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people's VOICE

**Solidarity with
BC teachers**

See pages 3 & 4

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PV photo: K. Cariou

Tory dirty tricks exposed
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independent
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heats up**

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Toronto rally on March 3 condemns drive for war against Iran (People's Voice photo: Ed Bil)

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Christy Clark's Liberals plead poverty as they cut spending on social programs and education. But their agenda is driven by a political choice to widen the gap between rich and poor.

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Frame-up falls apart**

Sixty years after the execution of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg, yet another crucial piece of tainted "evidence" in this frame-up is exposed as a fraud.

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New "austerity treaty"**

The corporate drive for lower wages, pensions and benefits ratchets up with the signing of an "austerity" treaty by Eurozone politicians. But workers may yet derail this latest attack.

"Women are the majority of the majority"

Ontario Federation of Labour Statement on International Women's Day, March 8, 2012 (excerpt)

The global Occupy movement of the past year has drawn significant attention to the vast and expanding inequality between the richest one percent in society and the rest of us - the 99 percent. Women make up slightly over 50 percent of the Canadian population but when it comes to wealthiest Canadians, men are vastly over-represented. In the 500 largest and most influential companies in Canada, men hold 93.8 percent of the top earning positions and make up 99 percent of the highest paid 100 chief executive officers at publicly traded companies. When it comes to those who are economically disenfranchised corporate greed, women are the majority of the majority.

Even among average wage earners, women continue to fair poorly. Among those with full-time employment, women continue to take home only \$0.70 for every dollar earned by men and racialized women earn only \$0.60 compared to non-racialized men and 16 percent less than racialized men. In so many ways in our economy, women continue to find themselves among the poorest of the poor, especially women raising children in single-parent families, who are almost five times more likely to be poor than those in two-parent families. This gender gap nearly triples for older women who are living on their own and is magnified among women in all of the most vulnerable populations: Aboriginal people, people from racialized communities, recent immigrants, persons with disabilities and so

many others. As one report puts it, "Gender creates a cleavage of vulnerability that cuts across all other groups."

Later this month, Ontario Premier Dalton McGuinty will table an austerity budget based on the nearly 400 public spending cuts recommended by banker Don Drummond in his recent report to the Ontario Government. These cuts will lead to dramatic job loss and decimate the very social services that are designed to help struggling Ontarians get back on their feet. They will likely hit health care and education the hardest, but their impact will be felt across the board. However, these cuts will have the most damaging effect on women and people from equity-seeking groups in our society...

An austerity-driven budget will result in a major loss of financial, administrative and secretarial jobs throughout the public service, where women make up 8 out of every 10 workers. Cuts to child care, full-day kindergarten and special education programs will not only hurt the women who dominate those professions, but it will devastate the hundreds of thousands of women who disproportionately benefit from them. On average, women rely more heavily on social services than men because they tend to be poorer and because they are more likely to take on caring roles and responsibilities that have reduced their earnings capacity. Women are also more likely to help their families cope with the loss of public services through unpaid work, sometimes having to give up their own employment opportunities to do so - for example, when childcare or after school care services are no longer

available.

"In cities and towns all across Ontario, women are at the forefront of opposition to cuts that threaten our collective economic recovery. Our mothers and grandmothers worked hard to win progress in women's equality - from wage gains to child care. These gains were not the cause of the recession and women shouldn't be made to pay for the folly of the financial sector," said OFL Secretary-Treasurer Nancy Hutchison. "At International Women's Day events across the province this year, women will be raising their voices against economic inequality and challenging an austerity agenda that puts corporate greed ahead of human needs." •



PEOPLE'S VOICE FUND DRIVE: \$50,000

Your alternative to the media dictators

"Any dictator would admire the uniformity and obedience of the U.S. media." - Noam Chomsky

In 1983, 50 corporations controlled the vast majority of all news media in the U.S. Since then, there have been dozens of mergers and the media's scope has expanded to include the Internet market. Today, only five huge corporations - Time Warner, Disney, Murdoch's News Corporation, Bertelsmann of Germany, and Viacom (formerly CBS) - control most of the U.S. media industry. General Electric's NBC is a close sixth.

The above quote from Noam Chomsky also applies to the Canadian mass media, which is dominated by a handful of major corporations.

Apart from some community

broadcasters, media in Canada are primarily owned by a small number of companies, including Bell Media (formerly CTV globemedia), Rogers Communications, Shaw Communications, Astral Media, Quebecor, and (unlike the U.S.) the government-owned CBC. Each of these companies holds a diverse mix of TV, cable, radio, newspaper, magazine and internet operations.

These corporations are an important part of the overall structure of present-day monopoly capitalism, with interlocking directors and major shareholders, and a common interest in preserving the status quo. Little wonder that they express a consistent bias in favour of ruling class ideas, such as the so-called "natural" economic order based on private ownership of wealth, or the view that human beings are "hard-wired" to fight wars rather than to cooperate for survival.

In the realm of ideas, the only serious challenge to this corporate control arises from the resistance of the exploited, the vast majority of the population under capitalism. For over a hundred years, this resistance has included the working class media, taking many forms - newspapers, leaflets, books, radio, TV, internet, etc.

This month, we mark the 90th anniversary of *The Worker*, which was born on March 15, 1922. For nine decades, *The Worker* and its successor publications - *The Clarion*, the *Canadian* and *Pacific*

Tribunes, *Clarite*, and *People's Voice*, among others - have fought relentlessly to expose the lies and distortions of the corporate media, and to cover the news ignored by the capitalist daily papers.

Shortly before this issue went to press, we mailed out our annual mail appeal for the 2012 People's Voice Fund Drive. The first replies are coming in, and as of March 2, we have received nearly \$3,000. That's a promising start on our campaign to raise \$50,000.

Over the next few months, we will be visiting our subscribers to seek your support. And our press activists will be holding a series of fundraisers, such as the June 2 Victory Banquet at the Russian Hall in Vancouver. As always, the value of May Day greeting ads (see page 3 for information) will count towards provincial targets.

Coming up first is the annual Pasta Dinner held as part of the Left Film Night, Sunday, March 25, 6 pm, at the Centre for Socialist Education, 706 Clark Drive, also in Vancouver. This month the film is "There But For Fortune", the powerful documentary on the life and times of radical U.S. folksinger Phil Ochs. Dinner is just \$12, with vegetarian options. Join us for some delicious food and a great movie! Call 604-255-2041 for details.

In our next issue, we'll give the first full report on the progress of the Fund Drive. Thanks to all who have sent in donations so far. Your solidarity is deeply appreciated!

Marking 90th anniversary of the working class press



Peace was the main theme of this historic issue of the *Canadian Tribune*, published on June 18, 1951, one year after the U.S. and its allies launched the Korean War. On the front page is a report that 125 clergymen (and they were all men in those days!) had petitioned Prime Minister St. Laurent to recognize the People's Republic of China and to support world peace rather than war. Inside are a wide range of articles and commentaries on the impact of the "Cold War", including the frameup of Communist Party USA leaders falsely charged with "conspiring" to teach and advocate "the duty and necessity of overthrowing and destroying the government of the United States by force and violence." Other articles covered the upsurge of labour action across Canada, as thousands of workers went on strike to demand higher pay and a shorter work week.

Here's my contribution to the PV Fund Drive!

Enclosed please find my donation of \$_____ to the 2012 People's Voice Press Fund Drive.

Name _____

Address _____

City/town _____

Prov. _____ Postal Code _____

Send your contribution to:
 People's Voice, 706 Clark Drive, Vancouver, BC, V5L 3J1

CAW President urges labour law changes

CAW President Ken Lewenza wants Ontario to modernize its labour laws in light of the Caterpillar lock out and closure.

"Governments must now move beyond words and give serious consideration to the role of

Ontario's labour laws in this tragic situation: how they must be improved to avert similar outcomes and strengthened to better protect workers from the devastating effects of workplace closures," Lewenza wrote in a

Feb. 29 letter to Labour Minister Linda Jeffery.

Lewenza said that multinational corporations exploit weak legislation to buy up other companies, take what they want and close up shop at little cost and

with few barriers - all to the detriment of Ontario workers and the communities where they live.

Caterpillar, which owns Electromotive Diesel in London, used the province's labour laws to its advantage. "Caterpillar did not misjudge or misinterpret Ontario's labour laws," said Lewenza. "Rather, they understood them all too well, and exploited the laws' weakness as a key part of their overall strategy.

"In the wake of the Caterpillar tragedy, it's time that greater balance is restored, better rules are established and stronger tools are placed at the disposal of government to settle these types of labour disputes."

Lewenza is also calling for an Industrial Inquiry Commission to investigate the experience at Caterpillar, a rarely used measure provided for under section 37 of the Ontario Labour Relations Act. The commission would then make recommendations to the minister on how to proceed in the future in other cases.

The CAW is calling for a number of changes and improvements to current legislation, including:

- * Strengthening requirements for the parties to bargain in good faith, including improving the tools available to the Ontario Labour Relations Board.

- * Creating new provisions to prevent employers from evading contract obligations by precipitating a lock out. Provisions in the previous collective agreement must apply, in the case of a lock out, once the closure is announced.

- * Banning the use of replacement workers.

- * Restoring the requirement that employers negotiate adjustment plans in mass terminations and closures, which would remove the incentive to cause a lockout.

- * Significantly lengthening the notice period for mass termination and providing a minimum of two weeks severance pay per year of service, accrued from the first year of employment. The 26 week cap should also be removed. ●

B.C. Teachers shocked by Bill 22

Issued by the BC Teachers' Federation, Feb. 28, 2012

The legislation introduced this afternoon by Education Minister George Abbott constitutes yet another assault on the profession of teaching and the public education system by this provincial government.

BCTF President Susan Lambert characterized Bill 22, the cynically entitled Education Improvement Act, as "a destructive act of legislative vandalism that will violate collective bargaining rights for teachers and have a profoundly negative impact on learning conditions for students."

Under the guise of imposing a six-month "cooling-off period," the bill empowers the minister to appoint a mediator who is constrained by the net-zero mandate and tasked with reaching agreement on a number of concessions tabled by the employer. The bill imposes a two-year wage freeze, which means every teacher will lose about \$2,800 in purchasing power.

"This bill forces us into a mock mediation that has a predetermined outcome, and is designed to make teachers complicit in stripping the remaining protections in our own collective agreement," said Lambert. "It's absolutely Orwellian."

The aspect of the legislation that is most damaging for students prohibits teachers from bargaining class size, average class size, staffing levels, ratios or caseloads for another two years. Thus, there are no effective limits on the number of children who can be

assigned to any class over Grade 3 or on the diversity and complexity of needs represented within any class.

"Why should these bargaining rights be postponed until after the next election? This means students will have suffered worsening conditions for a full 12 years," Lambert said. "Teachers sacrificed raises in the past to win protections for class size and composition because we care about our students and want to be able to teach to individual needs. I can only imagine how concerned parents will be when they realize that learning

conditions are only going to get worse as a result of this bill."

Bill 22 also includes severe penalties in the event of an illegal strike: \$475 per day for individual teachers, \$2,500 per day for union officers, and a minimum of \$1.3 million per day for the BCTF. "The fines in this bullying legislation are punitive in the extreme," Lambert said. "They are a clear attempt to intimidate teachers."

