recently recovered. The Quebec Student Strike three years ago was very helpful in that recovery.

The spirit of that magnificent 2012 mobilization was very much alive in the room.

After passing a motion giving guests the right to speak, Dominique Daigneault, General Secretary of the Central Montreal Council, turned to the main resolution and proposal: economic disruption and labour action against austerity.

The trade unionists spoke forcefully in support of the action plan. Many proposed longer, more targeted, and broader activities. This stage of the

campaign will culminate with a big May 1 action which will include economic disruptions and strikes where it is possible.

While all the attention was somewhat detail-oriented, some proposals addressed deepening labour's programme of demands against austerity, such as a guaranteed minimum income and a general raise in worker's wages as one of its stated goals. Several other suggestions were made, and in the end a strong plan against austerity was adopted.

The question remains if the labour militants can make this fightback a campaign for their whole membership and move the entire union movement into mass, united action. Already there have been a number of actions, including occupations of MNA offices in January by labour leaders. And there is concern



about the unity of the Common Front now, following Bill 10.

On the other hand, surveys show the "Barrette revolution" is by far the most unpopular of the austerity measures, which have seen tens of thousands of municipal and child care workers, as well as students, in the streets over pensions and other cuts.

Later this year public sector workers will hit the negotiating table. A lot is at stake and the current Liberal government is dedicated to destroying the entire Quebec model of the social welfare state. This what is really behind the attack on childcare.

It is of course a great outrage for working families and all Quebecers, but the attack is much more serious. It is the sharp tip of the knife that big business wants to try to utilize, eviscerating the fundamental principle of universality in social programmes.

The energy in the hall, however, was alert to this attack and combatant. While organized on a Montreal level, the meeting will have national implications.

Of course, there was an elephant in the room the whole time. In a discussion of economic disruption, every action and strategy the meeting considered - past, present, and future - could be considered illegal under Harper's new federal-level legislation, Bill C-51.

But if the vision and unity shown tonight are any indicator, the "non-commissioned officers" of the Quebec labour movement are willing to give capital a run for its money, and take on the big ticket struggles. ●

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

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

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

# "Put child poverty reduction efforts first in B.C."

**On Feb. 11, an Open Letter was sent by the First Call: BC Child & Youth Advocacy Coalition, in response to a letter from Minister of Children and Family Development Stephanie Cadieux about the 2014 Child Poverty Report Card. Here are excerpts from the First Call letter.**

Dear Premier Clark and Minister Cadieux,

Thank you for your response to our 2014 BC Child Poverty Report Card dated December 22, 2014.... We are glad to hear that your government believes that one child living in poverty is one child too many. We agree wholeheartedly.

Given this belief, we are puzzled by other aspects of your response. BC is about to introduce a budget with a surplus. In this context, and recalling BC's obligations as a signatory to the United Nations

Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) to make the best interests of children a priority, including their right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health, your argument that BC has a good track record on child poverty stands in stark contrast to the numbers: 169,420 children (1 in 5) in this province live in poverty according to the most recent statistics (2012). For children living in lone-parent families, a shocking 1 in 2 are poor.

We have heard government spokespeople dispute the accuracy of the statistics in the First Call Report Card. These statistics come from Statistics Canada. They are drawn from actual taxfiler income data and the measure of poverty used, the after-tax Low Income Measure used by provinces across Canada, and is widely used internationally. If anything, the LIM-AT poverty lines (by family size) are a conservative measure,

as they do not take into account the high cost of living in many parts of BC compared to other provinces and cities.

These statistics call for urgent response, rather than a defense of the status quo. In the Report Card we propose nineteen recommendations, fourteen of which fall within provincial jurisdiction, which would improve children's lives if government acted on them. First Call has been calling for many of these recommendations for years, and they have been echoed by the Select Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services in their reports on provincial budget consultations.

Our primary recommendation for a legislated provincial poverty reduction plan is dismissed in your letter because other provinces' plans have demonstrated "inconclusive" success. This defeatist stance assumes BC cannot put a good plan in place.

Poverty reduction plans are mechanisms for accountability for tracking and measuring progress, or the lack of it, in relation to specific targets and timelines. A plan is only as good as the evidence base on which it rests and the commitment or political will behind it. Government ministries all have service plans with annual performance goals to be measured. Low income children and families deserve the same level of attention to outcomes and the same rigour in measuring progress to reduce their poverty....

In your letter you state that government believes there are two ways to address poverty, with creating jobs and a strong economy being the first. You did not offer any measures of how BC's job creation efforts are doing in reducing child poverty. We agree that well-paying, secure jobs with benefits can be key to reducing the depth and incidence of child poverty. Our tracking of child poverty statistics over the years indicates that the majority of BC's poor children live with parents who have jobs, but they are still poor. In 2012 43% of BC's income earners made less than \$25,000 per year. Low wages and precarious work are major factors in high levels of child poverty in the province. This is why several of our recommendations point to the need to make sure parents' wages are sufficient to lift their families out of poverty.

You point to a list of targeted supports as the second way BC is addressing the issue of poverty. Again, we agree that reducing the costs of essential services and living expenses for families is an effective way to reduce poverty levels, as are income supports for those who are unable to work or unable to secure work. Many of our recommendations suggest improvements to these targeted supports to make them more effective, such as raising social assistance rates and addressing the child care crisis for families.

We were certainly pleased to see BC's minimum wage raised to \$10.25 in May 2012. However, it is

now 2015 and BC was the only province that did not raise its minimum wage in 2014. A single parent with one child working full-time, full-year at minimum wage would have been \$8,000 below the 2012 poverty line. Two parents both working full-time, full-year at minimum wage with two children would have been \$990 below the poverty line. Meanwhile, the BC consumer price index rose by 1.2% between November 2013 and November 2014, which means the lowest waged workers continue to fall behind in their buying power. We recommend raising the minimum wage to \$15 per hour as soon as possible, and indexing it annually.

With regard to your reference to BC's low personal income tax rates, we note that poor families pay little or no income tax and yet are still poor. Overall tax cuts, rather than being a gift to poor families have reduced government's ability to provide those targeted supports and services low income families and children need.

Child care subsidy eligibility thresholds have not been adjusted for many years and subsidy rates have been stagnant for almost a decade, and have certainly not kept pace with the skyrocketing cost of child care fees. You mention that BC paid \$135 million in subsidies this year. This is less than the \$154 million in subsidies paid in 2011. Research evidence indicates that subsidies are not the best way to support accessibility to quality child care and we draw your attention to our recommendation to adopt and begin implementing the proposed \$10 a day child care plan.

With regard to the 800,000 British Columbians who receive MSP premium waivers, this is because their annual incomes are below \$22,000 per year. If these families have children, they are living in poverty. Premium assistance eligibility thresholds were last adjusted January 1, 2010,

see BC POVERTY, page 11

## Bramptonians reject health sector austerity

PV Ontario Bureau

At a Feb. 15 People's Voice public forum on the topic "Health Under Attack", Brampton, Ontario residents spoke out strongly against austerity policies in the health care sector.

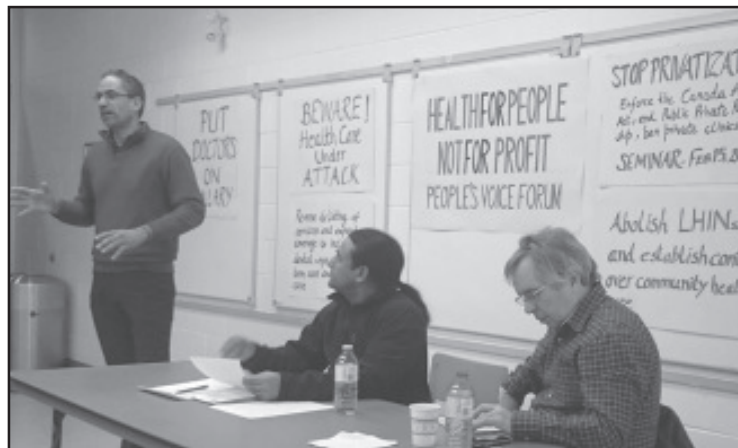
Among the speakers at the forum was Doug Allan, a researcher and board member of the Ontario Health Coalition.

Allan said that globalization of finance capital since the late '80s has created havoc worldwide, including accelerated privatization of the public sector. Private capital has systematically targeted the health sector to create a deliberate crisis, so that hospitals and related health facilities could be handed over to corporate interests. Both Liberal and Tory governments have collaborated to create a mess in Ontario's health sector. These changes started under the social democratic NDP government of Bob Rae, Allan noted.

Provincial and federal governments are consistently working to withdraw various medical facilities from public hospitals, and shifting to private "for profit" facilities where users pay hefty fees. To implement these anti-people policies, the ruling class has consciously defamed workers' unions. Allan said that governments have tried to cut MRI and CT scan facilities from public hospitals, but had to restore some services when the Ontario Health Coalition and related unions resisted this move.

Unfortunately, Allan said, the trade union movement is not as strong as it used to be in the 1960s, 70s, and 80s. Today, the offensive by big capital has to be confronted with strong unions, which need to devise new strategies by combining their efforts with the wider community. Trade unions must find ways to relate their activities with the communities, and create broad mass support to educate working people about the danger of the ruling elite's plan for massive privatization.

Another speaker, Shamshad Elahee Shams, explained the economic scenario of Ontario which plays a vital role in the



Speakers at the People's Voice health care forum in Brampton.

Canadian economy. Thirty-eight percent of Canada's 33.6 million people reside in Ontario, including 6.55 million in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) alone. Ontario produces 37% (\$695 billion) of the total Canadian GDP of \$1.893 trillion. The GTA and Ontario are witnessing rapid population growth, but Ontario is the lowest province in terms of what it gets in services per capita.

The zero percent rise in Ontario's health budget in the last three years is a testimony of a government that doesn't want to carry the social responsibility of the state. Over 18,500 beds were cut from its public hospitals since the 1990s. Public hospital spending per capita in Ontario was only \$1372 in 2012, way less than the \$2519 figure for Newfoundland and Labrador. Overall, Ontario's health care spending stands eighth among the ten provinces, an average \$3963 per person, compared to \$5399 for Newfoundland and Labrador. Allan called on the people of Ontario to fight for their basic human right, since health is a state responsibility, and no mature civil society can tolerate this passive attitude of government.

Community and communist leader Harinder Hundal gave a detailed example of the recently built hospital in Brampton. The government had promised a 600 bed hospital, but ended up with only 300-plus beds, and the cost of construction far exceeded budget projections. Hundal announced that members of the Communist Party of Canada, the Indo Canadian

Workers Association, the Rationalist Society of Ontario and other organizations will hold a demonstration on April 12 in Brampton to show that people here will no longer tolerate the austerity measures of ruling elite. We will teach them a lesson, as the Greeks did in recent elections, he said.

Human rights activist from Nepal, Govinda Shivakoti, said there will be no difference between a third world country and Canada if the education, health and social welfare facilities are withdrawn. Canada's social safety net, won by the hard work and sacrifices of the working class, is an achievement that cannot be compromised, he said.

Political activist Harparminder Gadri shared his personal experience of being billed for some blood tests which were earlier covered by OHIP. Now people are made to pay for services which had been free. Even sunglasses were covered in the 1960s by OHIP, but now vision care is left at the mercy of private clinics, where people are forced to pay over \$200 for their reading glasses. Finance capital, he said, is on their high horses since the demise of the USSR, creating havoc in every third world country. Gadri cited examples from India, where new economic policies of various governments at the center systematically destroyed the public school system in the interest of the private schools. They have almost dismantled government hospitals which had a high reputation in the 1970s. Since then, the health sector is left to private, for-profit hospitals. ●

## MAY DAY 2015 GREETING ADS

To mark May Day 2015, People's Voice will print greetings from a wide range of labour and people's organizations in our May 1-15 issue, which will be distributed at events across Canada. The deadline for camera-ready ads will be April 17; if PV is preparing the layout, the deadline is April 16. Please check with us about the format if your ad is being sent electronically.

