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# people's VOICE

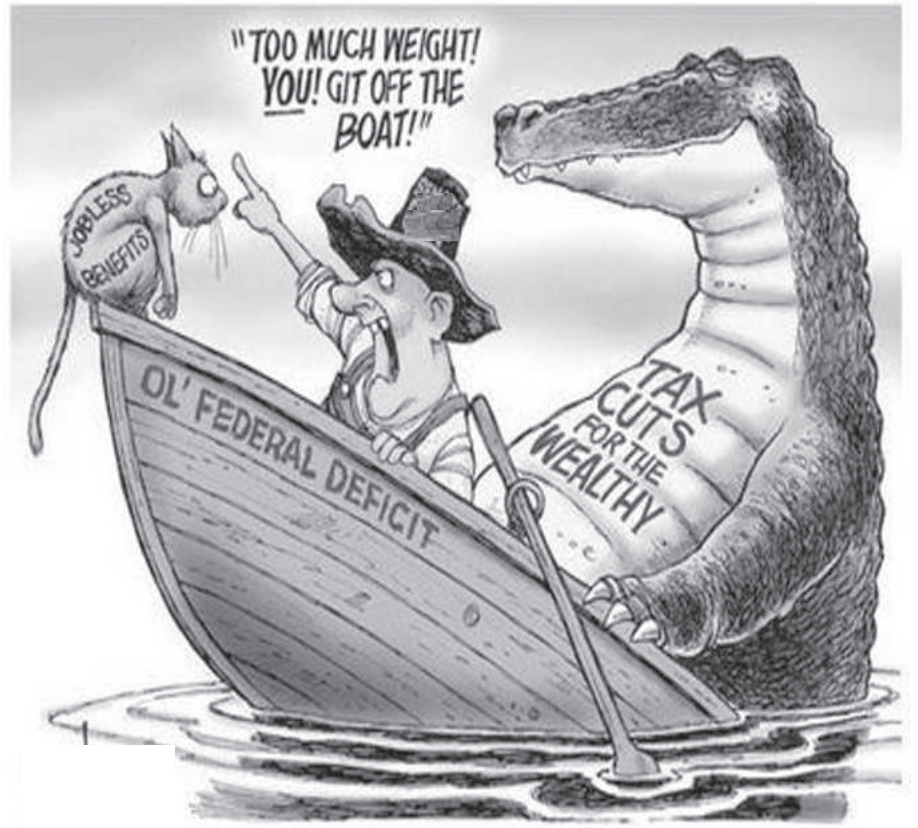
**Stop violence  
against women!**

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The Supreme Court of Canada has ruled in favour of the Métis people in a court case regarding stolen lands which were granted by the Manitoba Act of 1870. But the fight for justice is far from over.

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The armed conflict in Colombia began in 1964 as peasants resisted seizure of their lands. Today, land is at the centre of peace negotiations.

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Back in 1885, the Berlin Conference saw the division of Africa by imperialist powers. Today, a new scramble is underway to grab control of the continent's vast resource wealth.

# Canada-EU trade deal: No time for NDP to show moderation

By Sid Ryan, from the Toronto Star, March 7, 2013

It is always uncomfortable to give public advice to a friend, but when he is about to head down a perilous path, a good friend offers a strong warning.

This is how I feel about NDP Leader Thomas Mulcair's recent appeal to Canadians to remain open to the Canada-European Union Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA). If the NDP is seeking to demonstrate its thoughtfulness and moderation, this secret deal is not the right moment. NDP support for CETA - no matter how qualified - could lead Canadians down the wrong path.

Canada's experience with other free-trade agreements belies the myth that a free-trade agreement with the European Union could somehow reverse an already imbalanced trade relationship. According to economist Jim Stanford, CETA could expose Canadians to an even greater trade deficit and lead to the loss of as many as 152,000 jobs. CETA also grants rights to corporations that jeopardize the powers of Canadian governments at every level.

Such concerns are echoed by environmental organizations, labour unions, civil society groups and a growing number of researchers and experts. In fact, Council of Canadians Chairperson

Maude Barlow has been at the forefront of opposing CETA's threat to water, education and other public services, and more than 80 municipalities and school boards have expressed concern, with more than 40 demanding to be exempt. Even a UN envoy this week

## Other voices

signalled that this agreement would undermine the ability for Canada to support local economies and address poverty and hunger.

Despite this broad-based opposition, Mulcair is still musing about supporting CETA, but perhaps he'll listen to the candid counsel of a friend.

I think Mulcair already knows in his gut what is best for Canadians. In outlining the "deal-breaker" issues for the NDP, he proves why CETA must be rejected outright. After all, many of his non-negotiable issues - ranging from environmental protections to buy-local programs and Canadian banking regulations - are still on the table. Even Mulcair admits that despite his promise to defend the public interest, the NDP is up against "powerful, insider interests" - not to mention an all-too-willing

Harper majority government.

What would these corporate interests gain at the expense of working people? The pharmaceutical industry is seeking to extend monopoly patent rights for their brand-name drugs, which the federal government has admitted would cost the public up to \$2 billion annually. The NDP says it can live with this if it is accompanied by compensation to the provinces and consumers, but this still leaves Canadian taxpayers footing the bill. In addition, European companies stand to win the right to legally challenge Canadian laws that interfere with their profits, even on issues that are of vital importance to Canadians like health care and the environment. And this is just the tip of the proverbial iceberg.