As the legislature debated Bill 22, teachers across the province continued voting on whether to escalate their limited job action to a full-scale walkout. ●

Bill 22: "An assault on collective bargaining, a degradation of justice, and an attack on youth"

Statement of the B.C. Communist Party of Canada, Feb. 29, 2012

The Communist Party condemns Bill 22 as an assault on collective bargaining, a degradation of the judicial system and a threat to democracy in British Columbia.

In one stroke this failed and doomed Liberal government has violated the right to negotiate, to withdraw labour, and to exercise the franchise of citizenship in a democratic society. They have changed the meaning of the word "mediate" to "enforcement" and degraded the numerous court victories of the BC Teachers with legislation that is in opposition

to the Teachers, the Court decisions, their own Labour Board, any sense of human decency and most important of all the quality of life and education of BC children. Twice the Supreme Court has ruled anti-worker legislation of this government illegal.

The use of BC children, their teachers and the public school system as an anti-labour bludgeon in the ongoing attack on the entire public sector exposes the underbelly of an anti-people pro-corporate government that must be defeated. The resource extractors can plunder and destroy the ecology with government subsidies, but the Teachers Federation will be fined \$1.3 million a day if they fight for collective bargaining, the rights of children and democracy. Their officers and stewards can be fined \$2500 per day and each individual \$475 per day. Collectively this comes to over \$5 million per day. This is not merely punitive legislation, it is the financial expression of class hatred.

The Communist Party compliments the BC Federation of Labour, and its affiliates and Labour Councils who stand in solidarity with BC Teachers. The Communist Party supports labour and stands also with the 41,000 teachers and their families who are on the front line in the struggle for collective bargaining, democracy and young people.

We also stand in solidarity with the students who have committed themselves to rally in support of the Teachers on March 2 in Vancouver. We are convinced that the majority of BC citizens want justice for teachers and quality education for their children, and that their support will grow as the implications of the draconian Bill 22 becomes more widely known.

(For more information, email the BC Committee CPC at cpinfo.bc@gmail.com, or call 604-254-9836.) ●



IT HURTS TO CUT THEIR PAY BY 55%. BUT IT'S EITHER THAT OR MOVE TO THE STATES...

NIAGARA NEWS BULLETIN

People's Voice Niagara Bureau

* Eleven members of CUPE 1287 at the Lincoln County Human Society are on strike and picketing to **fight management's attempt to bring in two-tier wages** with no health care or sick time for new workers. They've been working without an agreement for 14 months while the Society reported a surplus in its last disclosure.

* **Meat-processor New Food Classic laid off 120 workers** from UFCW 175 a year after getting \$1 million from the province to move from Alberta. Plant Chair Kate Jones told reporters "We feel like we were duped when we into negotiations... We made a lot of concessions." The staff representative was left hoping on another buyer, saying "We're going to know more as we go along". Fifty-nine of the workers had been recalled from being laid off from the former owner of the plant.

* Twenty OPSEU (Ontario Public Service Employees Union) members **picketed the provincial government** in downtown St. Catharines against the privatization of ServiceOntario. They were followed by an Occupy Niagara protest against corporate tax cuts and austerity measures recommended by the Drummond Report.

* Despite earlier saying that the province's intervention into the Niagara Health system means the Ombudsman can now investigate complaints into closures of emergency rooms and cuts in services, the **Ombudsman has only referred the more than 80 complaints to the provincially-appointed supervisor** who has already publicly said he won't undo cuts.

* The **Ft. Erie race track's more than 300 workers** have started a letter-writing campaign against the Drummond Report, which recommends closing the track as an austerity measure, despite the provincial revenue coming from slots at its on-site casino.

* **Port Colborne's food bank ran completely out of food**, underscoring how poverty is a bigger problem than charity can solve. ●

MAY DAY 2012 GREETING ADS

To mark May Day 2012, 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 20; if PV is preparing the layout, the deadline is April 18. 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
One column x 2 inches.....	\$25
One column x 3 inches.....	\$35
Two columns x 2 inches.....	\$45
Two columns x 3 inches.....	\$60
Two columns x 4 inches.....	\$75
Two columns x 5 inches.....	\$90
Three columns x 4 inches.....	\$110
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

Only mass action can stop war

Nine years ago, huge public protests compelled the Chretien government to back away from direct participation in the invasion of Iraq. Today, a new catastrophe is unfolding, but the Harper government appears to relish the prospect of war and devastation, and our mass media refuses to question the line that such a terrible outcome is both inevitable and justified.

Paul Heinbecker, Canada's ambassador to the United Nations from 2000 to 2004, wrote recently, "I had a front-row seat for the march to war in Iraq. Now the target is Iran, and I have the sinking feeling that I have seen this movie before. The ending isn't happy."

Parallels between then and now are frightening. Most pervasive is the endless rhetoric about weapons of mass destruction. Of course, Iraq did not possess such an arsenal, despite the lies of the Bush administration. According to independent experts, the Iranian regime is years away from building a nuclear bomb, if indeed that is its goal.

Other lies are being spread, such as the deliberate mistranslation of a speech by President Ahmedinejad, to make it seem that he was calling for the military destruction of Israel. Some war advocates support the "responsibility to protect" doctrine, a 21st century version of the Vietnam War argument that "sometimes to save a village, you have to destroy it."

Cooler heads may prevail, since most of the international community is horrified at the vast human, social, economic and environmental cost of a U.S.-led war against Iran.

But hoping for the best is not an anti-war strategy. Unless millions of people in Canada, the U.S. and other NATO countries get mobilized, another illegal war of aggression may be unstoppable. And this time, the consequences for the people of Iran, and for our entire world, may be much worse.

Solidarity with B.C. Teachers

As this issue goes to press on March 6, 41,000 British Columbia Teachers Federation members are on the picket lines. The outcome remains in the balance, but for the second time in seven years, this courageous union has stood up against the corrupt, pro-corporate gang of Liberal bullies in Victoria. We salute the BCTF and its members for their determined and principled stand in defence of public education and of the rights of all working people.

It is increasingly understood in B.C., Ontario and other provinces that politicians do have choices. Despite the line of the Fraser Institute, the Drummond Commission, and other voices for big business, governments have the option of compelling the rich and the corporations to pay a larger share of taxation. In fact, refusal to consider this option has deliberately starved provincial and federal treasuries of billions of dollars needed to protect and expand vital social programs, schools, pensions and public health care.

Similarly, governments do have the option of agreeing to allow public sector workers the right to withdraw their labour in pursuit of better pay and working conditions.

But governments never recognize such options without a struggle. By striking to demand better pay and working conditions, the teachers are defending the interests of students and families, and of the entire working class. Their stand has the support of a majority of British Columbians, including most students and their parents, who agree that Premier Clark's Liberals must be stopped. So far, the labour movement has responded with strong support for the BCTF. If that solidarity is continued and expanded, the fight to defeat the Liberals at the polls next year will be strengthened. That's why all-out support for the BCTF is crucial!

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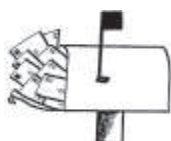
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LETTERS

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

CETA a threat to Canada Post

I read the article "CETA talks: what's the big hurry?" (People's Voice, Feb. 15-29) with interest. I agree with your analysis that CETA will profoundly and negatively influence public services.

CETA also has the potential of putting our mail service in jeopardy.

Currently CETA locks in Canada Post's existing exclusive privilege to handle letters, but does not provide the government or a future government with the flexibility to restore Canada Post's recently abolished exclusive privilege to handle international letters.

CETA also locks in the possibility of further deregulation of our postal service. If the current or a future government were to further reduce Canada Post's exclusive privilege, it would be irreversible (or at least inconsistent with Canada's international trade and investment commitments).

We need to stop CETA for a number of reasons, one of which is we need to maintain our public and universal postal services.

Marion Pollack, Vancouver, BC

Build the anti-racism movement

On March 21 progressive people the world over will observe the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. On that day, in 1960, police of the South African Apartheid regime opened fire and killed 69 unarmed children, women and men at a peaceful demonstration in Sharpeville. The demonstration was called against the apartheid state's "pass laws" which provided a racist "legal" basis for vicious discrimination to favour an elite white ruling class.

Proclaiming the Day in 1966, the General Assembly of the United Nations called on the international community to redouble its efforts to eliminate all forms of racial discrimination (resolution 2142).

It is an unfortunate fact that little headway has been made against racism in the world and there is much to be done here in Canada. As we approach this day the struggle against racial discrimination in Canada is far from won. The struggle goes on in the west with skinhead attacks on a young progressive family, and in the east with a cross burning on the lawn of a mixed race couple.

It continues on the unemployment lines with disproportionate representation by visible minorities and in the workplace with unfair wages and opportunities. It is widespread and institutionalized across the country with discrimination against First Nations' land rights and injustice. And it also continues in areas where you would think it should never take hold - in the courts and in our unions.

Racism is a cancerous tool that is perpetuated by ignorance and is deliberately promoted to divide, undermine and disrupt progressive organized groups and political parties. It is a weapon that promotes hatred and is wielded with the purpose of self gain and exploitation. It thrives in justifying and enforcing colonial domination, imperialism, and terrorism.

It has had official sanction in early colonial times, in Nazi Germany and its allies, in the South African apartheid regime, and it is very much alive in the Israeli state policies and in the "settler" communities, and in many extremist religious and imperialist organizations and states. It's the old divide and conquer strategy.

Communists, Marxists and socialists recognize its use by ruling classes and their henchmen as a tool to erode and confuse progressive social and political movements and labour groups. Racism cannot be a tool of the genuine left because it is self defeating for their cause in the long run, but that hasn't prevented well meaning groups from erroneously taking a racist position. In the 1920s the South African Communist Party briefly carried a banner calling for the exclusion of blacks as foremen and

blasters in the gold and coal mines when employers sought to replace whites with blacks to undermine white wages. The party ultimately corrected itself, and as is well recognized, was a leading force in the anti-apartheid struggle.

Social and other scientists no longer use race as a reliable differentiator for analysis, preferring geographic, economic and historic indicators. But what can the ordinary person do? The least we can do is examine our own racism, and fight it wherever it rears its ugly head in our own lives. In our workplace and in social settings it has to be challenged at its first appearance and discussed openly and intelligently, because disruptive forces are not above using the accusation of racism to impede and disable progressive organizations to prevent action. We need to be alert to failures of democracy in our unions and our political organizations. We need to connect with progressive social organizations, including the Communist Party, to build a strong force for democracy and ultimately a just society in which there is no possibility of, and no will to make gains through racism.

From the Public Sector Workers Club of the Communist Party (Ontario)

Renew today!

Check your label

Please check the address label on the front page to see if it's time to renew. Subscribers who find "2012/03/02" on their label, for example, will have their subscriptions expire with this issue, March 16-31, 2012

Don't miss a single copy - renew today!