### Ad rates (based on 5 column page):

One column-inch.....	\$15
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Two columns x 7 inches.....	\$130
Three columns x 7 inches.....	\$180

Send greetings to People's Voice at:  
706 Clark Drive, Vancouver, V5L 3J1  
E-mail: pvoice@telus.net

# EDITORIALS

## Re-writing history of WW2

Seventy years ago this winter, the Second World War was entering its final stages. Among the events on this timeline, the Soviet Red Army liberated Warsaw (Jan. 17) and the Auschwitz death camp (Jan. 27) from Nazi occupation. Over the next weeks the Red Army drove the Wehrmacht out of Lithuania, Hungary, Poland, Austria, and East Prussia, culminating in the May 8 surrender of Berlin to Soviet forces.

But astonishingly, some Canadian newspapers seem to have joined members of PM Harper's cabinet whose rhetoric depicts the Red Army's historic victory over Hitler fascism as a terrible tragedy. How else to explain the open support by their correspondents for the neo-Nazi thugs terrorizing the population of Ukraine, committing countless war crimes when they aren't busy commemorating fascist "heroes"?

Back on December 23, for example, Star writer Tanya Talaga introduced readers to the "Patriot Defense" campaign, which funds first aid kits and training to the rightist battalions which play a key role in the Kiev government's war. On February 7, the Star published a front-page article by Olivia Ward, advocating fundraising for extreme right militias. Last December, the Globe and Mail's European correspondent, Mark MacKinnon, described the Second World War as a time when "Hitler fought Stalin in Ukraine", rather than the heroic people's resistance against an invader who killed over 20 million Soviet citizens.

There is a saying that those who forget history are doomed to repeat it. In this case, those who cover up the crimes of Hitler's Nazis and praise his 21st-century supporters are creating fertile ground for the resurgence of fascism. What a slap in the face for the people of Britain, the USA, and Canada and other countries who were allies of the USSR in the global struggle to defeat Nazi aggression.

## Victory over transit profiling

Congratulations to the "Transportation not Deportation" campaign, which won a huge victory on February 20 when the Vancouver Transit Police announced that it will end its agreement with the Canadian Border Service Agency (CBSA) to help enforce racist federal immigration laws. The news came one week before an important TransLink meeting to discuss the controversial practice of armed transit cops checking on people's immigration status during fare evasion sweeps. One of those caught up in this racial profiling strategy was Lucia Vega Jimenez, the so-called "illegal" woman who hanged herself in a CBSA holding cell rather than endure the terror of being sent back to an uncertain fate in Mexico. During 2013 alone, transit cops reported 328 people to CBSA, including Jimenez, who was picked up for an unpaid bus ticket.

In effect, the agreement had established an internal border within the Canadian state, allowing random arrests of people accused of being on the wrong side of the line. This cooperation was aptly described by the Transportation not Deportation campaign as part of the privatization and militarization of the public transit system, a strategy which has undermined the current referendum to seek adequate public funding for regional transportation priorities. The scrapping of the agreement means that transit police will no longer ask for immigration status, or share such information with the CBSA. Migrants will now be able to access public transit without fear of detention or deportation.

The victory is a direct result of grassroots community mobilizing and petitioning by Transportation not Deportation, especially No One Is Illegal and 40 other organizations. At a time when the federal government is pushing a divide and rule political agenda with a sharply racist edge, this campaign shows that unity and struggle is the best way to defend human rights.

## PEOPLE'S VOICE

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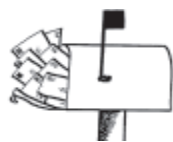
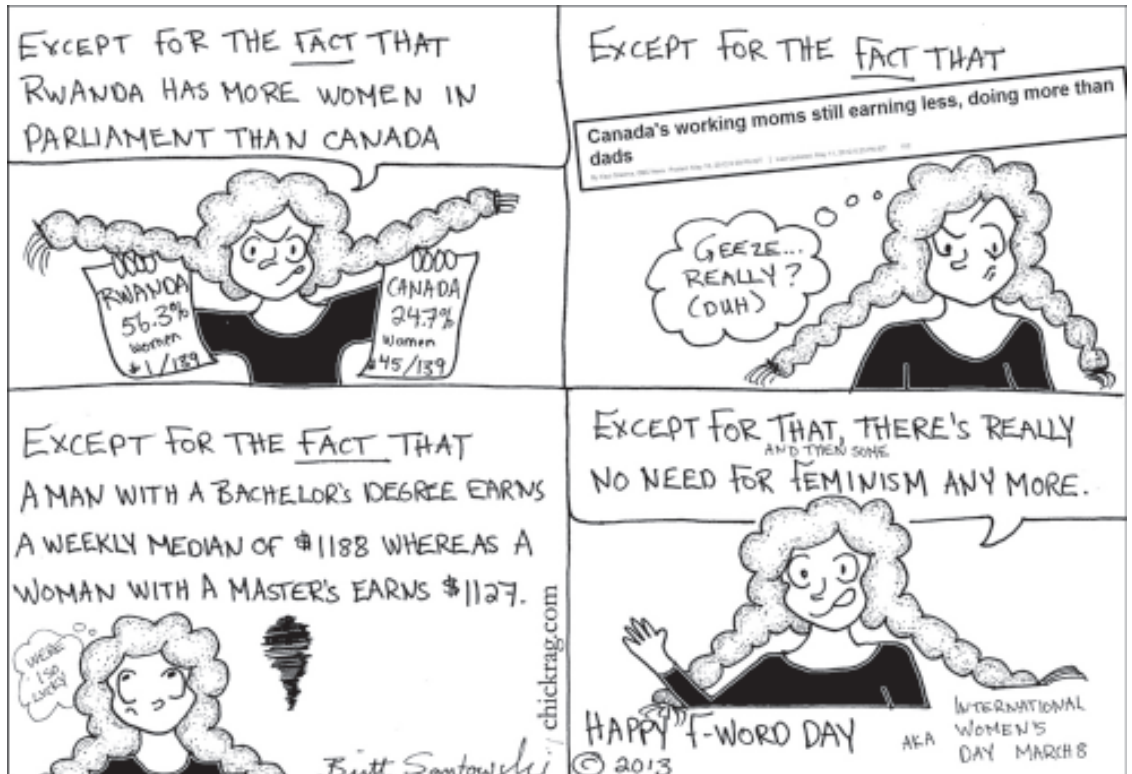
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## LETTERS

People's Voice welcomes your letters. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity, and to refuse to print letters which may be libellous or which contain personal attacks. Send your views to: "Letters to the Editor"  
706 Clark Drive, Vancouver, BC, V5L 3J1 or  
pvoice@telus.net

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## Letters to the Editor

## View from a professional librarian

Re: "No to McCarthyist Censorship in French University Libraries" (People's Voice, Feb. 15-28, 2015)

As a professional librarian who has worked in school, public, and post-secondary settings I have to

strongly aver that my number-one priority is getting correct information into our collections, information that objectively and fairly represents the issues at hand. However I have been reprimanded for deleting outdated and frankly

ridiculous books about the 'causes of homosexuality' and 'the transition from transvestism to transexuality' in order to replace them with twenty-first century scholarly books on social construction theory and post-modern models of sexual orientation; my request for these resources was denied. I think the craziest censorship I experienced was in regard to a children's book called *The Bronze Jar* which I picked up on a trip to the DPRK. This fable taught about the cruelty that feudal landlords showed toward serfs, but included a brief narrative about a young boy using wine to get soldiers drunk in order to get back at a chieftain whose actions were severely harming his widowed mother. The book donation was refused by the self-appointed censors of the library ostensibly for "promoting drinking", although it was obviously the political message that was being stifled by other staff. As librarians it is our job to get authentic and precise information and cultural expression to our patrons, and the actions of the staff at the Sorbonne is reprehensible.

Mark Davies, Windsor, ON

## Facts and figures: women's economic status

Source: [www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/economic-empowerment/facts-and-figures](http://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/economic-empowerment/facts-and-figures)

Evidence from a range of countries shows that increasing the share of household income controlled by women, either through their own earnings or cash transfers, changes spending in ways that benefit children. Increasing women and girls' education contributes to higher economic growth. Increased educational attainment accounts for about 50 per cent of the economic growth in OECD countries over the past 50 years, of which over half is due to girls having had access to higher levels of education and achieving greater equality in the number of years spent in education between men and women.

But, for the majority of women, significant gains in education have not translated into better labour market outcomes. Globally, women participate in labour markets on an unequal basis with men. In 2013, the male employment-to-population ratio stood at 72.2 per cent, while the ratio for females was 47.1 per cent.

Women in most countries earn on average only 60 to 75 per cent of men's wages. Women are more likely to be wage workers and unpaid family workers, and more likely to engage in low-productivity activities and to work in the informal sector. Women are often viewed as economic dependents, and are more likely to be in unorganized sectors or not

represented in unions.

It is calculated that women could increase their income globally by up to 76 per cent if the employment participation gap and the wage gap between women and men were closed. This is calculated to have a global value of \$17 trillion.

Women bear disproportionate responsibility for unpaid care work. Women devote 1 to 3 hours more a day to housework than men; 2 to 10 times the amount of time a day to care (for children, elderly, and the sick), and 1 to 4 hours less a day to market activities. In the European Union, 25 per cent of women report care and other family and personal responsibilities as the reason for not being in the labour force, versus only three per cent of men.

When paid and unpaid work are combined, women in developing countries work more than men, with less time for education, leisure, political participation and self-care. Despite some improvements over the last 50 years, in virtually every country, men spend more time on leisure each day while women spend more time doing unpaid housework.

Women are more likely than men to work in informal employment. In South Asia, over 80 per cent of women in non-agricultural jobs are in informal employment, in sub-Saharan Africa, 74 per cent, and in Latin America and the Caribbean, 54 per cent. In rural areas, many women derive their livelihoods from small-scale farming, almost always informal and often unpaid.

see WOMEN, page 11

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# BC Budget 2015: government of the rich, by the rich, for the rich

## Commentary from the Communist Party of BC

February 17 was Budget Day in British Columbia, and the corporate media dutifully lauded Finance Minister Mike de Jong for bringing in a surplus, plus “a few small tax breaks for families” and so-called “modest increases” for health care and education.

The reality is that working class and low-income British Columbians were hit hard again by Premier Christy Clark's Liberals, while the wealthy get a major financial boost.

Virtually the only good news is that people on income or disability assistance will finally be able to keep child support payments which until now have been seized by the government. Thanks to a powerful

campaign by anti-poverty groups, this vicious clawback is finally gone, resulting in a net benefit to several thousand poor families adding up to \$13 million per year.

This amount is dwarfed by the elimination of the temporary

personal income tax rate of 16.8 per cent on individuals earning over \$150,000, as of next January. That slightly higher tax bracket for the wealthy elite was introduced by Premier Clark two years ago, in an effort to create some political

distance from the elitist image of her predecessor, Gordon Campbell. Apparently the rich have now endured sufficient pain; the move to phase out this tax bracket will put an estimated \$227 million per year into the bank accounts of the wealthiest 2 percent of the population - more than 17 times the clawback “gift” to the lowest income British Columbians.

Similarly, the budget contains no help for those who need it most - minimum wage earners and those on social or disability assistance, whose rates have been frozen for eight years while the cost of living keeps climbing. The Finance Minister ignored the bi-partisan committee of MLAs who held pre-budget consultations, and unanimously recommended a comprehensive poverty reduction plan, and a review of income assistance rates and the minimum wage.

The Liberals will spend \$516 million on tax credits to corporations this fiscal year, compared to just \$460 million for the combined total of tax transfers to low-income individuals (the sales tax credit, the early childhood tax benefit, the low income climate action benefit, and the seniors home renovation tax credit).