We already know much of what is at stake in the CETA negotiations because draft text has been leaked. So Mulcair's "wait-and-see" approach to CETA is dangerous, not moderate. It doesn't take a good lawyer - or even a union negotiator - to know that when the "final text" is plunked down on the table, it is too late to change the deal. Waiting for the Tories to reveal the final offer to Canadians before raising objection is akin to closing the barn doors after the horses have bolted.

This is all the more reason why the NDP should be denouncing CETA and publicly declaring that the fix is in. Exposing CETA as a

"corporate bill of rights" isn't Chicken Little alarmism, it is speaking truth to corporate power. And it is this kind of principled commitment to values that led the NDP to a historic surge in 2011.

For the four and a half million NDP voters and the millions more they hope to win over, a willingness to bend your values is not inspiring leadership. If there is any lesson to be drawn from the past, surely it is from his Liberal counterparts who learned the hard way that if you forget what you stand for, then no

one else will believe in you either.

I admire the confidence that Mulcair has earned from Canadians through his principled opposition in the House. When it comes to an international trade agreement that puts corporate interests ahead of the public interest, Canadians deserve no less. The NDP must seize this opportunity to offer an alternative vision for trade - one that is sustainable, equitable and fair.

Sid Ryan is president of the Ontario Federation of Labour. ●

## Communist candidate meets North Van-Lonsdale voters

Kicking off his campaign for the May 14 B.C. provincial election, Communist Party of B.C. candidate Kimball Cariou met with North Vancouver-Lonsdale voters on March 9.

Cariou will be the first Communist on the ballot in North Vancouver since the 1980s. Volunteers are already collecting nomination signatures, and the campaign will go public at the March 19 Nowruz Persian New Year fire celebration, which attracts thousands to Ambleside Park.

At the forum, Cariou was joined by Communist Party of Canada leader Miguel Figueroa, making his final stop on a tour of western Canada. Figueroa has been from Winnipeg to Victoria, presenting the Party's views on how to defeat the war and austerity policies of the Harper Tory government.

Most of the audience on March 9th were from the local Iranian-Canadian community, which numbers over 20,000. Many are strongly opposed to the undemocratic Ahmedinajad regime, but equally reject the push by Canada, the U.S. and other imperialist governments for war against Iran.

Cariou, who has been active in peace movements since the days of the Vietnam War, will make opposition to Canadian warmaking a focus of his campaign. While this is a provincial election, he stressed, voters in North Vancouver-Lonsdale are paying for the military build-up under PM Harper. The billions spent on the military, he argued, should be redirected towards urgent civilian needs, such as low-income and social housing. Cariou pointed out that while North Vancouver has a reputation as a beautiful and wealthy area, there are thousands of poor people in the riding, including Iranian-Canadians who are falling through a dissolving social safety net. As in other parts of the region, rents are sky-high for North Vancouver voters living on minimum wage or part-time jobs.

Speaking about recent B.C. Liberal scandals around "ethnic voter" schemes, Cariou said that Premier Christy Clark really needs to apologize for her role in covering-up the sale of B.C. Rail, and for the devastation to schools, teachers and students during her years as Education Minister in Gordon Campbell's Liberal government.

For information on the Communist campaign in North Vancouver-Lonsdale, call 604-254-9836, email cpbcinfo@gmail.com. ●

## PV Fund Drive off and running

The initial returns on our 2013 People's Voice Fund Drive are coming in the mail, and the support from readers is encouraging. The first week of the Drive saw a total of nearly \$3000, mainly from western provinces which were the first to receive our direct mail appeal. Starting with our next issue, we will print a detailed provincial report on the results of the Fund Drive.

Meanwhile, preparations are underway for several fundraising events. One of the first is the annual Pasta Dinner on March 31, part of the monthly Left Film Night at the Centre for Socialist Education, 706 Clark Drive, Vancouver. The film will be a free screening (at 7 pm) of the popular documentary "The Queen of Versailles." The film is the story of a fabulously rich family intent on building the largest home in the U.S., modeled on (of course) the Versailles Palace. Unfortunately for this elite family, the 2007-08 economic crisis even hit some

capitalists, throwing a proverbial monkey wrench into the construction plans. Come before the film at 6 pm for a delicious Pasta Dinner; just \$12 gets you pasta with vegetarian or meat sauce, plus salad, garlic bread, dessert and coffee (wine extra). Call 604-255-2041 for details.

On page 5 of this issue readers will find an article by Liz Payne, a frequent contributor to our sister publication in Britain, the *Morning Star*. Comrade Payne will be the featured guest at People's Voice events this spring, speaking on the impact of the British Conservative government's attacks against women in the UK. In Vancouver, she will speak at our Victory Banquet marking the 20th anniversary of People's Voice, Saturday, June 8, at the Russian Hall, 600 Campbell Avenue. A few days later, she will speak at a PV event in Toronto, date and location to be announced shortly. Liz Payne

is the vice-chair of the Communist Party of Britain, and the women's organizer of the CPB. She is also a long-time activist for solidarity with the Iranian people, and we are delighted to host her speaking tour.