Sixty years too late to save the Rosenbergs

By Robert Meeropol, from the website of the Rosenberg Fund for Children, www.rfc.org

Feb. 25th will mark the 60th anniversary of the U.S. Appeals Court's affirmation of my parents' conviction for Conspiracy to Commit Espionage. As I have explained before, my parents were convicted of conspiracy - not spying, espionage or treason as the mainstream media usually reports. Prosecutors like conspiracy charges because the law in this country holds everyone involved in the conspiracy responsible for all the acts of any of the conspirators in furtherance of the conspiracy.

And all the prosecutors need to show to prove that a conspiracy exists is that two or more people got together, made an illegal plan, and took one overt act to move that scheme forward. It could be as simple as agreeing to make a phone call or arranging a meeting.

In order to prove a conspiracy, the prosecution must demonstrate that the defendants joined together in a common plan. This is sometimes referred to as the chain of conspiracy. In appealing their conviction, my parents' attorneys attempted to sever the government's chain of conspiracy at its weakest link.

This is how they did it. Although my parents denied that they conspired with chief prosecution witnesses David and Ruth Greenglass (my mother's younger brother and his wife) to steal atomic secrets, they could not deny that they knew and met with the Greenglasses on many occasions. After all, they were family.

Moreover, my parents'

from Klaus Fuchs, one of the top atomic scientists working on the Manhattan project.

Gold also testified that on one occasion he obtained secret information at David and Ruth Greenglass's apartment in Albuquerque, not far from Los Alamos where David, an Army sergeant, worked as a machinist fabricating pieces of the atomic

trial that Gold or Fuchs knew my parents or vice versa. In other words, the defense claimed that the government had not established the chain of conspiracy that connected the Rosenbergs to Gold and Fuchs.

The Appeals Court disagreed. The Justices pointed out that the Greenglasses testified that my father had given Ruth a half a Jello box-top as a recognition signal and kept the other half. David testified that when Gold came to his doorstep in Albuquerque he presented the half of the Jello box-top that matched the one Ruth had kept.

David stated further that my father said the person who came to collect the secrets would use a code phrase with Julius' name in it. Gold and David both testified that Gold used the name Julius at the meeting to prove his bona fides. Thus, the Appeals Court concluded the jury could infer the connection between the Rosenbergs and Gold through the Jello box top and code phrase.

Of course, we now know a lot more than the Appeals Court did 60 years ago. Over 20 years after their decision, my brother's and my legal action forced into the public eye secret government files detailing Gold and Greenglass's initial confessions.

Gold first said he used the name Ben in the code phrase, while David testified Gold used the name Dave. Another government file reported that after several months in custody Gold and Greenglass were brought together to iron out this discrepancy, and it was at that meeting that Greenglass "proposed" that "possibly" Gold used the name Julius. Gold responded that he was "not at all clear on this point," but none of this came out at the trial three months later and both testified that they were certain the name Julius was in the code phrase.

It was not until the 2010 publication of Walter Schneur's book *Final Verdict* that we learned that Ruth Greenglass, not my father, was tasked with the job of creating the "recognition signal." Thus, the two pieces of "evidence" upon which the Appeals Court based its decision to uphold my parents' conviction, have lost their probative value.

Harry Gold and David Greenglass inserted the name Julius into the code phrase just a few months before the trial, and Ruth Greenglass, not Julius Rosenberg, created the Jello box-top recognition signal. But, of course, once the executions took place on June 19, 1953, these fatal errors could not be undone. ●



"From an untitled lithograph of Ethel and Julius Rosenberg, by Pablo Picasso, 1952." Graphicwitness.org

attorneys did not contest the testimony of a third government witness, Harry Gold. Gold stated he was an espionage courier who transmitted a great deal of material to the Soviet Union about the construction of the atomic bomb.

In their appeal, my parents' attorneys acknowledged that while the Rosenbergs and Greenglasses were connected, and Gold, Fuchs and the Greenglasses were connected, no one testified at the

SPEAKING FRANKLY

Not so soft soap

By Rob Gowland, from *The Guardian, newspaper of the Communist Party of Australia*

They say you can prove anything with statistics, but that is generally said by people who want you to ignore a statistic that does not support their position on a particular issue. Some statistics however can be very instructive and revealing.

Thus, U.S. historians Walter Schiedel and Steven Freisen announced not long ago that the gap between rich and poor today was far greater than the gap between rich and poor in ancient Rome!

In the days of the Roman Republic (the time of Julius Caesar), the richest one percent of the population controlled 16 percent of society's wealth. Today in the U.S., that one percent on top controls 40 percent of the country's wealth.

What is perhaps most amazing about that statistic, is that the capitalists who make up that one percent on top seem to think they're going to stay there. To borrow an expression from somewhere else, I think they're riding for a fall.

The website of the Russian news channel *Russia Today* ran an online poll to mark the 20th anniversary of the overthrow of socialism in the USSR. It was not a very well designed poll, but the results are interesting anyway. Fifteen percent of respondents ticked the box "Yes we are definitely better off without the 'evil empire'".

Twenty three percent however said it was not a good thing because it left the US unchecked. By

contrast, a whopping 41 percent said it was not a good thing because Communism offered hope for a better future. And a politically naive 21 percent said it would have been better "if NATO had collapsed with it". (It makes you wonder what they think actually happened.)

Workers in Britain have been engaged for a couple of months now in protest rallies and demonstrations against government and business attacks on their pensions. Wringing their hands and claiming the attacks are "austerity measures", and that they are for "the common good", the Tory/Lib-Dem government and the big capitalists are out to downgrade pensions and cheat workers out of their entitlements.

In the public sector, workers and employers both contribute to pension funds. (In the private sector, two thirds of workers get no contributions from their employers.) Workers get some security in their old age, while employers get a fresh source of investment capital they can draw on when needed. Supposedly, everybody wins.

But bosses (even in the public sector) resent having to pay anything to the workers' pension funds, and are always on the lookout for ways to get their hands on the money in the fund without having to pay any of it to the actual workers.

One popular way in recent times has been for the company to quietly transfer the workers to an associated company and then to send that company into liquidation.

The giant Unilever concern, the 18th richest company in the world, can hardly go down that road.

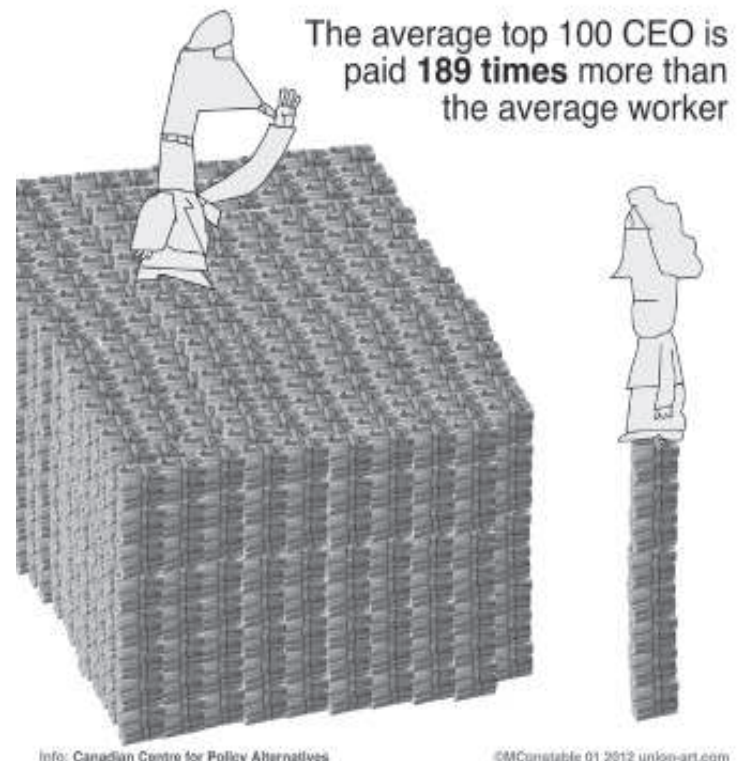
Instead, it has chosen to downgrade the company pension scheme from a final salary scheme to a career average scheme. They might seem innocuous-sounding differences, but if implemented they would see some workers losing 40 percent of the value of their pensions.

In a move calculated to embarrass the bosses of Unilever, a protest rally at the beginning of the year outside the company's London headquarters was joined by Lord Leverhulme himself, heir of the original Viscount Leverhulme. The present Lord Leverhulme called on the company not to stray from what he called its corporate social responsibility pledges and to stop taking risks with the company's reputation.

The first Viscount Leverhulme started out as plain William Lever, proprietor of a small soap factory in the old Lancashire manufacturing town of Warrington on the Mersey. He was imbued with the reformers' zeal which, although not widespread was also not uncommon among 19th century manufacturers. It often went along with strong religious convictions, especially in the industrial north of the country, stronghold of the English reformed churches (those who in response to the question "Religion?" would answer "Chapel!").

And of course, Engels, Marx's close friend and collaborator, was a factory owner.

While building up the vast Lever soap business, William Lever engaged in an historic fight to win pensions for workers. (At the protest rally in January, the present Lord Leverhulme warned that the pensions snatch planned by the



company and its government backers "shames this legacy".)

His ancestor believed that workers also deserved decent housing, access to schools, all those things the affluent took for granted. At Bromborough Pool, in Cheshire, in 1888 he established a model industrial village, which he named Port Sunlight.

He became a Liberal MP in 1906, and was made a peer in 1917. He died in 1925. While he lived, the company supported the continued growth of Port Sunlight, but the moment he died the company abandoned it.

The cottages Lever provided for his workers hardly compared to the mansion he lived in himself, but the capitalists who sat on the Lever board were unwilling to share even that small fraction of their profits with their workers. Now they want to get their hands on their employees' pension funds.

One of the legacies left by Lever was a workforce that was kindly disposed towards the company, on historical grounds more than anything else. That too has gone: the company had its first strike in the UK only last December. In retaliation, the company cancelled the Christmas celebrations (how petty can you get?) It was of course inevitable that William Lever's hopes for "corporate social responsibility" would founder on the shoals of corporate greed. Engels could have set him straight, but doubtless Lever never asked.

Meanwhile, the present corporate heads of the Unilever company must be scratching their heads - or laughing derisively - over such alien concepts as being "shamed" by pinching their workers' pensions. Profits are profits - the name of the game is to get them any way you can. ●

Communists demand: an independent inquiry and a new federal election!

Statement issued Feb, 29, 2012 by the Central Executive Committee, Communist Party of Canada.

There is overwhelming evidence that during the 2011 federal election, thousands of voters across Canada were phoned with fraudulent and misleading information. This sabotage of electoral democracy has removed any legitimacy for the Harper Conservatives. The Communist Party of Canada calls for the immediate resignation of the Harper government, a new general election, and an independent

public inquiry into all aspects of this scandal. Everyone responsible for this tactic should face criminal charges, right up to the Prime Minister and his inner clique.

PM Stephen Harper's arrogant and corrupt government shows complete contempt for democratic rights and civil liberties. It is about to bring in a viciously anti-working class federal budget, and may soon plunge Canada into catastrophic imperialist wars against Iran and Syria. This government is a serious threat to the Canadian people and to world peace.