Following the strategy of the Harper Tories, the BC Liberals are using targeted tax breaks to troll for votes: a one-time training and education savings grant of \$1,200 for children born since 2007, an “early childhood” tax benefit of \$660 per year for children under six, and a new tax credit for spending on sports equipment, worth just \$12.65 per child.

Most of these “breaks” will be eaten up by higher Medical Services Plan premiums. This highly regressive flat tax has now doubled over the past 15 years, and the new increase is much higher than the 2.8% increase in health care spending.

And while the budget announces \$564 million in “extra funding” for education over three years, that amount is to meet the terms of the collective agreement won on the picket lines last year by the B.C. Teachers' Federation. Overall, spending on education (and health care) is falling behind inflation and population growth. School boards across the province face an additional \$29 million in underfunding for the next fiscal year, and the government is also downloading the MSP increase onto the boards. The result will be more school closures and staff cuts, just as projections indicate future enrolment increases. Even as they refuse to admit the underfunding crisis, the Liberals have introduced a so-called “coaching tax credit” worth a tiny \$25.30 per individual teacher.

Premier Clark regularly puts on a hard hat to pose as a defender of working people, but jobs and

incomes are falling fast as British Columbia continues to face the fallout of the global capitalist economic crisis. Statistics Canada data analyzed by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives recently showed that the labour market participation rate in British Columbia was 74% prior to the 2008 crisis, and is now around 71%. This means that about 93,000 jobs have effectively disappeared here. B.C. is one of only three Canadian provinces where the total number of hours worked per year has actually declined since 2008, despite the growing population. Median employment income in B.C. went from \$29,833 in 2008, to \$29,200 in 2012 (the latest available numbers), a drop of \$633 or 2.1%, the worst decline in the country.

As progressive economists have warned, the budget surplus (created in part by disguising provincial debts) does not mean “prosperity” for British Columbia, where the housing price bubble in the Vancouver region gives a false picture of the true economic situation. Less British Columbians are employed, one in five children live in poverty, and students are sinking deeper into debt. Despite some growth in the forestry sector, there is no genuine economic revival on the horizon, now that falling energy prices have popped the fantasy of enormous foreign investments in the LNG industry. Natural resource revenues are projected to fall by 7% in 2015/16. Revenue from resource royalties is at a near record low, even as natural gas production is at an all-time high. In fact, the province collects more money from post-secondary tuition fees (\$1.6 billion annually) and MSP premiums (over \$2 billion) than from natural gas royalties and Crown land tenures combined (\$1.1 billion). Under the Clark Liberals, British Columbia remains largely an exporter of unprocessed raw materials, at the expense of value-added jobs.

Even so, there would be considerable funds to invest in secondary industry or to raise spending on health, education and social programs, if the policy of slashing taxes for the rich and the corporations was reversed. Implemented when Gordon Campbell came to power, these massive tax breaks cost the provincial treasury over \$2 billion every fiscal year - enough to pay for better health care and public schools, adequate funding for public transit (instead of the province abrogating its responsibilities by forcing municipal governments to hold a difficult and expensive referendum), ferry rate cuts, the proposed \$10/day public child care plan, major expansion of low-income housing, and more.

Instead, the Liberals are tinkering with tax gimmicks which get big media coverage while providing no real economic relief to working class families. Some analysts have called this a “short-sighted budget that lacks vision and leadership.” That is far too kind. This budget proves that even though British Columbia remains mired in economic recession, the government keeps forcing the working class pay for new tax breaks for millionaires. Nothing ever truly changes under the B.C. Liberals, who remain a government of the rich, by the rich, for the rich. ●



Public education gets short-changed by the Liberals yet again in their 2015-16 BC budget. (File photo: K. Cariou)

## Right to strike? Think again

By Justin Ling, posted on the Canadian Bar Association website, [www.nationalmagazine.ca](http://www.nationalmagazine.ca), Feb. 19, 2015

Right to strike? Think again. Back to work.

It took little more than two weeks after the Supreme Court of Canada declared the right to strike to be protected under the Constitution before the federal government decided to introduce legislation to force over 3,000 Canadian Pacific Railway workers back to work.

No matter that the top court ruled in *Saskatchewan Federation of Labour v. Saskatchewan* that the right to walk off the job is an intrinsically important part of collective bargaining. Negotiations had broken down between the Teamsters union and CP management, mostly due to an impasse on breaks and time off for conductors. The workers walked off the job on February 15. Trains ground to a halt in Western Canada, and commuters living in the environs of Montreal couldn't take commuter trains to work. Ottawa moved quickly the next day to legislate an end to the strike.

Before the bill itself was put forward — and, perhaps, because the bill was imminent — the union and management reached a tentative deal to end the work stoppage and take their dispute to mediated arbitration.

Lawyers say the government's move was a bluff. But in introducing the Rail Service Resumption Act 2015 in the House, Labour Minister Kellie Leitch vowed to “correct the record.”

“We are reviewing the decision taken at the Supreme Court, but it had to deal with the Government of Saskatchewan. It was about essential services, and that is not what we are discussing today. We are discussing making sure that CP Rail continues to function so that Canadians are protected,” she said. “I want to be very clear that the decision dealt with the Province of Saskatchewan, not the Government of Canada.”

Brian Langille, professor at the University of Toronto law school, calls that an “extraordinary legal proposition.”

“No first-year law student would read the law that way,” he says.

Indeed, the majority in

*Saskatchewan* found that the “right to strike is not merely derivative of collective bargaining, it is an indispensable component of that right. Where good faith negotiations break down, the ability to engage in the collective withdrawal of services is a necessary component of the process through which workers can continue to participate meaningfully in the pursuit of their collective workplace goals.”

That's an about-face from the 1987 Alberta Reference where the court declared that the so-called right to strike was not guaranteed under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

## Other voices...

Langille says the importance of the *Saskatchewan Fed. of Labour* ruling can't be understated. “It's not just about public sector workers, or just essential services — though it's about those too — it's making a big point about constitutional law,” he says. “It's about the right to strike and when you can take it away. It applies to the federal government.”

The decision overturned Saskatchewan law that allowed the government to decide what constitutes an essential service and, for those services, to unilaterally limit the right to strike and impose contracts on government workers.

At the heart of the decision is the Court's repudiation of the broad definition of “essential.”

“The fact that a service is provided exclusively through the public sector does not inevitably lead to the conclusion that it is properly considered ‘essential,’” wrote Justice Rosalie Abella for the majority. The Court relied on international case law that has narrowly defined “essential service” to mean one that has a direct impact on the life and safety of citizens.

Also problematic for the courts was the notion that the legislation provided for no alternative dispute resolution mechanisms. That is, if the government ordered workers

back on the job, it could simply chose an agreement to impose on them, without any further negotiations or bargaining. The

So, as Langille points out, there are two tests governments need to meet before limiting the right to strike - an initial test as to whether or not the service being interrupted is critical to public safety, and a second test over whether, once the limitations on the right to strike are imposed, there is an adequate agreement between management and the union.

Saskatchewan failed on both those fronts.

The federal government, on the other hand, if it ever faces a challenge on its use of back-to-work legislation, may find that it wins on the latter and fails on the former.

Federal back-to-work legislation generally mandates arbitration, which generally satisfies the need for an alternative dispute resolution mechanism. However, Langille says, the simple existence of a mechanism may not be enough, after *Saskatchewan Fed. of Labour*.

As University of Toronto law professor David Doorey pointed out when back-to-work legislation was tabled during the Canada Post lockout, “it gives the government (i.e. the Tories) the choice of arbitrators, and imposes Final Offer Selection, which means the arbitrator is limited to selecting either the union proposal or the employer proposal. One party will ‘win’ and one will ‘lose.’”

That sort of leveraged negotiation might not even meet the first test the Supreme Court laid out.

Langille summarizes: “Can the federal government threaten back-to-work legislation after this decision? Yes they can, but they have to justify it and we now have the Supreme Court telling us quite a bit about what the justification would look like.”

He says some federal sector employees such as federally-employed doctors and nurses, or those doing essential military communications could justifiably have their right to strike limited.

For most other workers in the federal sector, Langille says it's a no-go. “They can threaten this sort of legislation, but I think now the threat is largely a bluff,” he says. ●

**The budget puts \$227 million per year into the bank accounts of the wealthiest 2 percent of BC's population.**

# “Empowering Women, Empowering Humanity: Picture it!”

March 8, International Women's Day, is a time to celebrate our historic struggles for equality, and to unite around today's challenges. On IWD 2015, the Communist Party of Canada extends our warm solidarity to all who stand for peace, equality, democracy and social progress.

In September 1995, the Fourth World Conference on Women was held in Beijing. 30,000 activists held a parallel Forum, while government representatives from 189 countries hammered out the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. Despite its shortcomings, the document was amazingly comprehensive, covering women and the environment, economy, education, health, armed conflict, and much more.

The United Nations is highlighting the 20th Anniversary of the Beijing Declaration with the slogan “Empowering Women, Empowering Humanity: Picture it!” Yet women in much of the world seem even further away from empowerment.

In the past two decades, “fighting to defend the rights of women” has become a frequent rationale for direct military intervention. And while the Taliban, Al Qaeda and ISIL are deeply reactionary, such movements are largely a product of the imperialist drive for resources and profits. Prior to western interventions, the status of women in the secular states of Afghanistan, Syria, Libya and Iraq was much better than in Saudi Arabia and other regimes backed by Canada.

Violence is no solution for the victims of armed conflicts, especially civilian women and children. War has caused a massive increase in refugees world wide. In Syria alone, over 3 million refugees have fled, and 6.5 million are internally displaced. Women and girls are used as tools of war, kidnapped and raped from Nigeria (by Boko Haram) to Central America (by paramilitary forces). From the Middle East to Afghanistan to Colombia, wars fuelled by transnational corporations, western powers and local elites create health catastrophes through the destruction of power plants, water supply systems and hospitals. Trillions of dollars are wasted on militarism instead of education, economic opportunities, clean water, and healthcare, or to help grassroots movements struggle for human rights, personal security, choice in marriage, and reproductive choice. Environmental devastation particularly impacts women and children, from those near Alberta's tar sands, to millions living in drought stricken sub-Saharan Africa.

We express our full solidarity with the women of Palestine, and our support for the Boycott, Disinvestment and Sanctions campaign against Israel's apartheid policy, which imposes terrible hardships on the women of Gaza and the West Bank. We condemn the latest imperialist war in Iraq and Syria, and the U.S.-backed destabilization of the progressive and democratically elected Bolivarian government of

Venezuela.

In Canada, the dangerous Police State Bill C-51 imposes sweeping new powers to further criminalize dissent. Raising the spectre of Islamic terrorism, C-51 in reality targets the critics of austerity, environmental destruction and imperialist war, directly impacting women, who play leading roles in labour, Aboriginal, environmental, and student movements.

Millions of women in Canada

**IWD 2015 greetings from the Communist Party of Canada**



do face violence and oppression, but not from “terrorists.” Aboriginal women and girls suffer the racist burden of higher rates of poverty, unemployment, and incarceration, and dramatically shorter life spans. Over 1200 Aboriginal women have been murdered or disappeared, while the Harper Tories ignore calls for a public inquiry. Women are oppressed by the “double burden” of exploitation in the workplace and the major share of domestic labour. Women's unequal status is reflected in a 30% “wage gap” and other indicators.

The disclosure of misogynist songs, chants, and Facebook postings has revealed the deep-seated rape culture on campuses, where policies on harassment and equity lack strong enforcement. University administrations must stop covering up harassment of

women, LGBTQ and racialized students. Funding of campus women's centres must be increased, and effective anti-oppression education regarding rape culture is urgently needed.

The rights of all women to a decent job, education, child care, employment insurance, etc. are increasingly undermined by the neoliberal agenda. The Harper Conservatives, who pose as “defenders of women's equality,” slashed virtually every federal agency or service which supported women's equality, closed Status of Women Canada offices, eliminated funding of women's organizations which engage in advocacy, and blocked legal avenues to fight for pay equity.