Finally, the Editorial Board of PV joins with all other progressives in Canada in extending condolences to the Venezuelan people on the death of President Hugo Chavez. People's Voice gave extensive coverage to the successes of the Bolivarian Revolution in Venezuela from the very beginning. Unlike the capitalist media, we report the facts about social and economic gains achieved by the Venezuelan working class, and also the important anti-imperialist role played by President Chavez and his government over the past 14 years. We are confident that the Revolution will carry forward in Venezuela, and we will continue to extend our solidarity in the pages of People's Voice. You can help with your support to our Fund Drive. Thank you to everyone who has contributed so far! ●

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

Enclosed please find my donation of \$\_\_\_\_\_ to the 2013 People's Voice Press Fund Drive.

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Send your contribution to:

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



PV display at IWD in Toronto. Photo by Ed Bil

## MAY DAY 2013 GREETING ADS

To mark May Day 2013, 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 19; if PV is preparing the layout, the deadline is April 17. Please check with us about the format if your ad is being sent electronically.

Ad rates (based on 5 column page):

One column-inch.....	\$15
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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

# The deficit is a hoax - there are alternatives

By Jean Kenyon

It's budget season, and once again we are told the cupboard is bare. The federal and most provincial governments have been running big deficits ever since the financial crisis of 2008-09, and therefore don't have enough money for health care, poverty reduction, infrastructure, and other basic needs.

The deficit has become the latest excuse for skimping on the public services that once made Canada prosperous. But the deficit, truth to tell, is a bit of a hoax, for three big reasons:

1. Personal and corporate tax rates are way out of date.
2. Astounding revenues are lost each year to tax evasion and offshore havens.
3. Governments needlessly do most of their borrowing in the private market.

If you're over 45, you remember when there used to be 15 tax brackets in Canada. It was a truly graduated system and reasonably fair. But the Mulroney government scrapped it and established only three steep brackets.

Today we should restore the 15 smaller tax brackets, but scale up the thresholds so that the bottom two brackets are eliminated - freeing the lowest-income people from taxes - and more brackets are added at the top.

Today the top income bracket starts at \$128,800, above which income is taxed at 29%. Larry Gordon, co-founder of Canadians for Tax Fairness, writes:

"According to the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, adding two new tax brackets of 32 per cent on income over \$250,000 and 35 per cent on income over \$750,000 would generate about \$12 billion in new revenue over the next three years. Those modest tax adjustments could fund a new national pharmacare program, or launch a national child-care program, plus allow university tuition fees to be rolled back to 1991 levels."

That is, it would generate \$4 billion per year of needed revenue,

while leaving average households where they are, or even a little better off.

As for corporate tax rates, Canada's combined federal and provincial rate of 28.8% is the lowest of all the G8 countries. With the US corporate tax rate at 44.8%, why does ours need to be so low to be "competitive"?

According to *The Star's* Les Whittington, Harper's corporate tax cuts have cost Ottawa over \$10 billion per year since 2007. And this money, now left in the hands of business, isn't being plowed back into productive investment but frequently remains "dead money", held in inactive reserves.

The Canadian Labour Congress calls for corporate tax cuts to be rolled back and restructured as credits, targeted only toward companies that invest in improvements to productivity. The rest should be invested by government in "public infrastructure including transit, literacy, workplace training and child care. These are good ways to prepare for the economy of tomorrow and to stimulate Canada's economic growth and development."

Harper's cut of 2 percentage points to the GST in 2007-08 is also costing the public treasury \$13 billion per year. By one pen stroke he started his ideologically-driven push to demolish the surplus he inherited.

(Ultimately, of course, regressive taxes such as the GST and HST should be phased out as the income tax is reformed to cover the difference. Lowering regressive taxes shouldn't rob the treasury.)

The introduction in 2009 of Tax-Free Savings Accounts - which benefit only those with a lot of spare cash - will also cost an additional \$3 billion per year as they become fully utilized by well-to-do taxpayers. TFSAs have been called an upper-income tax cut in disguise.

So far we're up to \$30 billion/year in revenues that would be fairly painless to recapture, before we even look at tax havens.

Canadians for Tax Fairness (CTF) has launched a campaign to

urge the Finance Minister to go after money stashed offshore. Under pressure from the OECD, the Commons Finance committee started hearings in February on the problem of tax havens.

Murray Dobbin, president of CTF states that, "The world's largest corporations and wealthiest individuals use these jurisdictions - there are more than 70 countries offering these services. They park their money where there is minimal regulation, little or no taxation on non-resident wealth, and guaranteed secrecy which is actually enshrined in the countries' laws. There is no easy way of knowing which corporations have accounts, and no systematic effort to share information with other countries. Many of the world's largest banks - including most of the big Canadian banks - have divisions whose exclusive function is to facilitate this grand theft."

Fully one-tenth of the world's total wealth is sheltered in this way from taxes. The cost to the public sector everywhere is huge, and tragically so for developing countries. It is worth noting that Greece didn't fail because its social programs were too generous, but mainly because tax evasion was rampant.

Murray Dobbin estimates that Canada is now losing \$10 billion a year in revenue from money squirreled away on sunny islands. And that's only a small part of the total. Dennis Howlett of CTF, appearing before the Finance committee, estimated total yearly tax evasion in Canada at \$80 billion.

Canadians for Tax Fairness is publishing an eye-opening new book called *The Great Revenue Robbery*. It will be launched in April with a Canada-wide tour.

It's important to note that most of the tax breaks to the rich, and revenue lost to tax evasion, have to be paid for through government borrowing, i.e. deficit spending.