It is no exaggeration to state that the 2011 election was stolen

from Canadian voters, a vote fatally tainted by criminal tactics. It is impossible to count exactly how many voters were discouraged by "robo-calls" from casting a ballot. But reports indicate that this illegal tactic was used in at least 45 ridings. Since many of these constituencies saw very narrow Conservative victories, robo-calls may have lifted the Harper Tories from a minority into a majority in Parliament.

Canadians should remember the 2000 U.S. presidential election, which was also literally stolen by Republican thuggery, especially the refusal to count thousands of votes in Florida. This fraud led to the war against Iraq which cost countless lives.

"Voter suppression" has since become a key weapon in the arsenal of right-wing political forces in North America, including the Conservative Party, which has close links with the Republicans. The aim is to discourage as many people as possible from casting a ballot, making it easier for the wealthy and for highly-committed far-right groups to exercise political influence far beyond their actual level of public support.

Right-wing parties like the Tories understand that victory requires mobilizing their own pro-corporate and far-right base while demobilizing

the majority of the population. They want lower voter turnouts on election day, not higher.

This strategy includes demonizing and threatening critics, a wide range of dirty tricks, refusing to accept legal or court restrictions on government actions, etc. Voter suppression takes other forms, such as the attempt by Conservatives last spring to steal ballot boxes at Guelph University. This "take no prisoners" approach aims to make voters more cynical and suspicious, and less likely to believe that electoral politics has any meaningful place in the struggle to achieve progressive social or economic change.

On a much larger scale, Canada now has voter ID requirements that cannot easily be met by millions of people. Potential voters are required to show proof of identity and street address, such as a driver's license with photo (but not a valid passport, for example). This particularly impacts large numbers of rural residents and Aboriginals on reserves, where most people have a postal box. Many senior citizens no longer have driver's licences, and tens of thousands of post-secondary students and homeless people lack the necessary ID with street addresses.

While Elections Canada does not keep track of rejected voters,

post-election surveys have found that almost 5% of registered voters do not vote because they lack proper documentation. About 14.8 million ballots were cast in 2011, so the total of "lost voters" could be well over half a million, more than enough to tilt the outcome in most elections.

Genuine electoral reform requires dropping "first-past-the-post", in favour of a mixed-member proportional representation system which would encourage voters to support the party of their choice. A full enumeration process would help, along with a more realistic set of voter ID rules. The mass media should be required to cover all candidates and political parties, not just a favoured few "mainstream" parties.

These reforms alone would not bring about progressive economic and social change, but they would help to engage Canadians in the full range of struggles to "put people before profits."

Today, the most urgent priority for all who value democratic freedoms and civil liberties must be to mobilize in huge numbers, to demand a full and independent public inquiry into the scandal, and to call for a new federal election. The Communist Party of Canada extends complete solidarity to this crucial struggle for the future of our country. ●



January 2009 rally in Toronto against the Tories (photo: Ed Bil)

The Tory dirty tricks catalog

Excerpts from a recent article by the Globe & Mail's Lawrence Martin, listing Tory dirty tricks, black ops and hardball tactics.

1. Cooking the Books

Via peculiar accounting practices, the Tories exceeded spending limits in the 2006 campaign, gaining an advertising advantage in key ridings. They were later caught, had their offices raided by police and ultimately pled guilty to reduced charges of violating financing provisions of the Elections Act.

2. The Hidden Slush Fund

More than \$40-million slated for border-infrastructure improvements instead went into enhancement projects in Tony Clement's riding in preparation for the G-8 summit.

3. Falsifying Documents

The document-altering scam involving Bev Oda's office and the aid group Kairos is among several instances in which the Tories have been caught document-tampering. They altered a report by Auditor General Sheila Fraser to make it look like she was crediting them with prudent financial management, when it was the Liberals to whom she was referring.

4. Shutting Down Detainees' Probes

The Conservatives employed authoritarian tactics to avoid culpability on the Afghan detainees' file. They attacked the reputation of diplomat Richard Colvin, shut down Parliament, and disabled the Military Police Complaints Commission.

5. The Cotler Misinformation Campaign

Conservatives systematically spread rumours in Irwin Cotler's Montreal riding that he was stepping down.

6. The Suppression of Damaging Reports

A report of the Commissioner of Firearms that showed the gun registry in a good light was kept hidden by Public Safety Minister Peter Van Loan, and escaped the eyes of opposition members before a vote on the registry was taken.

7. Attempt to Frame the Opposition Leader

Late in the 2011 campaign, a senior Conservative operative leaked bogus photos to Sun Media in an attempt to frame Michael Ignatieff as an Iraqi war planner.

8. Communications Lockdown

After denying legislators information on costs of programs, Harper became the first prime minister in history to be found in contempt of Parliament. He has gagged the science community on the question of climate change and other issues.

The Tories denied an opposition member accreditation to attend the Durban summit on climate change then lambasted the member for not being there.

9. Bullying Adversaries

The list of smears against opponents includes: trying to link Liberal Navdeep Bains to terrorism;

Vic Toews' labelling of jurist Louise Arbour a "disgrace to Canada" for her views on the Middle East; seeking reprisals against academics for being critical of the government; the dismissal of Nuclear Safety Commission boss Linda Keen for having a "Liberal background."

10. The "Citizenship" Dog and Pony Show

The immigration department ordered federal bureaucrats to act

the going got tough. The Tories resort frequently to in-camera committee sessions, away from the public and media eye.

12. Leaking Veterans' Files

Colonel Pat Stogran was dropped as Veterans' ombudsman, then became the target of anonymous emails and other dirty tricks after criticizing the government. Other veterans' medical files have been leaked in an attempt to embarrass them.

13. Unfixing The Fixed-Date Election Law

The prime minister brought in a fixed date election law. He promptly turned around and issued a surprise election call in 2008.

14. Declaring Mulroney Persona Non Grata

In the wake of the Karlheinz Schreiber controversy, Harper's team put out the false rumour that Mulroney, who won two majorities for the party, was no longer a card-carrying Conservative.

15. Unreleasing Released Documents

The Conservatives have resorted to shady tactics to de-access the Access to Information system. Freedom of information specialists have catalogued some 46 examples of the government's shielding and stonewalling.

16. Ejecting Citizens From Rallies

Operatives hauled voters out of Harper rallies in last year's campaign for their marginal ties to other parties. The PM was compelled to apologize.

17. Hit Squad On Journalists

Operating under phony email IDs, Conservative staffers have attacked journalists in thousands of online posts in an attempt to discredit their work.

18. Dirty Work on Dion

In the 2008 campaign the Conservatives ran an on-line ad which depicted a bird defecating on Stephane Dion's head. Protests compelled them to withdraw it.

19. Tory Logos on Cheques

The economic recovery program was paid for by taxpayer dollars but the Tories put their own party logo on billboard-sized cheques. The money was distributed disproportionately to Conservative ridings and partisans.

20. The Nomination Crackdown

When a Conservative member tried to challenge Harper loyalist Rob Anders for the nomination in his Calgary riding, Harper's men seized control of the riding executive and crushed the bid.

21. The Rights and Democracy Takeover

Groups like Rights and Democracy supposedly operate at arm's length from the government. But the Harperites removed or suspended board members and stacked the board with pro-Israeli hardliners.

22. Vote Suppression Tactics

Along with pre-recorded robocalls, other Tory vote suppression tactics have included a systematic live-caller operation in which Liberal supporters were peppered with bogus information. ●



as stand-ins at a fake citizenship ceremony broadcast by Sun TV.

11. Obstructing Committees

The Tories issued their committee chairpersons a 200-page handbook on how to obstruct the opposition, by barring witnesses who might have embarrassing information, or shutting down the committees if

"BC government is by no means broke"

On Feb. 27, teachers held a Day of Action across British Columbia to protest the Liberal government's decision to legislate their contract. Iglia Ivanova of the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives spoke to the Surrey teachers rally. We reprint excerpts from her remarks.

The spin on this year's B.C. budget is so-called "prudence" but in reality there is nothing prudent about failing to tackle the global climate crisis, reduce income inequality, adequately fund our schools, invest in community-based supports for seniors, or reduce B.C.'s embarrassingly high poverty rate. For all the talk of preserving core public services, the budget offers only meager increases to the ministries of health, education and social assistance that don't keep pace with rising cost pressures and population growth. K-12 education funding, for example, needs to rise by at least 2% to keep up with inflation and maintain the current levels of service; more if the province wants to address the unmet needs in the system. Instead, we're seeing what's essentially a frozen budget, a zero increase, which effectively amounts to funding cuts on the ground.

Practically speaking, it's not real fiscal constraints that stand in our way but a lack of political will. Our debt levels are very reasonable when considered as a share of our economy, and they are among the lowest in the country. We can afford to borrow a bit more at today's record low interest rates to make capital and social

investments that will make us all better off in the long run.

Our Finance Minister Kevin Falcon claims we have no choice, but he's wrong. Our BC government is by no means broke, and the net zero mandate for public sector bargaining is a political choice, not a reflection of an economic imperative to cut costs.

The choice our government is making is to ask us to tighten our belts and keep our wages low for the benefit of economic growth during the recovery. Once growth returns, the government has often argued, the benefits would trickle down to everyone and wages will rise as the economy grows. Our Premier made that point quite clearly in her radio appearance on the Bill Good show earlier in February.

But the focus on pursuing jobs and growth without regard to what type of jobs we're getting hasn't paid off for BC families.

The 2008 recession and the current slow recovery are taking place in the context of a 30-year-long stagnation in BC family incomes. We don't hear this often, but median earnings for full-time, full-year workers in BC have actually fallen since the late 1970s, once inflation is taken into account. This means that over



March 2: Two thousand students left school on a Friday afternoon to rally in support of teachers at the Vancouver Art Gallery. (Photo: Sam Hammond)

half of BC full-time workers are earning less in real terms than their parents' generation. That's happened during a time when the provincial economy almost doubled in real terms, and real GDP per capita rose by 23%.

But it's clear that the benefits of prosperity have not trickled down to the bottom half of the population. This raises a moral question about fairness and social justice, one that the Occupy movement brought to the forefront of the public debate.

But it also has a direct impact on the economic well-being of our province and our country. High inequality can diminish economic growth if it means that we are not fully using the skills and capabilities of all its citizens or if it undermines social cohesion, leading to increased social tensions. We must find a way to share prosperity more fairly.

This all starts with a solid and well-funded public education system. Accessible, high quality education from the early years all the way to post-secondary is the only way to ensure economic mobility in a modern society. Providing access to high quality education for all children is the greatest equalizer we have.

And this means treating the hard working women and men who teach our children with the respect they deserve and compensating

them fairly.

There is no question that governments everywhere in Canada are facing pressure to balance their budgets. So far, efforts to reduce the deficit have disproportionately focused on cutting public sector jobs, wages and social programs. But we must remember that there are two sides to every budget - the spending side and the income or revenue side. The only proposals coming from the business sector are to cut government spending, but I think it's only fair and reasonable to look at the other side too and consider government income.

Over the past decade, the BC government has reshaped the provincial tax system. As a result, BC now boasts the lowest personal income taxes for individuals earning up to \$120,000 per year and one of the lowest corporate income tax rates in the country. The savings have been small for all but the highest-earning families and have largely gone unnoticed as user fees have risen, including MSP which is going up next year for the fourth time since 2009. And a number of public services have been scaled back or suffered from declines in quality due to underfunding.