Women are disproportionately affected by reduced access to EI benefits. The “restructuring” of Canada Post is wiping out thousands of jobs now held by women. If the Conservatives win another majority, the most extreme anti-women forces in Parliament could pose a serious threat to reproductive rights, which are still restricted in New Brunswick and some other parts of Canada.

The attack on equality extends to the provincial arena, including abolition of women's equality ministries, tuition increases, and cuts to welfare, health care, legal aid, child care, and emergency shelters and supports for victims of violence and abuse. Quebec's universal child care program is under serious attack, even as women in other provinces demand similar programs.

The unequal status of women has been condemned by virtually every United Nations body that reviews Canada's human rights performance, including the CEDAW Committee, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Human Rights Committee, and the Human Rights Council.



Some of the Communist Party/YCL contingent at last year's IWD march in Toronto. (Photo: Ed Bil)

**A united fightback can win**

The popular fightback against the corporate attack is hampered by the lack of a truly pan-Canadian voice for women's rights. There have been important struggles by women's and pro-equality movements, and the Canadian Labour Congress Women's conferences have helped keep the fight for women's rights alive. Over the past year, important struggles have been led by sections of the workforce which are largely women - Quebec child care workers, BC teachers, and Nova Scotia health care workers. The most important way to combat poverty and income disparity is to organize unorganized women.

But the women's movement has been deeply wounded by systematic cuts to funding. The re-establishment of an organization like NAC, to bring together women from labour, youth and students, and Aboriginal and racialized women, and from organizations that fight for legal rights, reproductive rights, disability rights, and child care, would be an important advance.

Working people of all genders and backgrounds need a genuine

alternative to corporate greed. Led by labour and its allies, such a People's Coalition could fight to win sustainable jobs, universal public child care, improved social services, and increased opportunities for women.

But while capitalism survives, it will generate poverty, inequality, exploitation, environmental degradation and war. These outrages are inherent in a system based on maximizing profit in private hands. Only socialism, based on democratic, collective ownership and working class power, can liberate the enormous creative and productive potential of the people for human needs.

The real alternative for gender equality and human survival is socialism. As the tiny island of Cuba demonstrates, when social equality is a priority, huge advances in the status of women can be achieved at every level. Cuban women are elected to almost 50% of seats in their National Assembly, for example.

Since IWD was adopted in Copenhagen in 1910, the full participation of women has been essential for the success of working class and democratic movements. A better world is both possible and urgently necessary.

## The UK austerity fallout – women and children first

**By Heather Wakefield, head of local government for Unison, Britain's public sector union**

Whichever way you look at it, the “austerity” programme of Britain's Conservative-led coalition government is shrinking women's lives. More work, less pay, fewer benefits, reduced support for childcare and caring and slashed services are now the everyday realities.

A 2014 Unison “damage report,” Shrinking Women's Lives, has shown how the fatal cocktail of pay austerity and ravaged public services is forcing women to retreat from the public sphere, with less money in their pockets.

Eighty per cent of the revenue “achieved” through George Osborne and David Cameron's slash-and-burn strategy has been robbed from women through tax and benefit changes, according to the Women's

Budget Group. Tax reduction — a clear plank of the coalition's neoliberal agenda — has failed to help the 25 per cent of women who don't earn enough to benefit, while the cost to the public purse has been £10 billion. (NOTE: one UK pound currently equals about 2 Canadian dollars.)

Meanwhile, Osborne's deficit reduction strategy is clearly failing as he is forced to borrow to make up for lost tax and national insurance income. At work and in their personal lives as mothers, grandmothers, partners, carers and daughters women are suffering.

Across all public services, women make up over two-thirds of the workforce. In local government and the NHS — Unison's largest groups — over three-quarters of all employees are women, which is true of Unison's overall membership too.

Coalition pay restraint has hit at our members' pay packets hard. In local government, basic wages have declined by 20 per cent since

2010. Already the lowest-paid of any public-sector group, they not only faced a three-year pay freeze from 2010-13, but the one million council and school workers paid less than the coalition's “low pay” threshold of £21,000, were denied the £250 lump sum paid to other public-sector workers. On top of this, unsocial hours payments, retainer pay, hours of work, car allowances and annual leave have all been slashed — adding to income woes.

What does this mean for women? In a Unison local government survey carried out late last year, a shocking 77 per cent of the 1,500 respondents said that they had reduced spending on food in the previous year. Eighty-seven per cent had reduced spending on social events and 87 per cent on clothes, books and other personal items. Only 49 per cent felt able to pay all their bills.

As if that weren't bad enough, the Office for Budget Responsibility has warned that 1.1 million

public-sector jobs will have gone by 2019. Some 500,000 have already disappeared from local government alone and our members face ever-expanding workloads for less and less reward.

Sixty-one per cent of all local government workers are part-time and those with higher hours have found them slashed over the last couple of years. Nonetheless they are expected to do the same work — and often cover for those made redundant too. Shrinking employment, growing workloads.

It's no surprise then that workplace stress levels are soaring. In a survey carried out by Unison's local government section in late 2014, 85 per cent of respondents said that workloads and pressure had increased in the previous 12 months, while service user expectations were rising. Sixty-

see AUSTERITY, p. 11

# Bill C-51 moves us one step closer to the end of privacy

By Craig Forcese and Kent Roach, Feb 17, 2015

The new information sharing law in Bill C-51 will relax constraints on the flow of information between government agencies about "activities that undermine the security of Canada." This change has not received as much attention as have other features of the bill. This is unfortunate because, as with other features of Bill C-51, this proposed law is not balanced.

"Big data" technology enables incredibly detailed and potentially intrusive monitoring and scrutiny of people's behaviour. Law stands as the bulwark against the end of privacy, and this bill makes the law weaker.

Recent events raise real concerns about terrorism, and there may be a case for increased information sharing. The Air India Commission even recommended mandatory sharing by CSIS to prevent another such attack. So information sharing is required. But it must be reasonable in its scope and be countered with effective review to ensure that the information shared is reliable and respects privacy.

If the ill provoking this change is terrorism, then a law that relaxes rules on information sharing should be about terrorism. That is not what Bill C-51 is about.

The law creates a radical new concept of activities that "undermine the security of Canada." It sweeps in anything "undermining" (whatever that means) the lives and security of Canadian people and the sover-

eignty, security or territorial integrity of Canada. The only exception is "lawful" protest, dissent or artistic expression. Note the reference to "lawful." If your protest fails to comply with municipal permitting regulations, it is fairly characterized as "unlawful."

The law names examples. They include activities aimed at changing or "unduly influencing" any Canadian government by force - or

merely "unlawful means." Students protesting tuition beware.

It names activities in Canada that undermine the security of another state. Any state. Diaspora groups denouncing repressive regimes should be attentive.

It names activities that interfere with "critical infrastructure." Any interference. Environmental or Aboriginal protest groups pay heed. Also included: threats to

Canada's territorial integrity. Sovereignist and First Nations groups take note.

Bill C-51 speaks of information sharing aimed at "detection, identification, analysis, prevention, investigation or disruption" of these "threats." And so the government may be empowered to distribute information preemptively, in anticipation of this sort of conduct that may be unlawful.

In sum, it is hard not to read this bill as aimed at "total information awareness" of real threats, and also more banal forms of dissent.

But even if it were more reasonable in its scope, this bill fails to include proper safeguards.

Information can injure. Improperly shared information may result in rumours and innuendo being reconceived as fact, and used to justify action.

Information sharing lay at the core of the Arar commission of inquiry. There, the RCMP shared inaccurate information with the U.S. that associated Arar with Al Qaeda. Information sharing played a role in Arar's rendition to Syria as well as the torture of three other Canadians, Abdullah Almalki, Ahmad Abou-Elmaati and Muayyed Nureddin.

The Arar commission recognized (wisely) that integrated information sharing must be matched

and balanced with integrated independent and self-initiated review to ensure reliability, relevance, and compliance with Charter and privacy rights. The government has failed to act on its recommendations and continues to do so in this bill.

The government promises its conduct will be subject to review by the Privacy Commissioner. In 2014, the Privacy Commissioner issued a report that recognized that the Privacy Act had not been substantially amended since the 1980s and that the Commissioner required more powers to ensure integrated review of secret information. Those amendments are not included in Bill C-51.

Nor should we expect judicial oversight. As Justice Dennis O'Connor recognized in the Arar Commission report, standard judicial review cannot effectively review information sharing because so few cases end in prosecutions. People may not even know that secret information about them has been shared.

We may need good, modernized information sharing laws. We may even need mandatory information sharing in some cases. Bill C-51 is not this legislation. It is not balanced and it radically authorizes sharing of information unrelated to terrorism. It deserves the most careful debate in Parliament. ●

**Given the urgent need to build broad resistance against the police state Bill C-51, People's Voice will continue to print a wide range of commentaries and analysis on this crucial topic.**



**Craig Forcese and Kent Roach teach national security at the Universities of Ottawa and Toronto respectively and Roach worked with the Arar and Air India commissions. This commentary and other detailed legal analyses of Bill C-51 are posted at [www.antiterrorlaw.ca](http://www.antiterrorlaw.ca).**

## What's happening to Canada? Open letter to PM Stephen Harper

By Ralph Nader, February 18, 2015

Dear Prime Minister:

Many Americans love Canada and the specific benefits that have come to our country from our northern neighbour's many achievements. Unfortunately, your latest proposed legislation - the new anti-terrorism act - is being described by leading Canadian civil liberties scholars as hazardous to Canadian democracy.

A central criticism was ably summarized in a February 2015 *Globe and Mail* editorial titled "Parliament Must Reject Harper's Secret Policeman Bill," to wit: "Prime Minister Stephen Harper never tires of telling Canadians that we are at war with the Islamic State. Under the cloud of fear produced by his repeated hyperbole about the scope and nature of the threat, he now wants to turn our domestic spy agency into something that looks disturbingly like a secret police force. Canadians should not be willing to accept such an obvious threat to their basic liberties. Our existing laws and our society are strong enough to stand up to the threat of terrorism without compromising our values."

Particularly noticeable in your announcement were your exaggerated expressions that

exceed the paranoia of Washington's chief attack dog, former vice-president Dick Cheney. Mr. Cheney periodically surfaces to update his pathological war mongering oblivious to facts - past and present - including his criminal war of aggression which devastated Iraq - a country that never threatened the U.S.

You are quoted as saying that "jihadi terrorism is one of the most dangerous enemies our world has ever faced" as a predicate for your gross over-reaction that "violent jihadism seeks to destroy" Canadian "rights." Really? Pray tell, which rights rooted in Canadian law are "jihadis" fighting in the Middle East to obliterate? You talk like George W. Bush.

How does "jihadism" match up with the lives of tens of millions of innocent civilians, destroyed since 1900 by state terrorism - west and east, north and south - or the continuing efforts seeking to seize or occupy territory?

Reading your apoplectic oratory reminds one of the prior history of your country as one of the world's peacekeepers from the inspiration of Lester Pearson to the United Nations. That noble pursuit has been replaced by deploying Canadian soldiers in the belligerent service of the American Empire and its boomeranging wars, invasions and attacks that violate our Constitution, statutes and international treaties to which both

our countries are signatories.

What has all this post-9/11 loss of American life plus injuries and sickness, in addition to trillions of American tax dollars, accomplished? Has it led to the stability of those nations invaded or attacked by the U.S. and its reluctant western "allies?" Just the opposite, the colossal blowback evidenced by the metastasis of al-Qaeda's offshoots and similar new groups like the self-styled Islamic state are now proliferating in and threatening over a dozen countries.