Until the mid-1970s, our borrowing was handled through the Bank of Canada, which was publicly owned and tasked to carry out government policy. Loans were virtually interest-free and the national debt did not increase. The war effort, housing for veterans, the St. Lawrence Seaway, and the introduction of old age security and medicare, were financed without inflation or significant deficits. Levels of borrowing had to reflect actual productivity, and borrowing in turn was used to enhance productivity. Most bonds did not have to be floated on the international private market as they are today.

But since that time, the "Bank for International Settlements" - the cabal of the developed world's central banks including the Bank of Canada - has wrested much power away from governments and imposed policies of its own. It has limited the public's ability to borrow from safe sources, putting us at the mercy of private banks, bond traders, currency speculators, and unpredictable interest rates. The result has been out-of-control public debt, in Canada and around the world.

Steps must be taken to reverse this trend, by starting to shift our borrowing back to the Bank of Canada. Beginning to lower the interest obligation on our existing national debt would start to get the austerity monkey off our backs.

There are solutions, lots of them. I haven't even mentioned here the government policy decisions that squander public money - like military equipment to support missions abroad, and needless jails.

By updating personal and corporate tax rates, clamping down on tax havens, and shifting our borrowing back to our own central

bank, we could eliminate the deficit a few times over.

But our leaders would have us believe that money is tight and the only "solution" to the deficit is to ream out the public sector, abandon the poor, saddle students with mountainous debt, and privatize health care.

This is frankly Bullfeathers! ●



Mohammed Mahjoub

## Interview with a security certificate defendant

PV's Saleh Waziruddin recently interviewed Mohammed Mahjoub, the "security certificate" detainee who was finally freed from having to wear a GPS bracelet. Mahjoub, a refugee from Egypt, was arrested in 2000, without being charged with a crime or given access to evidence against him. Mahjoub has been on a speaking tour after being released from having to wear a GPS. He claims he has found evidence that Canada has spent over \$1 billion on all security certificate cases, and that CSIS had used criminal records of five people with his name in Egypt who were convicted of various crimes to confuse the justice system.

Although cleared of any charges in Egypt, Mahjoub has been unable to find out why he was arrested in Canada, other than the possibility that another security certificate arrestee, unknown to him, may have mentioned his name in a phone call. His house arrest conditions were so onerous and invasive that he initially went back to prison on his own, and his wife divorced him in 2011 when he was going to be released back into house arrest. His defense committee's website is [www.supportmahjoub.org/](http://www.supportmahjoub.org/).

**People's Voice:** What would you say to someone who thinks what happened to you could never happen to them?

**Mahjoub:** I have never thought it will happen to me, but it happened. It can happen to anybody here in Canada. My advice to them is: don't take everything granted forever. It happened to me today, it can happen to anyone else, especially minority people.

**What have you found was most effective for the victories you've won in your struggle, such as being free from the GPS bracelet?**

The most thing effective in my case is speaking out, raising my voice, sharing my story with Canadians. Find other Canadians who have hope in their life to assist you.

**What can people in Canada do to help win justice for you?**

They can do a lot of things. They can share the story in the internet, they can write to their

MPs, they can share this information with human rights organizations. There are many, many things they can do, not only one thing. (They) can make events such as what happened today for instance here in St. Catharines.

**What changed in your opinion about Canada after your experience?**

Again, the law is (supposed to) apply to every individual, whether they are citizen or non-citizen. If someone commits a crime, he or she should face a fair trial, but in the security certificate cases there are no charges laid on me or any other security certificate individual. We didn't have a fair trial in the first place. We have to fight hard. Why there is (such a situation in) Canada? I am not angry, but I have to fight hard to clear my name. The individual who put me in this position, should be held accountable for what they did to me and my family as well.

**Do you have advice to anyone facing a similar situation?**

My advice to them (is) to be patient, to fight through legal avenues, not do anything to make their case more miserable or more difficult. There are many ways to fight through the law, to hire a good lawyer to speak out, to have contacts with organizations (which) can raise your voice. They can share your story with other organizations - human rights groups, parliament, media. ●

## NIAGARA NEWS BULLETIN

People's Voice Niagara Bureau

\* A Freeze Flash Mob for International Women's Day was organized by AIDS Niagara and the Brock University Student Justice Centre at the Pen Centre shopping mall, where protesters held up signs about sexism.

\* Workers from CEP Local 425-G laid off without notice or severance from Vertis Communications in Fort Erie are trying to stop plant equipment from being moved out by Quad/Graphics, which owned the equipment after Vertis filed for bankruptcy. Workers also brought their protest to a meeting of the local federal Conservative Party riding association where the local MP was appearing. More than 100 workers are owed an average of \$30,000 each. Meanwhile in Fort Erie another 100 workers are losing their jobs as InfoCision, a call centre, is closing.

\* At an Ontario Health Coalition protest in Welland against moving OBGYN, pediatric, and mental health services to a new P3 hospital half an hour highway drive away, the Ontario Nurses Association announced that the Niagara Health System is laying off 48 nurses and will probably have more layoffs. Nearby Port Colborne's City Council voted to support the City of Welland's 20,000-plus signature petition drive to keep its services.

\* Marineland Animal Defense protesters have been banging pots and pans outside Niagara Falls City Council meetings. The actions draw attention animal abuse at Marineland, the City's leasing of public land used for protests in front the water park, and also inaction over the owner's eviction of long-time trailer park tenants, which lead to one suicide.

News for people, not for profits!