But these tax cuts have done considerable damage to our collective capacity to care for one another and protect the environment. If we were

collecting taxes at the same share of the economy now as we were in 2000, we'd have \$2.5 billion more. Every year.

The way the government got people to support tax cuts is by hiding the consequences. Low taxes sounded like a good idea until such time that you or somebody you love needs the services that the tax cuts have starved. Until you see how big your child's class is and how many kids with special needs are in it who don't receive the supports they need to learn well.

Until you have to get rushed into the overcrowded emergency room and treated in the hallway. Until you find out how long the waiting list is for your aging mother to be assessed for supportive housing.

This highlights a need for a public debate on a key question: do we really want BC to be a low tax society with low wages and frayed public services? Because this is where the government's current budget is leading us.

At a time when BC families are stretched by record high debt levels and a weak labour market, the way out of this economic slump lies not in lowering the wages and benefits of teachers and other public sector workers, but in having stronger and more accessible public services, starting with education. ●



Parents and students rally in solidarity with teachers at the Vancouver-Point Grey office of Premier Clark (Photo: K. Cariou)

Student strike shakes Québec

PV Montreal Bureau

The students are starting to shake Québec, with province-wide student strike and rolling mobilizations that have brought thousands into the streets despite blistering cold weather.

Over 123,000 students have now voted to join the strike and the number is increasing almost daily. Since January, student's unions have been holding general assemblies of their membership to take strike votes on a faculty or

programme basis. A growing number of colleges (Cégeps) are shut down while university campuses, usually bustling at this time of year, are more like ghost towns.

Instead, the students are hitting the streets with almost daily mobilizations and bi-weekly demonstrations.

Already last semester, the students had built a brick wall over the door of the Minister of Education's office and staged mobilizations of thirty thousand people in the streets. This year has seen students, labour and community activists occupy the stock exchange, march for several hours through downtown Montreal, eventually shutting-down the Cartier bridge, and converge on the National Assembly in Québec city overcoming blizzard conditions.

The police response to the demonstrations has been heavy-handed, with helicopters circling in the air, storm trooper-style riot

squads on the ground, and repeated indiscriminate use of tear-gas. Behind the police barricades the Charest Liberals are not sitting comfortably. But the government is unlikely to give in, with a likely fall election around the corner.

The Charest Liberal government is officially proposing a \$325 fee annual increase over five years, for a total increase of 75%. Québec currently has the lowest tuition fees for in-province students and most accessible post-secondary education in Canada. Polls show broad support behind the students.

Québec student's also have their own challenges with internal unity, although so far they have maintained a more or less united front, behind the "red square" - a symbol of the student movement in Québec since the 2005 strike of 200,000 students for bursaries.

Unlike English-speaking Canada, a large number of student unions have no affiliation and are independent. While a relatively

loose table of consultation exists between McGill, Laval and several other schools, the strike is being driven by the main student union centrals, particularly the militant and leftist ASSE (Association for Student Union Solidarity).

ASSE has formed a short-term coalition with several other student unions called the CLASSE (Broad Coalition of ASSE), campaigning for reduced fees and free education. Their English-language site, www.stopthehike.ca, shows what is perhaps key to the Quebec student's approach - united, militant and political, with an escalating and democratically decided strategy.

A large number of students are also represented by two other federations of college and university students. The university federation tends to be much less confrontational and more tied-in to a strategy of electing the Parti Québécois. The students have reached an agreement on the strike, and to keep internal the

debate and criticisms about strategy and tactics.

Anglo campuses have been somewhat slower, but are also mobilizing. Concordia's Women studies programme students are reportedly the first to vote "en grève." The Canadian Federation of Students has expressed solidarity while student unions internationally are also responding to a CLASSE call for statements of support. Québec labour and community groups have come on side, including the left-wing Québec solidaire party, which is demanding elimination of fees.

"The students are the front-line of the struggle against the capitalist attack here in Québec," Marianne Breton Fontaine organizer of the LJC-Q told *People's Voice*. "It is vital that this strike grow," she said, adding that labour needs to "more actively embrace the movement and help build a political strike against the government." ●



GLOBAL CLASS STRUGGLE

Egyptian union leader convicted

In a blow against labour freedoms gained during the overthrow of Hosni Mubarak, a prominent Egyptian union leader has been sentenced to six months imprisonment for "insulting a public officer". The charge refers to June 9, 2011, when Kamal Abbas, general coordinator for the Center for Trade Union and Workers Services (CTUWS), interrupted Ismael Fahmy of the Egyptian Trade Union Federation (ETUF) as he was delivering a speech during the 2011 International Labour Organization conference in Geneva.

The ILO session saw a confrontation between the ETUF, which belonged to the former regime, on one side, and both the CTUWS and the Egyptian Independent Trade Union Federation on the other side. Abbas challenged the right of the ETUF to claim that it continued to represent Egyptian workers.

The Egyptian Constitutional Declaration's Article 12 states that "freedom of opinion is guaranteed, and every one has the right to express an opinion and publish it either orally, written, photography or other means of expression within the limits of the law, and self-criticism and constructive criticism to ensure the safety of national construction".

The CTUWS intends to appeal the court ruling, and argues that independent trade union organizations should not be headed by "public officers", but by trade unionists defending workers' interests.

Bosses get "leap day" windfall

Many Irish workers went unpaid on Feb. 29, providing a huge windfall for employers. Employees who receive an annual wage had to work the extra day because there are 252 working days in a leap year, as opposed to the 251 days in a regular year. The extra labour was valued at about 184 million euros to employers.

A spokesperson for the Irish Congress of Trade Unions, Macdara Doyle, confirmed that the situation, highlighted four years ago, has not changed.

"The situation has not changed for salaried workers, but with lack of demand crippling the economy, perhaps an end-of-month contribution from employers might help boost spend in the domestic economy."

But the chief economist with the pro-business group Friends First, Jim Power, said that due to the harsh economic climate, workers should be happy to work the extra day for free.

"Employers need everything they can get at this juncture, given the tough economic climate. Workers should regard this as a small sacrifice to make in order to help keep businesses trading."

Four years ago, when it emerged that people would not be paid for their extra day's work, it sparked a campaign in Britain which saw more than 4,000 people from Ireland and

Britain vowing to stay home and take a "duvet day".

Unions hit "straight-jacket" treaty

Working people across Europe held a Day of Action on Feb. 29 in opposition to the European Council's adoption of a budget discipline treaty. The decentralised mobilisations occurred in scores of cities and worksites with a common theme: "Enough is



enough! There are alternatives to austerity. Employment and social justice are the number one priorities."

The Day of Action took the form of demonstrations, work stoppages and information postings inside workplaces and government institutions stating that the European summit's Treaty on Stability, Co-ordination and Governance is a straightjacket that will plunge the Eurozone into free-fall recession.

Brussels was site of the European Council's March 1-2 summit, where the signers slashed wages and social protections, and put new restrictions on collective bargaining. Mass rallies took place outside at the European Council Building, and at the Belgian National Bank.

Other protests included mass demonstrations in cities such as Bucharest, Rome and Budapest. Greek trade unions held a three-hour work stoppage. The actions were the first European-wide mobilisation during the economic crisis which is now in its fifth year.

Indian unions issue demands

Unionists across India walked out on strike Feb. 28 to give voice to a number of key demands. The strike was called by 11 central trade union organisations and supported by some 5000 smaller unions. Over a million workers participated in the action, aimed to highlight a 10-point charter of demands, including: an end to labour rights violations, the same rights and protections for temporary and contract workers as for permanent workers, fewer price rises in essential commodities, and the creation of a national social security fund.

While banking and insurance sector workers took the lead, strike action by road transport and port employees was felt across the country. All the major dockers' unions brought operations to a standstill at most of the main ports.

Mahendra Sharma, Interna-

tional Transport Federation Asia Pacific regional secretary, commented: "This comes after many years when almost all the key national trade unions joined together to oppose the government's neo-liberal policies. They are stating that economic and social needs and the rights of the working class should not be ignored in India's growth story."

Unionists confined by managers

On the evening of Feb. 12, the President and General Secretary of the Coats Bangladesh Ltd. Employees Union went to the company's office in Dhaka, to meet with management about resolving an industrial dispute.

Instead, company officials forcibly detained the union leaders overnight and confiscated their mobile phones. The pair were only released when colleagues alerted the local media of their disappearance.

Previously, having no success in bargaining, the workers had voted 98.12 per cent in favour of strike action. The management somehow obtained a court order declaring the strike illegal.

The workers at Coats Ltd. are paid poverty wages of only BDT1,625 (US\$18.90). Trade unions in Bangladesh consider BDT7,000 to be the minimum for a living wage. The union demands also included increases in housing and other allowances, all of which were refused by the management. Despite trade union compromises, the employer remained intransigent and refused to bargain in good faith.

Slipper factory strike continues

As of early March, about 2,000 Burmese workers in a town on the outskirts of Rangoon remained on strike at the Chinese-owned Tai Yi slipper factory.

"This could be the biggest labour strike since oil workers went on strike and marched in protest against the Burma Oil Company and British colonial rule in 1938," Phoe Phyu, a lawyer who represents the workers. "More than 90 percent of the workers joined the strike."

The walkout started on Feb. 6, when the company refused to pay five days of wages that it had deducted for a holiday to mark the Chinese New Year, which is not officially recognized in Burma.

An industrial worker in Burma earns about \$50 to \$60 per month. All workers have to work overtime, and draw on hard-to-get performance bonuses to make around 60,000 to 70,000 kyat (\$75 to \$87.50) a month.

The Tai Yi workers are now demanding a 100 percent hike in hourly wages from 75 kyat (less than 10 cents) to 150 kyat (\$0.18) and an increase in their monthly bonuses from 6,000 kyat (\$7.50) to 8,000 kyat (\$10). During negotiations, the company has only agreed to raise the hourly wages by 25 kyat, or three cents. The workers turned down the company's offer.

Meanwhile, the company is trying to get the workers to knuckle under through threats, including reducing the supply of water to the dormitory where they live.

Although there have been some protests in Burma's industrial towns over the past few years, the current strike is the largest. A law introduced last year legalizes unions but stipulates that they must have the approval of the official Labour Union Federation to stage a strike. Since the government has not allowed any unions to register under the new law, workers are technically not entitled to stage a strike.

So far the government has avoided using force against the workers, which would contradict the rhetoric of reform that it has been using to buff up its image at home and abroad. The workers are also receiving growing support from members of the general public, who have been providing them with water and food.

Kumtor workers win strike

On February 17 striking Kumtor gold mine workers in Kyrgyzstan ended a ten-day work stoppage. According to an agreement, signed by Kumtor Operating Company and the strikers' committee, wages rise by 4.5 per cent retroactive to January 1, 2012, and the miners will also be paid a special bonus. These gains mean that the rising fees paid by the workers to the government insurance fund are completely compensated. The employer also agreed to pay compensation to the family of Asanbek Orozaliev, who died after a workplace accident.