Have you digested what is happening in Iraq and why Prime Minister Jean Chrétien said no to Washington? Or now chaotic Libya, which like Iraq never had any presence of Al-Qaeda before the U.S.'s destabilizing military attacks? (*See the New York Times' editorial on Feb. 15 titled "What Libya's Unraveling Means".*)

Perhaps you will find a former veteran CIA station chief in Islamabad, Pakistan, Robert L. Grenier more credible. Writing in his just released book: *88 Days to Kandahar: A CIA Diary* (Simon & Schuster), he sums up U.S. government policy this way: "Our current abandonment of Afghanistan is the product of a colossal overreach, from 2005 onwards." He writes, "in the process we overwhelmed a primitive country, with a largely illiterate population, a tiny agrarian economy, a tribal social structure and nascent

national institutions. We triggered massive corruption through our profligacy; convinced a substantial number of Afghans that we were, in fact, occupiers and facilitated the resurgence of the Taliban" (*Alissa Rubin & Robert Grenier's '88 Days to Kandahar,' New York Times, Feb. 15, 2015*).

You may recall George W. Bush's White House counter-terrorism czar, Richard Clarke, who wrote in his 2004 book, *Against All Enemies: Inside America's War on Terror - What Really Happened*, "It was as if Osama bin Laden, hidden in some high mountain redoubt, were engaging in long-range mind control of George Bush, chanting, 'Invade Iraq, you must invade Iraq.'"

Mr. Bush committed sociocide against that country's twenty-seven million people. Over 1 million innocent Iraqi civilians lost their lives, in addition to millions sick and injured. Refugees have reached five million and growing. He destroyed critical public services and sparked sectarian massacres - massive war crimes, which in turn produce ever-expanding blowbacks.

Canadians might be most concerned about your increased dictatorial policies and practices, as well as this bill's provision for secret law and courts in the name of fighting terrorism - too vaguely defined. Study what comparable practices have done to the United

States - a course that you seem to be mimicking, including the militarization of police forces (*see The Walrus, December 2014*).

If passed, this act, piled on already stringent legal authority, will expand your national security bureaucracies and their jurisdictional disputes, further encourage dragnet snooping and roundups, fuel fear and suspicion among law-abiding Canadians, stifle free speech and civic action and drain billions of dollars from being used for the necessities of Canadian society. This is not hypothetical. Along with an already frayed social safety net, once the envy of the world, you almost got away with a \$30 billion dollar purchase of unneeded costly F-35s (including maintenance) to bail out the failing budget-busting F-35 project in Washington.

You may think that Canadians will fall prey to a politics of fear before an election. But you may be misreading the extent to which Canadians will allow the attachment of their Maple Leaf to the aggressive talons of a hijacked American Eagle.

Canada could be a model for independence against the backdrop of bankrupt American military adventures steeped in big business profits, a model that might help both nations restore their better angels.

- Originally posted at [nader.org](http://nader.org) ●



# GLOBAL CLASS STRUGGLE

## Students back Togo teachers

Togo has shut down all schools in the country, with the exception of universities, after massive student protests in solidarity with strikes by the teachers. A large number of students had converged in Lome, the country's capital, demanding urgent action from the government to meet the teachers' demands.

But the Togo government instead imposed a temporary shut-down of both private and public schools following the protest. The demonstrations were "capable of endangering the security and lives of pupils, their teachers and the population," it claimed.

Seeking pay increases for public sector workers, labour unions in the country's health and education sector have running battles with the government.

A union leader who spoke to Agence France Presse, Gilbert Tsolenyanou, said the stand-off will continue. "We are not going to give up. We will fight to the last until our demands are met," Tsolenyanou said. Togo's central labour body launched a new 72-hour strike on Feb. 21.

The government however said it would "continue talks with labour unions, with a view to bringing appropriate solutions to the situation to bring about a happy academic year".

## Employers deny right to strike

A global day of action in support of the right to strike was held on Feb. 18 by the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) following a dispute with the employers' group in the International Labour Organization (ILO), who are denying the very existence of the right.

Since 2012, the employers' group has insisted that ILO convention 87 on freedom of association does not actually guarantee workers any right to strike. Jeffrey Vogt, head of the legal department at the ITUC, told *Equal Times* the employers group was "denying decades of consistent jurisprudence and in fact their own past support."

He added that they had "challenged whether the ILO even had the competency to interpret their own conventions" in an apparent attempt to undermine the ILO's international authority and ability to extend fundamental rights, including to strike, to workers in many countries. Despite the employers' insistence, they have refused to test their beliefs before the International Court of Justice, leaving the ILO deadlocked.

The right to strike is already frequently restricted in law and violated in practice around the world, with examples found on every continent. When the Korean Railway Workers' Union (KRWU) called a strike at the Korea Railroad Corporation, the company fired more than 6,700 workers, meaning almost all the workers who went on strike lost their jobs. The current South Korean government is known for siding with the

country's major corporations on labour issues.

After deadly protests in Cambodia's garment sector last year, local business groups took out advertisements in the local press which repeated the claim of ILO employers' groups that "the right to strike is not a fundamental right" and is not provided for in the ILO's Convention 87.

In Swaziland, five leaders from the Swaziland Transport and Allied Workers Union (STAWU) were prosecuted under the country's Road Traffic Act for holding a union gathering in the airport car park. These charges still hang over them today.

In Spain, 260 workers are facing prosecution for taking part in strike



action. The economic crisis has been cited by the current Spanish government as the reason for rolling back labour rights, particularly those of young people. According to the public sector union FSP-UGT, the government has started a process with the sole aim of "criminalising the right to strike and to demonstrate," which were regained 40 years ago at the end of the Franco fascist era.

In the USA, loopholes and weaknesses in the National Labor Relations Act mean employers have been able to replace striking workers permanently, or effectively prevent them from forming a union. Federal government employees are prohibited from striking, as are most other public employees covered by state laws.

Actions were held on Feb. 18 by trade unions in Thailand, Cambodia, New Zealand, Pakistan, India, Korea, Russia, Turkey, Uganda, Botswana, Colombia, Spain, France, Belgium, Slovakia and Ukraine.

Rosa Pavanelli, the General Secretary of Public Services International (PSI), stated: "Labour clauses that refer to ILO standards are no guarantee for the respect of workers' rights if the ILO's authority continues to be undermined. That is why this is a priority issue for all workers."

This month, the ILO Governing Body has to take a decision on the resolution of the conflict between the workers and employers' groups. If no agreement can be reached, the ITUC will demand a referral to the International Court of Justice for an advisory opinion.

## Port workers vs. privatization

The workers of all major ports of India will begin an indefinite strike from March 9 against the govern-

ment's decision to "corporatise" (privatize) the sector. The national coordination committee of Port Workers Federation called the strike in response to a unilateral decision of the Shipping Ministry to corporatise the country's major ports.

The Transport and Dock Workers' Union says the Ministry has scrapped previous assurances given to the Port Workers Federation by the government. The unions warn that the latest move by the Ministry is not only detrimental to the interests of the port, dock workers and pensioners, but also against the sovereignty of the country at large. They criticised the Ministry for not consulting port workers while making radical changes in sector's organisational structure. Port authorities are already refusing to implement existing agreements relating to current employees and pensioners, signed between management and the Federation.

The union leaders say that the Shipping Ministry is imposing new policies which run counter to existing collective agreements, disregarding the labour ministry's guidelines and several court judgements.

## Brazil GM workers walk out

Workers at the General Motors plant in the Brazilian city of Sao Jose dos Campos went on strike Feb. 20 to protest against the company's plans to lay off 794 employees. Employees on the morning shift reported for work, but then voted to strike. The plant in Sao Paulo state employs roughly 5,200 workers to assemble two GM models.

"A strike is the only way to prevent massive layoffs at GM," Antonio Ferreira de Barros, president of the Steelworkers Union, said in a statement.

GM complained that the company "was not officially notified (about the strike) by the local union as required by labor laws," and expressed surprise that the union "misrepresented" management's proposal. But the union insists the GM plan calls for jobs to be eliminated, and that management rejected a proposal for both sides to meet with Labor Minister Manoel Dias.

Brazil's automakers laid off 12,000 workers in 2014. Last month, Volkswagen announced it was laying off 800 workers at its Sao Bernardo do Campo plant in Sao Paulo state, but dropped the plans after a 10-day strike.

## Fire kills 10 migrant workers

At least 10 migrant labourers have been killed and eight injured in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) by a fire that tore through the warehouse they were sleeping in. The workers were staying in the al-Mussafah district of Abu Dhabi, an industrial area filled with warehouses, factories and workshops on the outskirts of the capital.

Police said the blaze started

early on the morning of Feb. 20 in a car repair shop at the base of a commercial building. It spread to a two-storey warehouse that had been illegally rented out as accommodation to the labourers and gutted the building before firefighters could extinguish the flames. The victims, who have not been named, were of different nationalities.

Migrant workers are drawn to the UAE, particularly Dubai and Abu Dhabi, with the promise of higher wages than at home for huge building projects. Many come from South Asian countries and human rights groups have long documented widespread examples of confiscation of passports, forced labour, terrible living conditions and deaths on unsafe construction sites. Human rights abuses were present even in high profile projects run by Western firms.

## S. Korean worker suicide protest

On February 16, Kim Jae-gi, an employee of Kumho Tires, set himself ablaze on top of a factory in Gwangju, South Korea, in an act of symbolic protest against the irregularization of his company's workforce. He left behind a letter in which he wrote: "Just because I died doesn't mean the world of labor will change, but I hope, at least, our Kumho Tires will change."

In 2010, Kumho Tires negotiated a so-called "workout," whereby most of its workforce would be converted from full time employees to contract workers. This process has been ongoing since then. Contract work is a

considerably more volatile form of employment, with significantly fewer benefits and little to no job security. Because of this structural change to its labor force, the labor union representing Kumho workers is holding the company responsible for Kim's death.

The pressures of global capitalism have driven the deregulation of the South Korean labor market. In times past, full-time or "life-time" employment was more common. But with the spread of neo-liberal policies in the 1990s and major structural adjustments following the 1997 Asian Financial Crisis, employment has become both harder to find and more precarious. Last year, the *Chosun Ilbo* reported that "non-regular jobs" in Korea are more common now than before: "The number of Koreans working on a contract basis rather than a full job stood at 6.08 million as of August [2014], up 2.2. percent." Many of the workers taking these jobs, it is noted, are recent college graduates.

Working conditions are better than in the 1960s and 1970s, when sweatshop conditions at the Seoul Peace Market led Jeon Tae-il, a workers' rights activist, to commit suicide by self-immolation. Jeon committed suicide in protest of the social harms of rapid industrialization; Kim's act is in opposition to the social dislocations of post-industrial capitalism.

While both men intended to raise awareness of blue-collar working conditions, Kim's protest against volatile working conditions will resonate with similarly frustrated workers in the capitalist west.

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

**Central Committee CPC**  
290A Danforth Ave, Toronto, ON, M4K 1N6  
416-469-2446 <info@cpc-pcc.ca> [www.comunist-party.ca](http://www.comunist-party.ca)

**Parti Communiste du Quebec** (section du Parti communiste du Canada)  
5359 Ave Du Parc, Suite "C"  
Montreal, QC, H2V 4G9  
Email: pcqccc@gmail.com Tél: 438-338-8890

**B.C. Committee CPC**  
706 Clark Drive, Vancouver, BC, V5L 3J1  
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**Edmonton CPC**  
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**Calgary CPC**  
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**Saskatchewan CPC**  
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**Ottawa CPC**  
Tel: 613-232-7108

**Manitoba Committee CPC**  
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**Atlantic Region CPC**  
Box 70, Grand Pré, NS, B0P 1M0  
Tel/fax: 902-542-7981



# Latin American leaders warn of Chile-style coup

By Matt Willgress, national co-ordinator of Venezuela Solidarity Campaign UK, ([www.venezuelasolidarity.co.uk](http://www.venezuelasolidarity.co.uk))

Feb. 12 saw the announcement of the discovery of a plot to overthrow Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro, with officials saying the plans included violent attacks on the presidential palace and other government buildings.

The thwarting of this latest coup attempt comes as leaders of numerous Latin American countries have warned of a similar situation developing in Venezuela to that which preceded the 1973 coup against Chile's Salvador Allende, which led to the horrendous dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet.