# EDITORIALS

## Congratulations to the Métis

The Supreme Court's 6-2 ruling in favour of the legal case brought by the Manitoba Métis Federation is another important milestone in the long struggle by Aboriginal peoples to achieve justice and national equality within the Canadian state.

The court's decision comes 140 years since the shameful theft of lands which were to be provided to the Métis under the terms of the Manitoba Act. Instead, the Métis were scattered by the Canadian colonial ruling class, which seized their homeland as part of the process of settling the prairie provinces for the expansion of an emerging capitalist economy. This genocidal policy continued with the defeat of the heroic Métis and their allies at Batoche in 1885, and the subsequent generations of abysmal poverty and racist oppression.

But the Métis never surrendered to the push for assimilation and annihilation. New resistance leaders took up the cause of Louis Riel and Gabriel Dumont, including the "Métis Patriots of the 20th Century," the communists Jim Brady and Malcolm Norris, who played key roles in rebuilding the movements of the Métis for their national rights starting in the 1930s. The Métis succeeded in achieving recognition as a distinct Aboriginal people in the Canadian Constitution, and kept raising demands to redress the historic crimes committed against their nation. The latest SCC ruling, along with the court decision in the "Daniels" case, regarding the status of some 600,000 Métis and non-status Indians across Canada, show that major legal advances can be achieved as part of a wider strategy of popular struggles. It is no coincidence that the blue and white flags of the Métis have been prominent at many powerful actions of the Idle No More movement.

We salute the Métis on this historic victory, and we pledge our solidarity in the struggle to turn this legal ruling into meaningful gains for their social equality and national rights.

## Which way for the NDP?

The New Democratic Party's retreat towards "qualified support" for the Canada-European Union Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) is raising serious concerns within the trade union movement, and rightly so. As OFL President Sid Ryan wrote recently, "this particular trade deal is being negotiated in secret and in the interest of multinational corporations. A number of affiliates have invested significant resources into campaigning against CETA and have been working alongside coalition partners to raise public concern."

The OFL President is not alone in his objections. Many trade unions and social justice movements - the backbone of the NDP's voter base across Canada - have campaigned hard to block CETA for years. The abrupt turnaround by Thomas Mulcair has shocked many of these organizations, which traditionally count on the NDP to represent their views on Parliament Hill.

Sadly, the NDP's change of course did not surprise observers who have followed its trajectory in recent years. Sensing a possible victory in the 2015 federal election, the party which claims to be the voice of "ordinary Canadians" is bending over backwards to reach out to big capital. This trend pre-dates Thomas Mulcair; recall Jack Layton's January 2009 speech to the Toronto Board of Trade urging workers to take pay cuts to save jobs, or his moves to water down the NDP's anti-war positions.

When labour activists gather at the Canadian Labour Congress conference this month, there should be no illusions about a Mulcair NDP government. Only massive pressure by trade unions and all people's movements can compel political parties to put people's needs ahead of corporate greed. Leaving the political struggle to the NDP caucus in Ottawa will not achieve this goal.

## PEOPLE'S VOICE

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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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## Canadian Labour Congress targets Harper government

By Darrell Rankin

Hundreds of delegates are expected to attend the Canadian Labour Congress' political action conference, which will plan how to defeat the Harper government, March 21-23 in Toronto.

The highly managed CLC conference comes at a time when the government is ripping the country apart and selling it part by part. The Communist Party has called for a broad, political action conference for years, and it is important that the most be made of it. Success will be measured by how the conference organizes the fight, especially before the election, not just during the campaign period.

On the positive side, there is a focus on key issues like labour rights (the attack on the Rand formula and the closed shop), the Aboriginal question in the labour movement, creating industrial jobs, equality of women, child care, privatization, and green energy.

Some focus is on rebuilding once-vibrant coalitions, like those that thrived in the 1980s fighting against free trade and for nuclear disarmament. The new coalitions need to include those entering political life today, activists fighting for Aboriginal rights and the environment, students against tuition hikes, the Occupy movement.

Many CLC affiliates already have their separate campaigns targeting the Harper Tories. The

problem for the CLC and this conference is to send a message: Bring these efforts together! Unite, locally and across Canada.

Local and regional coalitions will be a basis for strong Canada-wide coalitions; these played an important part defeating the Mulroney-Campbell Tories in

100,000 people on Parliament Hill, through the anti-free trade Pro-Canada Network.

Such rallies can and should take place again. The Harper government is carrying out a vicious attack on the labour movement and workers as a whole. The time has come for more thought about stronger measures in the fightback, including work stoppages and political strikes which are now common in many European and Asian countries.

In 1988, the CLC targeted 50 Tory MPs for defeat in one of the Canada's most important elections dealing with Canada-US Free Trade. The next election is equally important. If the CLC will carry out a similar campaign next election, groups need to sign-up at the conference and get to work. Time is short.

There is no shortage of political actions to take against the narrow Harper Tory corporate agenda which is leading us to disaster. Developing and mobilizing for a broad, emancipatory alternative, the CLC can help defeat Toryism and its big business agenda.

Darrell Rankin represented the Canadian Peace Alliance at the Pro-Canada Network, the Action Canada Network and the Solidarity Network.

**How we see it...**

1993, and they are needed now.