Mining and Metallurgy Workers' Union president Eldar Tadzhibaev noted that letters of solidarity from various unions

across the CIS (Commonwealth of Independent States of the former USSR) had a crucial role in the success of the strike.

"The success would be impossible without the workers' perseverance and unity. They risked their jobs and lost income by staying on strike all these days, defending their legitimate rights and interests," stated Tadzhibaev.

Bahrain workers challenge firings

In Bahrain, the "Arab spring" protests did not lead to democratic reforms or to the end of an autocratic regime. An independent commission of inquiry recently confirmed human rights abuses committed by the Security Forces during the unrest. Almost thirty-five deaths occurred between February and April 2011, including five cases of torture attributed to the Minister of Interior.

The Bahrain trade unions supported the demand for reforms. Salman Jaffar Al Mahfoodh, General Secretary of the General Federation of Bahraini Trade Unions, said in a recent interview that "we wanted a change in the elections, in order to allow a fair representative system. In general, we were in favour of an economic reform, starting from a minimum wage and the ratification of the core conventions of the ILO. Then we decided to call for a general strike in March... The response to the strike was huge: over 60 percent of workers participated. Even the Independent Commission of Inquiry confirmed that our protest was legitimate, since the strike was a matter of freedom of expression."

The Bahraini unions are demanding the reinstatement of over 3,000 workers fired during the 2011 struggle.

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

Send me information on the Communist Party of Canada



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

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387 Selkirk Ave., Winnipeg, MB, R2W 2M3
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The end game looms nearer in Afghanistan

PV Vancouver Bureau

For years, Canadians have been told that “the Taliban are on the back foot” and that victory is near in Afghanistan. Most of us never believed it. Opinion surveys have consistently shown that the majority of Canadians want our troops brought home from this unwinnable war.

The latest news from Kabul confirms that the US-led occupation forces have utterly lost the battle for popular support. Contingents of NATO troops are being pulled out ahead of schedule, with the notable exception of Canada.

The spark for this development was lit when U.S. troops on clean-up duty tossed Korans into a burning pit at Bagram Air Base. Afghan workers rescued some singed pages, and before long, massive protests and riots shook the country. A swift round of apologies and promises by U.S. officials has done nothing to change the mood of an increasingly resentful Afghan public.

A decade after taking on the “colonial burden”, the U.S. and its allies are paying the political price for abuses, torture and killings committed in the name of “freedom”. Before long, the remaining occupation troops may be inside their giant fortified bases, chowing down on expensive western-style fast food. As in Iraq, they may be replaced by western “civilians”, but the signs of imperialist retreat are everywhere.

About 300 U.S. and other NATO advisors were withdrawn from Afghan ministries around Kabul in late February, as fears mounted for their safety. At the same time, the German military decided to speed up plans to abandon a 50-soldier outpost in the north of the country.

The French are also eager to get out since four of their troops were killed (and 16 wounded) by an Afghan army soldier, just weeks after three others were shot by another Afghan in uniform. Both the French and the Germans have also withdrawn civilian advisors from Afghan government institutions.

As Tom Engelhardt and Nick Turse wrote in the *Tom Dispatch* blog on Feb. 28, “Eleven years in,

if your forces are still burning Korans in a deeply religious Muslim country, it’s way too late and you should go.” Instead, General John R. Allen, the war commander in Afghanistan, has directed that all U.S. military personnel undergo ten days of sensitivity training in the proper handling of religious materials.

Sensitivity, as Engelhardt and Turse point out, has not been an American strong suit. They point to revelations about the 12-soldier “kill team” that murdered Afghan civilians “for sport,” and then posed for photos with the corpses. Four U.S. Marines videotaped themselves urinating on the bodies of dead Afghans. A U.S. sniper unit proudly sported a Nazi SS banner in another incident, and a U.S. combat outpost was named “Aryan.” British soldiers were filmed abusing children. Eight shepherd boys, aged six to 18, were recently slaughtered in a NATO air strike in Kapisa Province in northern Afghanistan. Afghans have endured years of night raids by special operations forces that break into their homes, violating cultural boundaries and often killing civilians.

These actions have been protested by President Hamid Karzai, who has little power over his own country. And now, more than 30 protesters have been killed in demonstrations against the burning of the Korans.

The *New York Times* now reports that Afghanistan is “a religious country fed up with foreigners”. Laura King of the *Los Angeles Times* writes about the “visceral distaste for Western behaviour and values” among significant numbers of Afghans.

Engelhardt and Turse provide details of the blowback against the NATO forces. In a heavily guarded room of the Afghan Interior Ministry in Kabul, the bodies of a U.S. lieutenant colonel and major were recently found, each executed with a shot in the back of the head while at work.

Two other U.S. troops died outside a small American base in Nangarhar Province in the midst of a demonstration in which two protesters were also killed. An Afghan soldier gunned the Americans down and then escaped

into the crowd.

In fact, Afghans in police and army uniforms have repeatedly attacked their “allies”. At least 36 U.S. and NATO troops have been killed this way in the past year, far beyond the level of “isolated incidents.” This includes the April 2011 case in which an Afghan air force colonel murdered nine U.S. trainers in a heavily guarded area

of Kabul International Airport. His funeral was attended by 1,500 mourners.

The time for “apologies” by the U.S. occupation forces has long passed. Many Afghans are demanding local trials and the death penalty for the Koran burners.

Engelhardt and Turse conclude, “despite its massive firepower and

staggering base structure in Afghanistan, actual power is visibly slipping away from the United States. American officials are already talking about not panicking (which indicates that panic is indeed in the air). And in an election year, with the Obama administration’s options desperately limited and what goals it had fast disappearing, it can only brace itself and hope to limp through until November 2012.

“The end game in Afghanistan has, it seems, come into view, and after all these fruitless, bloody years, it couldn’t be sadder. Saddest of all, so much of the blood spilled has been for purposes, if they ever made any sense, that have long since disappeared into the fog of history.”

For Canadians, this terrible tragedy includes 158 deaths among our own troops. When Afghanistan inevitably bids goodbye to NATO, our politicians will be asked: what was it all for? And there is no good answer. ●



Angry protests have been held across Afghanistan.

70 years of struggle for democracy, independence, social justice and peace!

The Tudeh Party of Iran, that country’s Marxist-Leninist political party, marked the 70th anniversary of its founding in October 1941. We reprint here excerpts of the speech by a Tudeh Party representative at a recent celebration of this important occasion held in Toronto.

Dear comrades and friends of Tudeh Party of Iran and its humanitarian ideals. Thank you all for coming out tonight to celebrate the 70th anniversary of TPI, 70 years of tireless struggle for democracy, independence, social justice and peace.

We are honoured tonight to have our comrades from CP of Canada, Chile, and Iraq to celebrate with us.

The founding of the Tudeh Party of Iran in October of 1941 came in response to the urgent political, social and economic needs of Iranian society and working people, and to continue as an organized political force, the path of freedom fighters of the early 1900s during the Constitution Revolution of Iran, and a few years later when the Communist Party of Iran was working and was eventually banned in 1931 by the 1st Pahlavi.

Responding to an objective need of society, it was only natural that the Tudeh Party of Iran (TPI) would be widely welcomed by the working people. In that time, Iran was an under-developed country in which capitalism was growing, and the working class was being formed. Each was in the course of establishing its own institutions.

With the establishment of TPI, labour unions, peasant organizations, women, youth and student organizations, and progressive journalist and peace organizations (against the growing global threat of fascism) were formed. Over just a few years, a great leap forward was experienced in the fields of philosophy, literature, science and culture, and

political and social activism - the products of which are seen in present day Iran. In the streets, in the parliament and over the media, TPI campaigned decisively and tirelessly to raise the awareness of the people of their democratic rights and also to build alliances with other progressive and national political and social groups to win common causes.

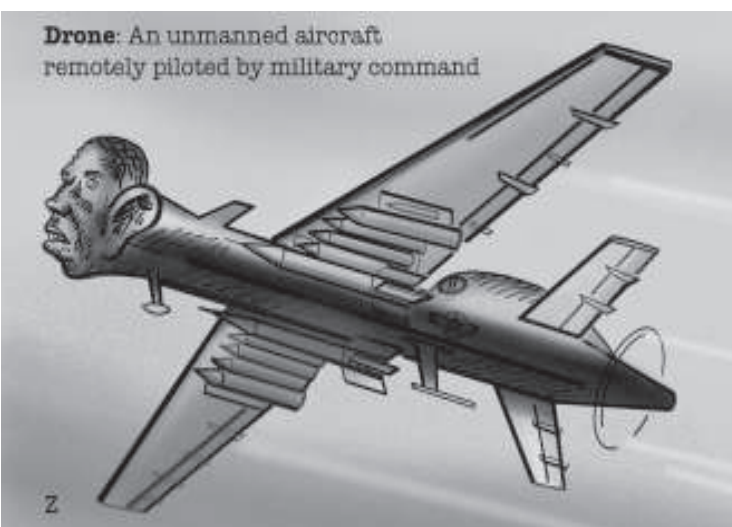
Since then, our party has continued its struggle along the same lines and based on Marxism-Leninism for 70 years, as part of the progressive movement in Iran.

Our party has had its ups and downs, as any living and breathing organization would. We learn from our mistakes while being very proud of our achievements, before and after 1979 revolution.

Our achievements, to name a few, were the enacting of the first Labour Law of Iran (1946), nationalization of the oil industry (1951), nationalizing foreign trade, advancing agrarian reforms and 3-tier state-coop-private economy (1979), etc.

see TUDEH, page 10

Drone war resumes in Pakistan



After a respite following the November 2011 killing of 24 Pakistani soldiers near the Afghan border, the U.S. has resumed its “drone war” in the northwest tribal region. President Obama calls the attacks a “targeted, focused effort at people who are on a list of active terrorists”. But the Bureau of Investigative Journalism, based in London, cites credible reports that between 282 and 535 civilians, including more than 60 children, have been killed in drone attacks since Obama took office.

Important victory for Liliyany Obando

The initial reports are sketchy, but it appears that Colombian political prisoner Liliyany Obando has won an important legal victory.

In a Feb. 29 news release, the International Network of Solidarity with Political Prisoners and other solidarity groups announced that the Superior Court Judicial District of Bogota-Criminal Chamber had ordered Liliyany’s immediate release. The decision may reflect the possibility of a legitimate peace process in the country, which for decades has been racked by a civil war provoked by the Colombian ruling classes.

A powerful advocate of human and labour rights, Liliyany Obando has been held in pre-trial detention since August 8, 2008, a total of three years and seven months of arbitrary imprisonment without trial on charges of “rebellion.”

Liliyany was arrested while serving as the Human Rights Coordinator for Fensuagro, Colombia’s largest organization of peasant farmers and farm workers unions and associations. She had been preparing a report about the more than 1,500 Fensuagro members killed by Colombian military and paramilitary troops over its first 30 years of existence.

The case was stretched for years without resolution. Even when the Colombian Supreme Court ruled that the evidence against her was inadmissible, she continued to be jailed despite international protests. Her release was announced concurrent with the “Colombia Behind Bars” conference in support of 8,000 political prisoners.