In recent weeks, Maduro himself has warned that the right-wing opposition in the country is trying to create conditions that will lead to a coup. The warning came after a series of raids on shipping companies revealed that they were hoarding products to generate shortages.

Venezuelan Vice-President Jorge Arreaza also echoed Maduro's concerns, saying the opposition is intentionally creating shortages of supplies to destabilise the country.

In an illuminating contribution to the discussion, Ecuadorean President Rafael Correa called on young people in his progressive governing alliance to learn from Latin America's history, when economic wars and coups have been regularly used to destabilise popular governments.

Comparing the current "economic war" by sections of big capital against the Venezuelan

government to what happened in Chile in the early 1970s, he said that "after the elections in March 1973 in Chile, the defeated bourgeoisie chose the path of economic war to overthrow Allende: stockpiling, speculation, etc," adding that "the resemblance is striking with what is happening now in Venezuela."

He added that this happened "once the Chilean elites realised that they could not achieve victory in the ballot box and were defeated in the legislative elections in 1973."

Adding to this discourse, Ecuadorean Foreign Minister

Ricardo Patino said that the steps taken by the Venezuelan government to confront hoarding and scarcities are "absolutely legitimate" in light of the "economic war" being waged in the country.

Hammering home this important point, he argued that a strong government response in Venezuela was necessary as "it is similar to what happened with Chile and Allende."

The minister went on to explain that various sectors were interested in taking over Venezuela's oil reserves — the largest in the world

— and therefore "it interests them to take that country like many others, that is the reality of the history of humanity."

Linking the "economic war," the ongoing anti-democratic, destabilisation plans from elements of the opposition and the increasingly aggressive attitude of the US, Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega meanwhile accused the US government of launching a calculated economic war that seeks to undermine Venezuela's political stability, explicitly comparing the situation to Washington's role in the overthrow of Allende.

"We see clearly that they want to repeat the same situation that took place in Chile, they are applying the same script and they want to have it end in a military coup," Ortega stated.

Ortega's words followed the US government announcing a new set of sanctions which target former and current Venezuelan officials.

In response, the Non-Aligned Movement group of 120 nations has issued a statement denouncing US sanctions on Venezuela as an intervention into Venezuelan affairs. The body described the sanctions as "intended to undermine Venezuela's sovereignty, its political independence and its right to self-determination."

The Non-Aligned Movement considers the unilateral sanctions a "violation of international law, including the United Nations Charter and the basic principles of international law of relations between states."

Latin America is right to stand by Venezuela — so must we.

Venezuela  
Solidarity  
Campaign



## US, Britain, Canada involved in coup plot

Writing on the Global Research website ([www.globalresearch.ca](http://www.globalresearch.ca)), U.S. researcher Stephen Lendman reports that Washington's role in the foiled Venezuelan coup included funding for key opposition fascist figures Antonio Ledezma, Maria Corina Machado and Leopoldo Lopez, who released a joint communique on Feb. 11, a day before the foiled coup.

Titled "A Call on Venezuelans for a National Accord for the Transition," it promoted regime change to hand Venezuela back to corporate interests. Attacking the government and the Bolivarian revolutionary process, the communique claimed that it is "the duty of every democrat to help resolve the current crisis, to defend free-

dom... to make the transition... (to restore) democratic order."

TeleSUR reports that National Assembly President Diosdado Cabello identified US embassy personnel involved in the plot, along with an RCMP official and a British diplomat who had sought information on airport capabilities in case of an "emergency."

Computers seized from the conspirators had detailed plans, including maps showing targets to be bombed, and a video showing military officials announcing Maduro's government no longer was recognized. The video was scheduled to be aired on TV after

planned bombings were launched.

Cabello said the plotters planned to topple Venezuela's government forcefully on the anniversary of US-manipulated 2014 street violence which killed 43, injured hundreds and caused huge economic damage.

On Feb. 14, Maduro addressed Venezuelans on national TV.

"Almost all (opposition) leaders knew about this plan, this ambush, almost all of them, including the four-time losing candidate," Maduro explained, referring to Henrique Capriles Radonski. "I'm not saying all of them were actively involved, but it was a rumour

circulating amongst them, that something was about to happen."

Some of those arrested had confessed that Washington's enlisted Venezuelan political and military officials, bribing them with large cash payments.

U.S. State Department spokeswoman Jen Psaki called Maduro's accusations "ridiculous," adding that "(T)he United States does not support political transitions by non-constitutional means." Considering the U.S. backing for dozens of military coups and "regime changes", her statement was widely discounted as a public relations effort. ●

## Imperialists "happy to use ISIS when it suits them"

From the Morning Star, February 16

Fundamentally reactionary movements such as Isis should not obscure the continuing role of Western imperialism in the Middle East, communists from around the world warned at a Feb. 14-15 gathering in London.

Representatives of communist and workers' parties from Iran, Iraq, Sudan, Cyprus, Greece and Guyana domiciled in Britain laid bare the sectarian and anti-communist fundamentalist movements but pointed out that Western governments have no qualms about promoting and utilising them.

Tudeh Party of Iran international secretary Navid Shomali pointed to the record of the theocratic regime in his country in using state power to suppress the left-wing, trade union and women's movements, even executing most of the former leadership of the Tudeh Party. He accused Islamist movements across the Middle East and north Africa of adopting and enforcing neoliberal economic policies against the interests of the masses of people.

Iraqi CP central committee member Salam Ali said that Islamist forces served imperialist purposes by seeking to fragment nation states such as Iraq and Syria, deepening sectarian divisions and destroying people's unity against foreign intervention and domination.

In northern Iraq, the communists have set up their own armed units alongside Kurdish peshmerga and Iraqi regular forces to defend communities against "fascist" Isis.

The Co-ordinating Committee of Communist Parties in Britain (CCCPB) seminar also heard how NATO member Turkey and Western allies Saudi Arabia and Qatar had facilitated the rise of Isis.

Abdel Rahim Hassan of the Sudanese CP explained how imperialist powers had supported Islamic fundamentalists in their drive to split Sudan, enabling the Islamist regime in the largely Muslim north to consolidate itself while placing oil and other valuable resources in the hands of a fragile government in the new and mostly Christian state of South Sudan.

"For more than two decades, the Western-backed Islamic regime in Khartoum provided a safe haven, training, money-laundering and diplomatic facilities for (Osama) Bin Laden and jihadists from Afghanistan, the Middle East and north Africa," he pointed out. ●

## Kiev court judges withdraw from Communist Party banning case

[rt.com/news/233559-ukraine-communist-ban-judges/](http://rt.com/news/233559-ukraine-communist-ban-judges/)

Judges at an administrative court in Kiev have refused to try a case banning the activities of the Communist Party of Ukraine, after police conducted a search and seizure operation in the office of one their colleagues.

Judge Valery Kuzmenko, who was presiding over the Justice Ministry's suit against the Communist Party, withdrew from the case on Feb. 19. All the other judges in the Kiev District Administrative Court have also filed applications to be excused from hearing the case.

Judge Kuzmenko explained the move by saying that the prosecutors and police searched his office and seized his computer, with working materials on the Communist Party case and others. He said he views the law enforcement officials' actions as an attempt to put pressure on the court.

According to the prosecutors, the Feb. 17 search and seizure was performed as part of the criminal case, launched over the "abuse of power or position" and "forgery" by the judges.

The Communist Party has been speaking against Ukraine's new authorities since the coup in February 2014, which saw President Viktor Yanukovich ousted. However, the persecution of the

Communists Party began in April, shortly after Kiev launched a military operation against the country's south-eastern regions.

Communist leader, Pyotr Simonenko, said the military



Communist Party of Ukraine leader Petro Simonenko

campaign is Kiev's war against its own people, stressing that if he was the head of state, he "would immediately recall all the troops."

He openly accused the Ukrainian authorities of the "slaughter of civilians and mass murder," saying they had labelled the 7 million people in Donetsk and Lugansk as "terrorists."

In June, Ukraine's justice minister, Pavel Petrenko, announced a lawsuit to ban the Communist Party in Ukraine.

In mid-summer, the Communist faction was dissolved by the Ukrainian parliament, with the official explanation for the move being an insufficient number of MPs in the party.

Ukraine's security service, the SBU, said that 308 criminal cases had been launched against members of the Communist Party, with its leaders accused of supporting Crimea's accession to the Russian Federation and backing the creation of the People's Republics of Donetsk and Lugansk, as well as financing the rebels. In November, a group of MPs introduced a draft law to the parliament, making any dissemination of Communist ideology in Ukraine illegal and proposing punishment of up to 10 years in prison for the perpetrators.

The Communist Party banning trial was rescheduled several times and eventually postponed by the Kiev District Administrative Court. The decision was reversed by an appeal court on December 24.

The Communists aren't the only party facing persecution in Ukraine over their opposition stance. MPs from six parties have also come under scrutiny.

On Feb. 2, Radical Party leader Oleg Lyashko demanded the dissolving of the opposition block after it became the only faction in parliament to vote against recognizing Russia as "an aggressor state" in the Ukrainian conflict. ●

# Thousands take part in Women's Memorial Marches

PV Vancouver Bureau

Memorial marches were held across Canada on February 14, to honour more than 1,200 missing and murdered women Aboriginal women, and to emphasize the growing demand for an independent federal public inquiry.

The largest event took place in Vancouver, where an estimated 5,000 marchers filled the streets for several blocks. They followed a route through the Downtown Eastside, stopping for moments of silence near locations where women have been murdered or where they were last seen. The event concluded with a healing circle at Oppenheimer Park and a community feast at the Japanese Language Hall.

In Toronto, 1200 community members paid homage to Aboriginal women who have been murdered or gone missing. Amidst strawberries and water handed out to the many individuals who came to this event, were heartfelt speeches given by individuals who have lost family members due to violence. Toronto's February 14th Organizing Committee includes No More Silence, the Native Youth Sexual Health Network, Jaggies "and other Indigenous and feminist organizations working together to raise awareness about the disappearance of Indigenous Women, Girls, Trans and Two-Spirit people on Turtle Island."

Activists also stood shoulder to shoulder in Ottawa, Montreal, Winnipeg, Calgary, Edmonton, Saskatoon, St John's, Victoria, Hagersville, Kenora, Courtenay, Nelson, Grand Forks, Kelowna, Prince George, Sault Ste. Marie, Thunder Bay, Nanaimo, and London, as well as in three U.S. cities - Denver, Fargo, and Minneapolis.

The organizers of the Vancouver march (<https://womensmemorial-march.wordpress.com>) say that "the first women's memorial march was held in 1991 in response to the murder of a Coast Salish woman on Powell Street in Vancouver. Her name is not spoken today out of respect for the wishes of her family. Out of this sense of hopelessness and anger came an annual march on Valentine's Day to express compassion, community, and caring for all women in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside, Unceded



Scenes from the February 14 Memorial Marches in Vancouver (above, photo by Roberto) and Toronto (below, photo by Liz Hill)



Coast Salish Territories.... Indigenous women disproportionately continue to go missing or be murdered with minimal to no action to address these tragedies or the systemic nature of gendered violence, poverty, racism, or colonialism.

"This event is organized and led by women in the DTES because women - especially Indigenous women - face physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual violence on a daily basis. The February 14th Women's Memorial March is an opportunity to come together to

grieve the loss of our beloved sisters, remember the women who are still missing, and to dedicate ourselves to justice. Over the years, the February 14th Women's Memorial March has expanded to cities across these lands, as well as internationally. The March is an opportunity for all cities and communities to come together to grieve the loss of our beloved sisters and remember the women who are still missing. We encourage all women to journey and heal together by organizing memorials on this day because women, especially Indigenous women, face physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual violence on a daily basis. Violence against women is always unacceptable; every life is precious and we must continue to honour and work for justice for murdered and missing women."