Unfortunately, the agenda is heavy on workshops like working with media. No time is available for different movement caucuses to meet. The agenda has little or nothing for anti-war, environmental or anti-free trade movements, all historically connected to the labour movement. The lack of travel equalization, income-related fees, or billets makes it expensive for activists outside Toronto.

The main thing, though, is that the conference is taking place. When hundreds of people start to talk, they can produce the sparks that will push the Tories to defeat.

It will be hard to match the send-off to the Mulroney-Campbell government in 1993, when the CLC helped rally

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# We have a world to win

By Liz Payne, Morning Star, [www.morningstaronline.uk](http://www.morningstaronline.uk)

International Women's Day each year provides an opportunity to focus in depth on the condition of women, the class struggle against inequality and the tasks that face us in the immediate and more long-term future.

In Britain, the austerity measures of the coalition have been nothing less than a brutal assault on working-class women.

Beginning with the Emergency Budget of June 2010 draconian measures "to fill the economic deficit" have hit women hardest, taking their jobs and slashing the benefits and services on which so many depend. And, with less than a quarter of the already-planned cuts implemented, the worst is yet to come - that is, unless we put a stop to it.

More than 400,000 women's jobs will be lost from the public sector alone, and hundreds of thousands more will go from the private sector. Pay cuts in the form of wage freezes and below cost-of-living rises will hit women workers hardest, concentrated as they are in low paid work. Sixty-four per cent of all low-paid workers are women.

Women - statistically twice as likely as men to depend on benefits - will suffer most from government raids on welfare budgets. Many benefits under the axe relate to women's lives directly - support during pregnancy, child care

assistance via tax credits, child benefit.

Women are the main recipients of housing benefits, including those supporting single-parent families, nine out of 10 of whom are women.

Decimated public services and unaffordable privatised "replacements" are in the main those on which women heavily rely. Caring services and public transport are only two examples. The cumulative effect will be the further isolation, impoverishment and disenfranchisement of women, denying them access to education, jobs, health care and amenities and increasing vulnerability to exploitation, abuse and violence.

Low incomes demonstrably increase the latter risk. According to public-service union Unison, women in households with an income of less than £10,000 (about \$15,300 Cdn.) are three-and-a-half times more likely to experience domestic violence than those in households with an income of over £20,000 (\$30,600).

Into this mix add the removal or reduction of state-funded legal support for cases relating to welfare benefits, debt, family law, education and medical negligence, coupled with the tightening of eligibility criteria for legal aid. Add also the drastic reduction of funds for voluntary organisations that provide services that support women.

Working women are increasingly aware of all this, but

fewer feel certain that an alternative is possible.

This International Women's Day we must commit to making everyone aware that none of these things needs to happen.

Now is the time for women and men to fight back against the government, the banks, industrialists and public and private employers, asserting the right of working-class women to jobs, justice and a decent life.

But if that fightback is to be successful, it cannot begin and end



with a short-term economic challenge, crucial as that is. We must win understanding that we need to change the way women live and of how this might be done.

The Charter for Women, supported by trade unions, trades councils and women's organisations across the country, sets out what life might look like for women - in the wider society, at work and in the labour movement.

It shows how campaigns built on the demands of women for equality, independence, justice, representation, work, fair pay, education and health can make broad, deep and irreversible changes to the lives of working women in Britain.

But campaigning on the Charter for Women cannot itself be undertaken in isolation. The demands of women are integral to those of all working people, as put forward in the TUC-adopted People's Charter.

They must also be heard, recognised and incorporated in the work of the coming People's Assembly against Austerity on June 22, which hopes to mobilise millions against the Con-Dem government and build a movement for genuine change founded on equality and social justice.

In the long, hard battle we have to fight there must be fundamental recognition of the centrality of the struggle for women's equality.

Capitalism worldwide depends on the exploitation of working women and on their unpaid labour. Without it capitalism's profit ceases and its crises cannot be resolved. Further, capitalism's continuance is assured only if working people are prevented from uniting to challenge it. The division between working women and men is not an option of capitalist strategy - it is the system's lifeblood.

And so the struggle for women's equality in Britain is linked with the struggle of women worldwide

against a system that can only degrade and exploit them.

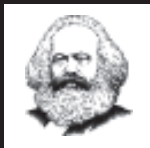
Media coverage of women since last year's International Women's Day has graphically reflected this. It has been memorable and shocking - depicting extremes of violence, sexual objectification, eroticisation of murder, denial of rights and representation, displacement, impoverishment and denial of voice.

But the past year has also witnessed women fighting back - the women of India rising together against endemic violence, the women of Egypt returning again and again to demonstrate for a more just and equal future despite the rape and sexual assault meted out to intimidate them.

Women have been arrested, tortured and killed for organising, speaking out and challenging their oppressors in many countries. And yet, as ever, the brave struggle still continues.

Now is the time to "really alter things" - win vital public support, defeat anti-women austerity measures, get rid of the government of the super-rich and begin to work towards a genuinely just, peaceful, democratic and socialist future that has seen out capitalism for ever. This is our task on every day of the year, not just on International Women's Day. We have no choice.