However, the court process has not been suspended and Liliyany still could be sent back to jail. While the so-called “farc-politica” frame-up against human rights activists has now completely collapsed, the Colombian state may find another pretext to detain Liliyany again, or she could become a target of murderous right-wing paramilitaries.

Solidarity groups are therefore demanding that the Colombian state guarantee Liliyany’s safety and personal integrity, and that of her family.

Moments after receiving the news, Liliyany spoke from the Buen Pastor women’s prison to a representative of the International Network for the Political Prisoners.

“I have mixed emotions,” Liliyany said. “I want to leave, but I don’t want to leave the other political prisoners behind. We have to keep working until all the political prisoners are free.” ●

What can one do against so much hatred?

My Brother for life,

I never thought I would have to write this letter. We share the same lack of enthusiasm for letter writing, a fact clearly demonstrated during our respective internationalist missions and - more conclusively - in the unique experience of the last 20 years. In other words, only conditions as extraordinary as the present ones induce me to write.

Under normal conditions, these things should be said face to face, and a lot of them wouldn't even need to be said at all. You have enough on your plate with this pitched battle against a disease that is trying to devour you, without on top of that having to face a human ailment that is much more lethal: hatred.

The hatred that stops me from reciprocating all the efforts, with that well-deserved hug we Five would like to give you.

The hatred that does not let me laugh with you at the each of the happenings that spring from your immense courage.

The hatred that obliges me to guess, by the sound of your breathing on the telephone, the fluctuating fortunes of the battle you are waging.

The hatred that causes me the anguish of not being able to share in the caring for all those who love you; and which stops me from

being there to support Sary and the boys.

The hatred that deprives me of

The U.S. National Committee To Free The Cuban Five has published this letter from Rene Gonzalez, to his brother Roberto Gonzalez Schwerert. Roberto, a member of the legal team of the Cuban Five, is in hospital, gravely ill with cancer.

seeing our nephews and nieces grow up; they have become men and women in the last few years. How proud you must be of your children!

The hatred that prevents me from simply embracing my brother. That obliges me to follow from an absurd and distant confinement a process of which I should be part, like anyone else who has served a prison sentence, in itself quite long enough and imposed precisely out of hatred; but for him, still insufficient.

What can one do against so much hatred? What we have always done, I suppose: love life and fight for it, both for our own and for that of others. Confront every obstacle with a smile on our lips, an apt witticism, and with that optimism instilled in us from childhood. Press on, tough it out, never give in, always together shoulder to shoulder, however hard they try to isolate me from family and friends,

to punish all of us in that way.

Today I've been remembering those great days from your time as a sportsman. You in the pool and us up in the stands, shouting your name as you swam. Our voices reached you intermittently, when you raised your head to breathe. You told us how sometimes you heard your whole name, other times just the beginning or the end. So we trained ourselves to wait 'till

your head was out of the water and then all shout your name in unison. You couldn't see us, but the din we made told you we were with you, even if we couldn't intervene directly in the fierce struggle taking place in the swimming pool.

History is now repeating itself. While you are committing all your efforts to this struggle, I am here cheering you on, now together with the family that you had not

then yet built. Although you can't see me, you know I'm there, together with yours, who are also mine. You know that this brother, from his strange exile, from the sorrow of forced separation, under the most absurd conditions of supervised freedom, based on the dignity of his status as a Cuban patriot (like you) and on the

affection nurtured by the ties of kinship and shared experience that unite us, is and always will be with you. Every time you raise your head, you'll be able to hear me shouting, together with my nephews and nieces.

Breathe, brother, breathe!!

Your brother who loves you,
René •



Rene and Roberto Gonzalez in their youth

Tudeh Party honours 70 years of struggle...

continued from page 9

Despite the short periods of time in our party's history when it has been able to operate openly - less than ten years in total - our party has had great successes, while it has been the target of both the reactionary regimes of Shah and the present theocratic regime, and imperialism which sees our party and communists in general as a threat to their anti-popular anti-national interests.

Our party has been "banned" and "disbanded" by both regimes, its campaigns have been smeared, been accused of treachery and a pawn of the Soviets! Our members and supporters have been persecuted, exiled, jailed, tortured, murdered and executed. The most dreadful case was the raids of the early 1980's and mass murder of hundreds of cadres, members and supporters, including tens of party leaders - many of whom were prominent scientists and social and political figures - in a criminal act in the summer of 1988, known commonly as the "National Catastrophe".

But thanks to the heroic efforts of its faithful activists, and due to its deep roots in the working class and working people, our party survived and rose again, like a phoenix, to continue the struggle; a fight that will be fought as long as

injustice exists.

We salute, respect and remember those who sacrificed their lives and livelihood to stay faithful to the ideals of the party and the working people. Neither the reactionary and despotic regimes, nor imperialism have any intention to ensure a decent and peaceful life for the working people and masses, as we witness today when the Iranian people are seriously threatened in a military face-off and warmongering, by the imperial powers from outside, and by the reactionary, anti-people, theocratic regime of Iran.

Today, the people of Iran are suffering from unprecedented poverty, oppression, and social and economic injustice. The regime has closed all the doors to a democratic society. We believe the first step would be to dispose of the Supreme Leadership of one person and its control system beyond and above the ordinary structure of a civil society, and establish a normal democratic civic society in which people are able to participate freely.

Our party strongly believes in

internationalism, and we are proud to be a member of the global family of progressive and communist parties. We all have our own independent analyses, we struggle under various circumstances, and may even have our differences in opinion and analysis, but our family fights for the same humanitarian ideals and we rely on each other's support and solidarity to win our domestic and international battles. We help each other out; our comrades' working proudly among the ranks of the CP of Canada is a great example of this commitment. We all have a tough road ahead of us, and a tough battle to fight. But it is worth the effort and we are proud of it, because it is for a better life for the working people.

Once again, we salute our fallen comrades, and pledge to continue their historic battle against dictatorship and imperialism, for democracy, independence and social justice; for socialism.

Long Live Tudeh Party of Iran, the Party of the working class and working people of Iran! Long Live International Solidarity! Socialism is the Future! •

Spanish students attacked by riot cops

Spanish student leaders accused Barcelona police of brutality for charging into a demonstration outside the city's stock market on the evening of Feb. 29.

Mass protests against education cuts took place in Madrid and Valencia, but only in Barcelona did they turn violent with TV footage showing protesters hurling rocks and setting fire to bins. But the footage was misleading as police had launched an attack on demonstrators with rubber bullets and truncheons.

Anger is mounting over education cuts, with some schools reportedly so poor that they have had to borrow money from pupils' parents. Money has dried up as education and health are funded by regional authorities, which were banned last month from running budget deficits.

The issue is especially sensitive as the young have suffered most from government cuts. Unemployment in Spain is currently at 23.3 per cent, the highest in the EU, but is nearing 50 per cent for 16-24-year-olds.

But Foreign Minister Jose Manuel Garcia-Margallo warned that Brussels would not tolerate any relaxation in the austerity agenda. The government has hinted that it will plead for a deficit target of 5.3 to 5.5 per cent in the next budget - but the EU Commission has said it must slash it to 4.4 per cent.

Garcia-Margallo said the EU was unlikely to change its "recommendation" by "more than a few decimal points."

EU officials said Spain's "2012 budget will have to comply with the recommendations" and the issue would not be up for discussion at an upcoming meeting of the European Council.

EU statistics office Eurostat revealed on March 1 that unemployment in the eurozone has hit its highest level since the single currency was adopted. The unemployment rate hit 10.7 per cent in January, with Spain and Greece worst-affected.

(Morning Star) •



The Fifth of the Month to Free the Five

Join in the worldwide action to Free the Cuban Five on the 5th day of each month! Write to President Obama and demand that he Free the Cuban Five:

E-mail: president@whitehouse.gov

On the web: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/contact>

Phone 1-202-456-1111

Fax 1-202-456-2461

Telegram: President Barack Obama, The White House, 1600 Pennsylvania Ave. NW, Washington, DC 2500, USA

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

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WFTU opens regional office in Africa

The World Federation of Trade Unions calls its first Africa Regional Office "a great landmark in the development of the international struggle for the labour rights and interests of the working class against capitalist exploitation and imperialism." The office was opened in Johannesburg, South Africa on Feb. 11.

With 80 million members in 120 countries, the WFTU has its headquarters in Athens. A news release from the WFTU reports:

"With the substantial and irreplaceable support by the WFTU affiliates in South Africa, the militant trade unions of National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA), the National Education, Health and Allied Workers Union (NEHAWU), the Police and Prison Civil Rights Union (POPCRU) and the Chemical, Energy, Paper, Printing, Wood and Allied Workers Union (CEPPWAWU), the WFTU Africa Regional Office will play its protagonist role in the enhancement of the class-oriented struggles in the African Region for the benefit of the working class

and the peoples of Africa.

"On the one hand, this new step proves the progress of the work of WFTU in South Africa. On the other hand, it is a signal of the starting point for the fulfilment of an important action plan of the WFTU, not just for South Africa but also for the whole continent in general according to the decisions of the 16th World Trade Union Congress of the WFTU (April 2011)..."

"Based on the three basic principles of the WFTU - democracy, collectivity and the class struggle - the Regional Office in close collaboration with the Central Offices of the WFTU, the new Centre will promote trade union education, encourage the affiliation of new members of the WFTU and the TUIs. At the same time, it will collaborate and mobilise the member-organisations and the friends of WFTU in the workplaces, where they work and live.

"It will unite the workers in the private and public sectors. It will unite the workers independently of their colour, religion and political beliefs. It will unite all the wage-

earners according to the class they belong to.

"The first tasks of the WFTU Regional Office in South Africa are:

- * to strengthen the relations of the class-oriented and militant trade union organisations of South Africa with the WFTU. Our common history is long and militant and we have ahead of us the potential for greater class struggles in South Africa and internationally;
- * to enhance and motivate international solidarity with the struggle of the working class and the people of Swaziland for the end of the brutal and undemocratic regime and against the activity of the monopolies who are looting, enslaving and imprisoning our brothers and sisters in Swaziland.
- * to confront the problems of the working people of the African region directly and effectively with specific action; to discuss, to cooperate and to express in a powerful way the solidarity in the working places, the strikes, the demonstrations and other forms of action."

(www.wftucentral.org) •

What's Left

Victoria, BC

31st Annual Walk for Peace, Earth, and Justice, Sat., April 21, gather at the Legislature 11:30 am, walk at 12 noon to Centennial Square for speeches, entertainment, info tables. Call 250-888-2588.

Vancouver, BC

No War on Iran, Sat., March 17, 12 Noon, Art Gallery (Robson side), organized by StopWar, Vancouver's broad-based peace coalition, <http://stopwar.ca>, email stopwar@resist.ca.

Community March Against Racism, Sunday, March 18, gather 2 pm at Clark Park (14th & Commercial), march to Grandview Park (1200 block Commercial) for speakers.

Left Film Night, "Phil Ochs: There But For Fortune", documentary on the radical U.S. folksinger, Sun., March 25, Centre for Socialist Education, 706 Clark Dr. Come at 6 pm for the annual Pasta Dinner (\$12), proceeds to People's Voice Fund Drive, followed by film 7 pm. Call 604-255-2041 for information.