AUFCW Canada solidarity statement said, "The message from all the gatherings was loud and clear: there needs to be a national inquiry that looks at the increasing prevalence of these murders and missing case files as more than just another incident or sociological mishap in society... This year is an appropriate time to demand that our federal government work with all jurisdictions, unions, and community organizations to stop the systemic cycle of violence that has taken the lives of well over a thousand Aboriginal Canadian women to date." ●



## MUSIC NOTES

By Wally Brooker

### B.C. musician boycotts Winter Games

Singer-songwriter Raghu Lokanathan is a member of two music groups that were scheduled to perform at the Canada Winter Games being staged in Prince George, B.C. as People's Voice was going to press. The performances were to be part of an entertainment package organized by the Coldsnap Festival in association with the Games. Instead, in a Feb. 5 letter to the editor of the local daily newspaper, the *Prince George Citizen*, the long-time Prince George resident declared that he'd be boycotting the festival. His reason: Northern Gateway Pipeline (a.k.a. Enbridge) is one of the official sponsors of the Canada Winter Games. The \$6.5 billion pipeline boondoggle would carry toxic tar sands bitumen through Bear Lake, 70 km north of this central B.C. city of 70,000. Judging by the mostly-favourable comments on the paper's website, Lokanathan's stance has been well-received. Incidentally, last December Lokanathan performed at a fundraiser in Prince George for local First Nations who have launched a legal challenge to the pipeline. Bear Lake is in the federal riding of Price George-Peace River. Its House of Commons seat is held by Conservative MP Bob Zimmer. For more info visit <http://dogwoodinitiative.org/>.

### Holiday hounded to death by G-Men


U.K. author Johan Hari's new book, *Chasing the Scream: The First and Last Days of the Drug War*, documents the deliberate targeting of African-American jazz great Billie Holiday. Her story is a featured case study in this history of America's century-long "war on drugs" and it provides evidence that drug addiction is related more to personal histories of abuse than to actual physical causes. Holiday was stalked by the very man who launched the "war on drugs" after World War I - the jazz-hating and racist Federal Bureau of Narcotics (FBN) chief Harry Anslinger. His vendetta against the singer began in 1939 after she recorded the anti-lynching song "Strange Fruit" and begun singing it in racially-mixed nightclubs. Hari recounts the story of Holiday's enslavement by FBN double agents in an operation that led to a debilitating prison term. Finally, in 1959, an FBN agent planted drugs on Holiday and had her arrested. Later that year, her health in decline, she was placed in a New York City hospital, handcuffed to her bed, and forbidden visitors. Billie Holiday died there on July 17, 1959. Learn more about the book at <http://chasingthescream.com> and look for out "The Hunting of Billie Holiday" at [www.politico.com](http://www.politico.com).

### Top cellist tangles with YouTube

Zoe Keating, a Canadian-born avant-garde cellist, has built a successful career as an indie musician, combining electronically-inspired solo work with soundtrack composing, stints with groups like cello-rock band Rasputina, and collaborations with contemporary performance artist Amanda Palmer. Last month, Keating, a popular blogger with more than a million followers, shared her concerns about YouTube, the increasingly commercial video sharing service, now owned by Google. In January, YouTube told her that she'd have to sign a five-year contract or lose her artist's channel. Here's a sample of Keating's objections: 1) Anything that a third party uploads to YouTube with her name on it will be loaded onto her page; 2) Ads will accompany all of her songs; 3) All new music must be given to YouTube (i.e. no more releasing new music to core fans on other services). Keating's reflections on her dilemma (whether to sign) provide a fascinating glimpse of the contemporary music business as experienced by an articulate artist with principles. Check out the blog and sample her brilliant album "Into The Trees" at <http://www.zoekeating.com>.

### Celebrating Bob Marley

February 6th marked the 70th anniversary of the birth of Jamaican musician Bob Marley, who died of cancer on May 11, 1981. Marley's anniversary was observed with concerts throughout the world, including a gala outdoor event in Kingston, Jamaica, headlined by his musical descendants. Bob Marley was a pioneer of reggae music and remains its most influential figure. Starting with The Wailers in 1963, he released many of the earliest reggae recordings before achieving world-wide fame as a solo act in the 1970's. His albums "Catch a Fire", "Burnin'", "Rastaman Vibration", "Uprising" and "Exodus" are landmarks in world music. Songs like "Get Up, Stand Up", "Redemption Song", and "War" are perennial anthems of resistance to racism, neocolonialism, war, and inequality. "Redemption Song" is inspired by a 1937 speech given in Nova Scotia by the renowned Jamaican political leader Marcus Garvey. "War" is based on the famous "Appeal to the League of Nations" by Ethiopian Emperor Haile Selassie in June 1936, after his country had been invaded by fascist Italy. Bob Marley was a Rastafarian, a spiritual practice that holds such values at its very core. Like Che, Marley's image has been widely marketed, but it's easy to appreciate his true message. Just listen to the songs!



## La Trova Nuestra

**Friday, March 27, 8 pm**

**"La Peña Nuestra"**  
Centre For Socialist Education, Vancouver  
706 Clark Drive (Clark and Georgia st)  
\$10 Entry

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

# Women's economic status...

continued from page 4

More women than men work in vulnerable, low-paid, or under-valued jobs. As of 2013, 49.1 per cent of the world's working women were in vulnerable employment, often unprotected by labour legislation, compared to 46.9 per cent of men. Women were far more likely than men to be in vulnerable employment in East Asia (50.3 per cent versus 42.3 per cent), South-East Asia and the Pacific (63.1 per cent versus 56 per cent), South Asia (80.9 per cent versus 74.4 per cent), North Africa (54.7 per cent versus 30.2 per cent), the Middle East (33.2 per cent versus 23.7 per cent) and Sub-Saharan Africa (nearly 85.5 per cent versus 70.5 per cent).

Gender differences in laws affect both developing and developed economies, and women in all regions. Almost 90 per cent of 143 economies studied have at least one legal difference restricting women's economic opportunities. Of those, 79 economies have laws that restrict the types of jobs that women can do. Husbands can object to their wives working and prevent them from accepting jobs in 15 economies.

Ethnicity and gender interact to create especially large pay gaps for minority women. In 2013 in the U.S., women of all major racial and ethnic groups earn less than men of the same group, and also earn less than white men. Hispanic women's median earnings were \$541 per week of

full-time work, only 61.2 per cent of white men's median weekly earnings, but 91.1 per cent of the median weekly earnings of Hispanic men (because Hispanic men also have low earnings). The median weekly earnings of black women were \$606, only 68.6 per cent of white men's earnings, but 91.3 per cent of black men's median weekly earnings, which are also fairly low.

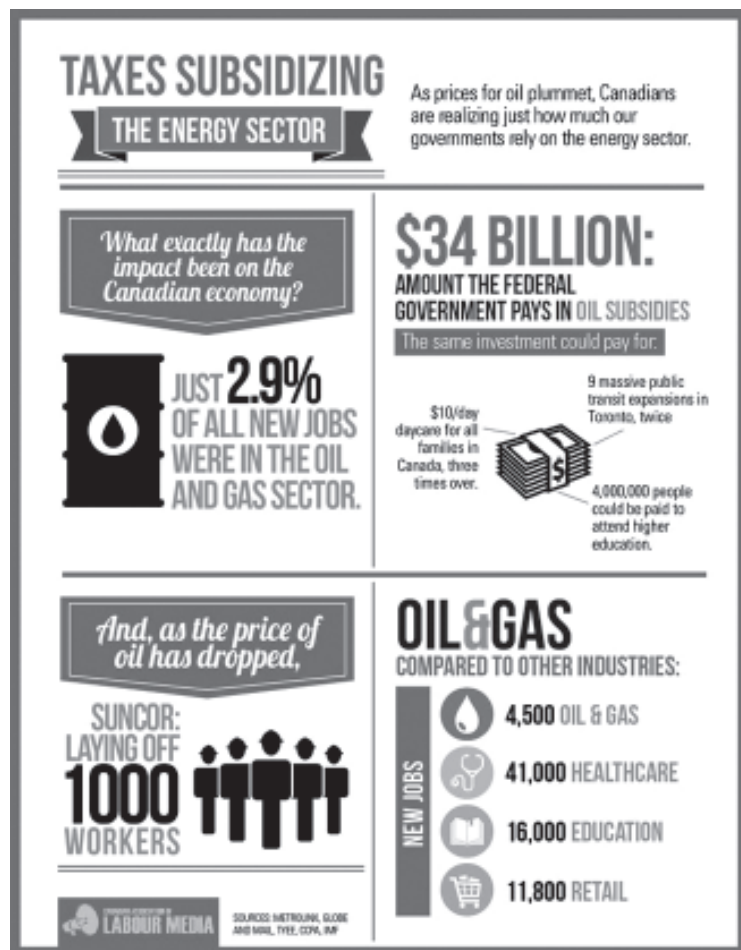
Women comprise an average of 43 per cent of the agricultural labour force in developing countries, varying across regions from 20 per cent or less in Latin America to 50 per cent or more in parts of Asia and Africa. But women farmers control less land than do men, and also have limited access to inputs, seeds, credits, and extension services. Less than 20 per cent of landholders are women. Gender differences in access to land and credit affect the relative ability of female and male farmers and entrepreneurs to invest, operate to scale, and benefit from new economic opportunities.

Women are responsible for household food preparation in 85-90 per cent of cases surveyed in a wide range of countries.

From 1990 to 2010, more than 2 billion people gained access to safe drinking water, but 748 million people are still without clean drinking water.

Women, especially those in poverty, appear more vulnerable in the face of natural disasters. A recent study of 141 countries found that more women than men die from natural hazards and disasters.

Women and children bear the main negative impacts of fuel and water collection and transport, with women in many developing countries spending from 1 to 4 hours a day collecting biomass for fuel. A study of time and water poverty in 25 sub-Saharan African countries estimated that women spend at least 16 million hours a day collecting drinking water; men spend 6 million hours; and children, 4 million hours. Gender gaps in domestic and household work, including time spent obtaining water and fuel and processing food, are intensified in contexts of economic crisis, environmental degradation, natural disasters, and inadequate infrastructure and services. ●



## BC Poverty debates....

continued from page 3

while premium rates have been increasing steadily year over year. Many lower income families just above the premium assistance cut off of \$30,000 per year are being squeezed by these ever higher premium costs. BC is the only province that charges these health care premiums.

You also reference government's investments in affordable housing and social housing. A recent study by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives showed virtually no growth in social housing stock for poor families between 2006 and 2013. Wait lists remain very long.

We appreciate the Rental Assistance Program which subsidizes market rentals for employed families with children if their income is \$35,000 per year or less. However, subsidy amounts are a small portion of actual rents, e.g. a Metro Vancouver family of 4 earning \$24,000 per year (or \$2000 gross per month) would qualify for a maximum rental subsidy of \$349/mo. By comparison, the Metro Vancouver Living Wage rent calculation for this family size is \$1300 per month. In today's rental

market, many more families could use help with their rent costs if the eligibility criteria were broadened. Families trying to find appropriate shelter on income assistance rates are terribly disadvantaged in this market.

You state in your letter that in light of your government's commitment to maintain a balanced budget, substantial investments such as raising income assistance rates or implementing the \$10 per day child care plan are "not feasible in our current economic climate." With all due respect, we have been hearing this argument from government for over a decade, even when the economy was strong (pre-recession) and budget surpluses were posted. The choice not to invest in significant measures that will reduce child and family poverty is not prudent, as it ignores the actual costs of maintaining high poverty levels in BC...

The biggest spending choice government has made is decreasing provincial revenue by lowering tax rates for profitable corporations and higher income earners. We are asking you to put child poverty reduction efforts at the top of the list of priorities that merit substantial investments... ●

# What's Left

Surrey, BC

**International Women's Day celebration**, Sunday, March 8, 1:00 pm at City Centre Library Room 418. Join the Fraser Valley Peace Council for an multicultural and multilingual extravaganza of poetry, music, documentaries and speeches of prominent women activists of our community. Free event, for info call 604-940-0420 or 778-688-3545.