Liz Payne is vice-chair of the Communist Party of Britain and its women's organiser. She will be the featured speaker at People's Voice events in June. ●



## Marxist Theory

## Resistance against the corporate agenda is mainly outside Parliament

The fightback against the Harper/corporate agenda, as we predicted back in 2011, has been waged mainly in the extra-parliamentary arena. Even if so inclined and armed with clear alternative policies, the opposition parties inside Parliament would be incapable of blocking government legislation. In fact, the situation has been even worse. The Bloc Québécois, after suffering a decimating defeat at the polls, continues to languish in existential crisis. The Liberal Party benches have not fared much better, financially strapped and without an elected leader for almost two years. Green Party leader Elizabeth May has put up a good fight around some issues, but has no legions behind her in the House. More to the point, the Greens, having situated themselves politically somewhere between the Liberals and the NDP, have little space to articulate a distinct position.

Many in the labour and democratic movements were looking to the New Democrats, with 101 seats and the mantle of "Official Opposition", to lead the charge against Harper's political agenda. But under Thomas Mulcair's leadership, the NDP presence has been barely discernible. It is true that in the immediate period after the election, many caucus members were new to Parliament and still learning the ropes. But that argument no longer rings true. In fact, there is a conscious strategy

**The Communist Party of Canada's 37th Central Convention will be held April 5-7 in Toronto. Members of the CPC are currently discussing the Draft Political Resolution for the Convention. PV will reprint excerpts from the Resolution, including these paragraphs. To download the full document, visit [www.communist-party.ca](http://www.communist-party.ca).**

crafted by Mulcair and his closest advisors to "low-ball" their role in the Opposition, to avoid taking "controversial" positions on critical issues, and to bide their time until the 2015 election in the hope that voters will tire of the Harper government agenda and turn instead to the NDP to take office. This hope of slipping into government by default reflects bourgeois opportunism at its worst, and is a recipe for failure.

At a more basic level, none of the parliamentary opposition parties have fundamental differences with the main tenets of the neoliberal policy agenda advanced by Harper and company. Nor have those parties differentiated themselves in a principled way from the Conservatives' imperialist and militarist foreign policy. With respect to the war on Libya for example, the one critical voice was that of Elizabeth May, primarily over the issue of inadequate Parliamentary approval and oversight. The NDP has long abandoned its initial criticism of the US-led wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, in favour of support

for expanded militarism and the so-called "responsibility to protect" doctrine. This imperialist concept is essentially a new version of the racist "white man's burden" ideology, a convenient excuse by NATO to justify wars and occupations in third world countries, in pursuit of control over resources by transnational capital. The NDP's adoption of this doctrine has dealt a severe blow to the anti-war movement in Canada, for example by effectively muzzling anti-war elements in the trade unions from speaking out against militarism.

To counter the pro-imperialist "regime change" concepts of what has been called the "anti-anti-war movement", we must do more to win the genuine peace forces to defend the principles of international law and national sovereignty. This situation highlights the urgent need to strengthen the most consistently anti-imperialist elements within the wider anti-war movement, especially the Canadian Peace Congress and its affiliates, which are part of the World Peace Council.

It will also be important to mobilize support for other significant anti-imperialist initiatives, such as the 18th World Festival of Youth and Students, which will take place late this year in Ecuador.

At the provincial level, NDP governments in Manitoba and Nova Scotia have preferred to cut corporate taxes and protect the interests of the ruling elite, rather than taking significant action on pro-people demands raised by the labour movement and other progressive groups.

The continued rightward shift of the NDP leadership towards the centre of bourgeois electoralist politics has left many members and supporters increasingly disenchanted and questioning

**37th Central Convention  
April 5-7, 2013**



whether that party constitutes any meaningful alternative to the Tories. The rejection of extra-parliamentary forms of political struggle by the NDP leadership has weakened and divided the fightback, paralysing sections of the labour and people's movements. This political degeneration is evident in many other countries as well, where right-wing social democratic parties have implemented neoliberal and pro-imperialist policies, and have

opposed and even attempted to derail mass mobilizations of resistance. This raises a wider issue: to what extent can contemporary social democracy still be seen as a force which stands for progressive reforms, if not fundamental change? What is the role of parties such as the NDP? These will be critical questions for the labour and people's movements leading into the 2015 election and beyond. The NDP's shift to the political centre makes it all the more urgent for the Communist Party and other progressive forces to advance radical, anti-capitalist concepts and class struggle policies. This could help improve the conditions for a stronger left as part of a realignment of political forces in Canada.

Despite this rightward reorientation of the NDP leadership however, the struggle against the Harper/corporate agenda outside of Parliament has become much more vibrant and consequential. There have been significant mass mobilizations around a number of important issues - in opposition to the G20 Summit in Toronto; around environmental issues, especially the Northern Gateway pipeline in B.C.; against the EI cuts in Québec, in defence of women's reproductive rights; against municipal cutbacks in Toronto and elsewhere; in solidarity with the Egyptian Revolution and the people of besieged Gaza; around the poverty and oppression faced by Aboriginal peoples, etc. ●

# The day we met Hugo Chavez

By Johan Boyden

When the news came it was probably natural that almost all of us from that delegation thought about our experience, eight years ago. When I bumped into some of the delegation at International Women's Day events, since his death came so close to IWD, it seemed natural to talk about it.

It was 16th World Festival of Youth and Students, in Caracas. I remember we got off the airplane after our long flight, arriving late at night, and immediately stepped into a wall of hot and humid air. A bit tired, we stumbled into the darkness with our bags.

And then, there they were. A welcoming party of Venezuela youth. Some were holding roses. Each woman in our delegation got a rose as she stepped onto Venezuela soil.

I remember noticing what they were wearing. Bright red t-shirts

emblazoned with the slogan: "Another world is possible, and that is socialism!"