COPE Winter Gala, tribute to outgoing COPE electeds, Sat., March 31, 7 pm, Museum of Vancouver (1100 Chestnut). Tickets at 604-255-0400, or www.cope.bc.ca.

Winnipeg, MB

Marxism course, information or to register, contact the Communist Party, tel. 586-7824 or send email to cpcmb@changetheworldmb.ca.

Toronto, ON

Dinner and Evening in praise of Dave Rigby, Sat., March 17, doors open 6 pm. Ausp: Central Committee, CPC. For tickets and info, call 416-469-2446.

Ontario Day of Action: Demand Prosperity, Not Austerity, Sat., April 21, 3-5 pm, Queen's Park, organized by Ontario Federation of Labour and allies. For info call OFL, 416-571-3087

Montreal, QC

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

Frank Kennedy, 1928-2012

One of the most outstanding leaders of the west coast labour movement, Frank Kennedy, passed away on Feb. 19 at the age of 83. Born in Oak Ridges, Ontario in 1928, Frank worked as a teenager in the Toronto area, and then across the prairies. He began working in British Columbia in 1946 as a seaman aboard coastal tankers, freighters and tugs. He started longshoring in 1951, and soon became a leading member of the International Longshore Workers Union in Vancouver. Among other positions, he served as secretary-treasurer of the ILWU Canadian area, a member of the BC Federation of Labour executive, and president of the Vancouver and District Labour Council.

Frank was also a deeply passionate activist in his community. As chair of the

VDLC's Metropolitan Advisory Committee, he played a crucial role in the formation of the Committee of Progressive Electors in 1968. He became the first president of COPE, which united the labour movement, community organizations, Communists, New Democrats and other progressives in the struggle for civic reforms. When the Cold War heated up in the early 1980s, he was the founding chair and president of End the Arms Race, a coalition which brought together hundreds of labour, faith, political and community groups and drew over 100,000 people to its largest annual marches. In later years, he was a director of the B.C. FORUM, representing the ILWU's retired members, and remained an active supporter of COPE, the anti-war movement, and other progressive struggles.

To the end of his life, Frank

Kennedy held true to his ideals of social justice, labour rights, human equality, and world peace. He played a huge role in mobilizing broad sections of people around these ideals, building unity around the critical issues of the times rather than dividing over other differences.

Frank's memorial, held at the Maritime Labour Centre on March 4th, saw hundreds of friends and activists share their memories of this remarkable leader of the struggle for a better world. The Communist Party of Canada's Central Executive Committee and BC Provincial Committee, and the Editorial Board of People's Voice, extend their deepest condolences to Frank's family, and we pledge to carry forward his legacy of working class commitment to a world of peace and socialism.

IWD march in Toronto



Thousands took part in the annual International Women's Day event in Toronto on March 3. Many carried banners against the threat of war, and opposing the attack on jobs and public services, which hits women disproportionately harder. (PV photo: Ed Bil)

Appeal to Europe's unemployed...

continued from page 12

unemployed. Comprehensive medical pharmaceutical health-care and social security protection. Freezing of their loans and mortgages.

Unemployment is not a natural phenomenon. It is bred by the capitalist system which is characterized by the anarchy in production, by exploitation.

Only a socialist economy, that is to say a centrally planned economy that will be based on workers' power and the socialized means of production can guarantee the right to work for all. This is what happened in the Soviet Union and the other socialist countries and it is a historical achievement and one of the many accomplishments of the socialist countries.

Our parties call you to struggle every day, to struggle for the abolition of exploitation, for a society without unemployment, for socialism which can satisfy the needs of the people.

Communist Party of Greece, Workers Party of Ireland, Communist Party of Ireland, Socialist Party of Latvia, Socialist People's Front of Lithuania, Communist Party of the Peoples of Spain •

Join an anti-war rally to say

No War on Iran

IRAN

same lies, same plan

Saturday, March 17, 12 noon
Vancouver Art Gallery
Robson & Hornby

Organized by the StopWar Coalition
<http://stopwar.ca>
stopwar@resist.ca

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www.solidnet.org

People's Voice deadlines

April 1-15 issue: Thursday, March 22

April 16-31 issue: Thursday, April 5

Send submissions to PV Editorial Office,
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Saturday, March 17

Doors open 6 pm

**Dinner and Evening
In Praise of Dave Rigby**

Ausp: Central Committee, CPC
For tickets and info, call 416-469-2446

New "austerity treaty" signed in Brussels

With files from the Morning Star (UK)

The leaders of 25 of the 27 European Union member states signed a new EU treaty in Brussels on March 2 that aims to bolster the power of unelected EU authorities to dictate economic policy across the bloc.

Only the governments of the Czech Republic and Britain decided not to sign the Stability, Coordination and Governance in the Economic and Monetary Union Treaty, which bars member states from running deficits of more than 0.5 per cent of annual output under pain of regressive "structural reforms."

German Chancellor Angela Merkel, a key player in the drafting of the pact, said the member states who signed sent "a strong signal that we are focusing on the future of a politically united Europe."

European Commission president Jose Manuel Barroso added: "From monetary union, we are now progressing towards a true economic union."

But the treaty has to be ratified by the national governments of at least 12 of the 17 eurozone states, at a time when many citizens have become actively hostile to both the EU and the euro.

Two years of regressive austerity foisted on poorer EU states countries by the European Commission and the European Central Bank have served to boost unemployment and erode living standards, triggering an unprecedented outpouring of popular trade union-led opposition.

In a bid to blackmail citizens and legislators, Brussels has decided that financial aid from the eurozone's new bailout fund, the European Stability Mechanism, will be limited to states that have enacted it.

European Council President Herman Van Rompuy was in bullish mood, telling the heads of EU member states: "You now all have to convince your parliaments and voters that this treaty is an important step to bring the euro durably back into safe waters."

"I am most confident you will succeed," he went on. "You are all gifted politicians, otherwise you

would not be here."

But many eurozone politicians fear that the tighter spending rules in the treaty will limit their room to manoeuvre.

Critics warn that, if ratified, governments of eurozone states would be forced to cap public spending, privatise state property, increase indirect taxes, reduce wages, and deregulate the domestic market.

Irish referendum

Irish citizens will have a say on whether their government should sign the austerity treaty, Taoiseach Enda Kenny announced on Feb. 28, hours after Attorney-General Maire Whelan advised him that the Irish constitution requires a referendum. A date has yet to be announced for the vote.

Sinn Fein, which has been part of successful campaigns for No votes against the Nice and Lisbon treaties, argues that the new rules are designed to feather big bankers' sumptuous nests at the expense of the general public.

Speaking in the Dail, party president Gerry Adams predicted that far from helping to regenerate the economy "it will condemn the people here, particularly those people in lower and mid-income brackets, to this government's terrible policy of austerity."

Mr Adams warned that the treaty would hand "what limited fiscal power remains in this parliament to unelected and undemocratic officials in Brussels."

"It's little wonder that Fianna Fail supports this. Fianna Fail, Labour and Fine Gael formed the consensus for cuts and we are going to see that replay again."

Workers Party of Ireland president Michael Finnegan has welcomed the referendum decision.

"The government" said Finnegan "have been dragged kicking and screaming to this announcement. It is clear that at the highest levels of government in Ireland and the EU there was serious collusion to draft a treaty that could be foisted on the people without a referendum. It is a good day for democracy that those underhand tactics have been rejected by the Attorney General".

Finnegan continued: "This treaty represents the most seismic shift in our relations within the EU since the Single European Act of 1987. It introduces a serious of draconian economic rules, with

equally draconian punishments for any breach of those rules. It will tie the hands not only of this government but of all future governments into the foreseeable future as regards economic policy.

And it buries once and for all the hope of a Social Europe".

"We reject," said Finnegan "the populist posturing of Fianna Fail in demanding and welcoming a referendum on this treaty. Twice in the last decade they have rejected the decision of the Irish people on both the Nice and Lisbon treaties. Their utterings of this issues have no credibility".

Pdraig Mannion, Workers Party spokesperson on the EU added: "Once again the people of Ireland are the only people offered a chance to vote on this vital treaty. As a party we will oppose this treaty and I am confident that the people will reject it decisively. The imposition in the treaty of permanent Thatcherism into the economy; the limitations on social investment; the subservient position of our Oireachtas (Parliament) in our own economic policy; and the prioritisation of the needs of the banking sector are all anathema to the Irish people. The government themselves know that the people are opposed to this treaty and that is why the government were so determined to avoid a referendum. We look forward to the campaign ahead with confidence." •



An appeal to the millions of unemployed in Europe

Joint Statement of the Communist and Workers' Parties of the countries with highest unemployment in the EU

Workers, Unemployed, the Communist and Workers Parties of the countries of Europe which have been most affected by unemployment Spain, Greece, Lithuania, Latvia and Ireland call on you to struggle and organize.

We address the 24 million "officially" unemployed people in the European Union, particularly the long term unemployed, the unemployed young people and women who are most badly affected. We address all those who are not recorded in the official

statistics, but experience the same nightmare of unemployment.

We address the semi-employed, the agency workers, the workers without social security, those who work in a state of employment by rotation with flexible shifts, with individual contracts, with piece-work contracts, who experience employer intimidation, who face the danger of dismissal and unemployment.

We address those who are forced into unpaid labour under the pretence of opportunities to return to work; those who are deprived of their entitlements to redundancy payments by employers' pleading "inability to pay"; workers who are on strike and engaged in occupations and sit-ins to protect their jobs and rights.

We also address the farmers who are being wiped out, the small professional and self-employed who have been led to closure by the assault of the monopolies, the anti-people political line of austerity which attacks the working class-popular families.

All of you, as well as every worker today, better understands that this labour "jungle" is spreading and is becoming a general law which, slowly or quickly, big capital, its governments, and the EU seek to impose in every workplace. There is no time to lose.

In the countries where our parties operate, Spain, Greece, Lithuania, Latvia and Ireland, unemployment has reached very dangerous levels. The bourgeois class in each country and the predatory alliance of the EU as a whole, have declared war on the working class and the poor popular strata. The capitalist economic crisis brings new measures which

smash whatever the anti-people offensive in the previous period had left upright, especially after the Maastricht Treaty.

In this harsh reality, a handful of plutocrats have made fabulous profits. And yet they demand further measures. Their crisis is not a debt crisis, it is a capitalist crisis which came about due to the over-accumulation of capital.

In order to overcome the crisis in favour of capital, the industrialists, the bankers and the other sections of the plutocracy along with their political representatives impose hard measures in order to further reduce the price of labour power and force more people into unemployment.

In this situation the people's resistance to these harsh measures has been hindered by those elements in the trade union and labour movement who, having long ago accepted the logic and the ideology of capitalism, now plead that there is no alternative but to succumb to the offensive of capital.

The way forward is to win the majority of workers and their families for class based popular struggles on the strategy which promotes their interests. The Communist and Workers parties must be at the heart of this process.

Struggle together with the class-oriented forces, together with the Communist and Workers parties. Organize in your unions and workplaces. Contribute to the development of activity. In this direction the strength of the working class can be reinforced.

Demand immediate measures for the protection of the unemployed: decent unemployment benefit for all the

see APPEAL, p. 11

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