Vancouver, BC

**La Trova Nuestra**, evening of Latin American music, admission \$10, 8 pm, Fridays, Feb. 27 and March 27, CSE, 706 Clark Drive.

**International Women's Day Dinner**, Friday, March 6, 5:30 pm, at Fraserview Hall, (8240 Fraser St.), hosted by the Women's Committee of the Vancouver & District Labour Council, guest speaker Alexa Conradi, president of Quebec Women's Federation. Advance tickets \$45 (\$30 low income) from VDLC.

**Book Launch: Cuba Solidarity in Canada**, edited by Nino Pagliccia, 7:30-9:30 pm, Friday, March 6, Mt. Pleasant Neighbourhood House Room 3, 800 E. Broadway, organized by Canadian-Cuban Friendship

Association-Vancouver. \$14.95 at the event, or call 604-254-3066 to purchase a copy.

**Left Film Night**, 5 pm, Saturday, March 7, CSE, 706 Clark Drive. Ph. 604-255-2041 for details.

**Community March Against Racism**, Sat., March 21, gather 1 pm at Clark Park (14<sup>th</sup> & Commercial) for march to Grandview Park (1200 block Commercial).

Toronto, ON

**Bethune Day Dinner**, 7 pm, Sat. Feb. 28, 290 Danforth Ave. Tickets \$5, door prize all-inclusive trip for two to Cuba. Media sponsor: People's Voice. For tickets, call 416-469-2446.

**IWD 2015**, Saturday, March 7, in solidarity with upcoming World March of Women, under the theme "Our Bodies, Our Territories, Our Communities". Main rally 11 am inside OISE (252 Bloor St. West), speakers and entertainment, March starts 1:00 pm, Info Fair at 2 pm. Rally and march organized by IWD Committee and Women Working With Immigrant Women.

**People's Voice Fund Drive event**, with editor Kimball Cariou, Sat., March 28, for details call PV Ontario Bureau at 416-469-2446.

## People's Voice deadlines

March 16-31 issue: Thursday, March 5

April 1-15 issue: Thursday, March 19

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

## BOOK LAUNCH!

"Cuba Solidarity in Canada"

7:30-9:30 pm, Friday, March 6

Mt. Pleasant Neighbourhood House Room 3,  
800 E. Broadway, Vancouver

Get your copy of Nino Pagliccia's new book here... or....  
It is also available for \$14.95 from Canadian-Cuban Friendship Association-Vancouver, 604-254-3066

## Austerity cuts hurt UK women...

continued from page 6

nine per cent said that this was affecting their job performance and 70 per cent felt that it was affecting their personal lives too.

So what does austerity mean for the other dimension of women's lives — childcare, caring and perhaps even a social life?

Our Shrinking Women's Lives report looked at the impact of cuts — 40 per cent of council budgets in England since 2010 — on women. This is what we found:

\* 60 per cent of more than 2,500 women surveyed thought that public services had deteriorated in the previous year.

\* 60 per cent said that parks and leisure facilities had got worse and that they were concerned about

their safety.

\* 13 per cent had been cut from leisure budgets in the preceding year.

\* £82 million had been cut from children's centre budgets over the previous three years and 285 children's centres had closed.

\* Over a third felt more cut off from their communities, 28 per cent thought it would be more difficult to find a job and 12 felt more cut off from their families.

As if this weren't bad enough, our women members with responsibility for caring for older family members are having to face the consequences of a £3 billion cut in the social care budget, reducing visits to 15 minutes — for those lucky enough to qualify for care.

Eligibility thresholds have gone

through the roof, with fewer and fewer elderly and vulnerable people able to access care.

As for home care workers themselves, almost a quarter of a million are forced to live on pay levels below the national minimum wage because they are not paid for travel time between visits.

So women's lives are certainly shrinking. We intend to mobilise our women's organisation alongside other parts of our union to combat the cuts and vote against the most anti-woman government in our history. The fight starts today.

(From *The Morning Star*, [www.morningstaronline.co.uk](http://www.morningstaronline.co.uk), the world's only English-language daily socialist newspaper) ●

# Cold-war throwback continues to gather public criticism

By Johan Boyden

As the Harper Conservative government keeps up its drive to build a "Victims of Communism" memorial on Parliament Hill, this already controversial project continues to gather widespread public criticism. It seems as if not just the communists are saying: why don't we build a monument to the victims of capitalism instead?

Last fall, the Ottawa Raging Grannies took on the so-called memorial, setting up an alternative monument to "all victims 'thrown under the bus' by the Harper government" with the hope that "it might inspire abandonment of the Harper government's plan for a Monument to the Victims of Communism," they said in a release.

The alternative monument took the shape of a bus driven by Harper with an "Out of Service" sign on the front. Little feet extended from under it, with toe tags identifying them as Harper's targets, including Aboriginal women, democratic rights, environmental protection, the CBC, Veterans, and many others.

Canadian citizens "have also fled from Nazism, Fascism, religious extremism, dictatorships, and military juntas," they said, calling Harper's monument "pandering [...] for political purposes." The Raging Grannies, who dress up in outrageous hats, long skirts and shawls covered in political buttons, are well known for their satirical songs.

Then in January, Scott Vrooman, a young comedian who has appeared on *This Hour has 22 Minutes*, *Conan*, and writes for the *Huffington Post*, called the monument an example of "selective empathy."

Writing in *Rabble.ca* Vrooman said that, "To take one of many examples, a million of the people listed are Vietnamese. For each one of those deaths, seven tons of non-communist bombs were dropped by American planes during the Vietnam War. Those ones should at least have an asterisk in the shape of Henry Kissinger's head."

This year marks the 40th anniversary of the end of the Vietnam war. The victory of the national liberation forces ended a series of US bombing campaigns which saw three times more ordnance dropped than during the

Second World War, over Laos, Cambodia and north and south Vietnam. Kissinger acted as a key US advisor in the war.

Vrooman added, "shouldn't we prioritize the deaths of innocent people the Government of Canada was complicit in?"

## Massive problem

But comedians and the Grannies aren't the monument's only vocal opponents. On Jan. 21, the *Ottawa Citizen* revealed that the board of directors of Ottawa's National Capital Commission (the crown corporation administering federal lands in Ottawa and Gatineau) had overruled its own advisory committee's objections to the monument.

According to the *Citizen*, the NCC committee on planning, design and realty "judged the location totally inappropriate," and "didn't think much of the winning design." At least one of the seven member jury evaluating designs had a "massive problem" with the proposal.

Shirley Blumberg, a prominent Toronto architect, member of the Order of Canada, and part of the NCC's jury, even called the chosen location - directly in front of the Supreme Court - "so centrally placed that it would seem to quite overshadow Canada's true history," and noted that it would cost at least two or three times the estimated \$5.5 million to build.

## Tribute to what?

The vast majority of those funds - \$4 million - will come from the public purse. Apparently, individual and corporate donations just haven't raised enough. Donors include the likes of Prime Minister Stephen Harper, Jason Kenney, director of the Canadian Taxpayers Federation Gregory Thomas, and Tory Senator Linda Frum.

(Senator Frum can perhaps be forgiven for only hosting a few fundraisers at her private mansion. She is also busy raising money for the Stephen Harper Bird Sanctuary in Hula Valley, Israel - land that, as the Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East note, was ethnically cleansed of its Palestinian communities.)

While the Liberal, NDP and Green leaders have all jumped on

this bandwagon, most of the money raised by the glibly named "Tribute To Liberty" charity appears to be from far-right nationalist groups within the Ukrainian, Lithuanian, and Polish communities in Canada.

Even Lech Kaczynski, former Polish President, has sent Tribute to Liberty a letter of endorsement which they proudly display on their website. Under the leadership of Kaczynski's brother and his Law and Justice Party, Poland made it illegal to possess, purchase or distribute items or recordings containing communist symbols.

Those having a Hammer and Sickle or a Red Star could face fines or imprisoned for up to two years. This law, as well as Law and Justice's open homophobia, has garnered widespread international condemnation.

In fact, scratch below the surface of this monument and you will find a crude attempt to equate communism with fascism, and excuse fascist crimes. Nationalist Ukrainian-Canadian newspaper *The Echo* has been fundraising for the monument by showing "The Soviet Story," a film which plays fast and loose with the truth to claim the USSR's role in WW2, and the Soviet liberation of eastern and parts of central Europe, was the same as Nazi occupation and holocaust.

"Tribute to Liberty," *The Echo* reports, "is an enthusiastic supporter of 'The Soviet Story.' Nevermind that this January actually marked the 70th anniversary of the Red Army's liberation of Auschwitz."

To back up their truly wild claim that communism in the 20th century killed 100 million people, the Monument supporters' only source is a French text called *The Black Book of Communism*. They add without documentation almost two million from Africa, and finally drop in an extra five million out of nowhere to bring the number up to a hundred million.

As the Communist Party of Canada has pointed out, this figure also "includes the estimated 25 million Soviet citizens who perished at the hands of the Nazi invaders during World War II, defending their homeland, fighting heroically as allies of Canada."

On this basis a giant publically-funded monument is being erected in Ottawa.

## Apologizing for Fascism

The *Black Book* has been widely discredited as an attempt to link nazism with communism - and for its bad research. As Michael Parenti says, "To be sure crimes of state were committed in communist countries... But the inflated numbers offered by cold-war scholars serve neither historical truth nor the cause of justice but merely help to reinforce a knee-jerk fear and loathing of those terrible Reds."

Harper, of course, clearly understands and promotes this rewriting of history. Speaking at a Tribute to Liberty fundraiser in Toronto last May, he said "whatever it calls itself - Nazism, Marxist-Leninism, today, terrorism - they all have one

thing in common: the destruction, the end, of human liberty."

It would seem however, as the Raging Grannies suggested, that human liberty's real enemy was our capitalist system which is everywhere denying people access to basic needs, jobs, as well as peace, justice and a healthy environment; and that past and current attempts to fight Marxism and terrorism by the ruling class have much more in common with fascism than with democracy.

Johan Boyden is the Central Organizer of the Communist Party of Canada. He is currently wrapping up an organizing tour across Ontario talking about, among other things, overcoming anti-communist sentiments in society. Fran Sedgwick helped with this article. ●



This Cold War propaganda seems absurd today, but the "Tribute to Liberty" aims to revive the anti-communist McCarthy era.

## Neo-nazi threats in Britain

British anti-fascist movement Hope Not Hate reports that "teenage neonazis are on the rise even as the British far right splinters into oblivion." In its annual report for 2014, Hope Not Hate also warns of the fertile ground for anti-Muslim propaganda on the back of the Paris attacks.

Groups such as the openly nazi National Action (NA) are a particular concern. With a membership calculated between 40 and 50 people, NA has been described as "very active and pernicious" and with the potential to grow. One of its main targets has been universities, where several NA posters were found last year.

The hate group is predominantly composed of teenagers and 20-somethings. Among them was 21-year-old Garron Helm, who was imprisoned last October for sending Labour MP Luciana Berger over 2,000 anti-semitic tweets and death threats. Last July another teenager, Michael Piggan, was detained after his room was found covered in swastika flags and homemade explosives and air rifles were retrieved.

In another development, the release of English Defence League founder Tommy Robinson next July could mean his return to politics. According to Hope Not Hate, Robinson has the charisma, media ability and willpower to unite the far right under his anti-Muslim quest. ●

## NEWS FOR PEOPLE, NOT FOR PROFITS!

Every issue of PEOPLE'S VOICE gives you the latest on the fightback from coast to coast. Whether it's the struggle to defeat the Harper Tories, resistance to social cuts, solidarity with Cuba or workers' struggles around the world, we've got the news the corporate media won't print.

And we do more than that—we report and analyze events from a revolutionary perspective, helping to build the movements for justice and equality, and eventually for a socialist Canada. Read the paper that fights for working people—on every page—in every issue!

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