I have difficulty describing the impact of these few words on a t-shirt. After all it seems that today, with the economic crisis, more and more young people today are opening their eyes. The most popular searched words in the online Merriam-Webster Dictionary last year were "socialism" and "capitalism."

During the "Dirty Thirties," in a speech advocating for public health care, Dr. Norman Bethune once said that "Twenty five years ago it was thought to be contemptible to be a socialist. Today it is ridiculous not to be one."

Well, that dark night at Simon Bolivar International Airport felt a bit like the twenty five years had just ended.

It was, I think, a quote from President Hugo Chavez. A clear

statement. Here, in Venezuela, thousands of young people are debating a profoundly different future. Over the next two weeks we would learn that their truly was a serious, vibrant, and exciting argument.

Up to that point, the link between socialism and the Bolivarian Revolution had been far from clear. Only days before had Chavez made the connection as necessary. Over the next few days during the World Festival of Youth and Students, Chavez would speak and develop this pro-socialist perspective in more detail.

It seemed groundbreaking. It was.

It took us ages to get out of the airport, to the "bed city" where we stayed and finally, down to a giant parade ground for the opening ceremonies. Who would have known, just a few years later, we would be looking into the newspaper and recognize the very same parade ground as where his funeral procession would go, surrounded by hundreds of thousands.

Those parade grounds are at the bottom of a valley. The city is all around, then big steep hills rise up which become giant mountains in the distance. The hills are covered with the communities of the poor, the barrios.

Dusk fell. Then came the deep, black tropical darkness. Moving

as a group, we slowly walked what seemed like a few miles, finally turning past a big podium. And then there he was. Hugo Chavez.

long. There was no translation.

"I was so young, I didn't appreciate how we were witnessing history," one former delegate told me the other day.

We looked up at the hills, and realized that the twinkling tiny network of lights in a few small areas must generally outline the rich communities with electricity, hostile to the Bolivarian Revolution, while the slopes which had fallen into darkness were its social base.

The festival was beginning. I personally didn't glimpse him again. But over the next week, in the voices and stories of all the youth involved in the Bolivarian process, it kind of felt like we were meeting with Chavez.

As the World Federation of Democratic Youth said, "the ones who die for life, shouldn't be called dead." Today those youth we met are eight years older. If they retain a tenth of the energy of the energy they had then, I am confident I will meet Chavez again.

Johan Boyden is the leader of the Young Communist League of Canada, which is helping organize a cross-Canada delegation to the 18th World Festival of Youth and Students taking place late this year in Ecuador.



16th World Festival of Students and Youth

V E N E Z U E L A  
2 0 0 5

The man himself. Full of life, surrounded by other youth leaders, welcoming the youth of the world who had assembled to raise high the banner of the festival: "for peace and solidarity, we struggle against imperialism and war."

It seemed the procession was regularly interrupted. Chavez had a few people from some of the delegations brought up to the podium. The US delegation's flag-bearer, for example, received a giant bear-hug. And then he spoke. For our tired bodies it seemed

## Métis celebrate Supreme Court ruling on Manitoba Act

PV Vancouver Bureau

In a major Aboriginal legal rights case, the Supreme Court of Canada has ruled 6-2 in a favour of a case brought by the Manitoba Métis Federation (MMF), regarding the issuance of lands designated for Métis children under the Manitoba Act of 1870. Passed by Parliament in the wake of the "Red River Rebellion" of 1869-70, the Manitoba Act brought that province into the new Confederation of Canada. The leader of the Red River Métis people, Louis Riel, is regarded as the founder of Manitoba for his role in these historic events.

The March 8 ruling declared that the federal Crown failed to implement the land grant provision set out in Section 31 of the Manitoba Act, and awarded costs to the appellants.

Prior to the ruling, MMF President David Chartrand said, "Our People sent a message that our Land Claim must be a priority and one that I must advance all the way to the Supreme Court of Canada to seek justice. This case is about lost and stolen properties and a People who were displaced and dispersed across and beyond their Homeland."

"The 1870 Manitoba Act recorded solemn promises made to provide lands to our children and to recognize the titles to our lands along the Red River. These and other promises were not kept. The Métis children and their families were swindled and their lands stolen by speculators. This was facilitated by government delays, unconstitutional legislation, and orders in council.

"This has been called the unfinished business of Confederation. As a Partner in bringing Manitoba into Confederation, and as an Aboriginal People, the Métis believe the Honour of the Crown and Canada's fiduciary

responsibilities require this business be closed fairly and equitably. We have spent over 30 years in the courts struggling to right these wrongs done to our Ancestors."

Hundreds of people were at Winnipeg Airport to greet Métis leaders returning from Ottawa after the decision. A rally was held at Louis Riel's gravesite, in the cemetery of the St. Boniface Cathedral, to celebrate their success and the prospects of the next steps of negotiations with the provincial and federal governments. A celebration with Métis fiddling, dancing, and traditional food was held at the Community Hall of the Cathedral.

"To be a part of this historic event was truly a gift from the Great Spirit, a God-inspired moment, with Riel surely smiling down upon the great victory and vindication of his sacrifices and a testament to the tenacity, perseverance and excellent leadership of President David Chartrand, his government members and the Métis Nation citizens within the province of Manitoba which brought the Métis Nation of the Northwest into confederation," stated President Clément Chartier of the Métis National Council.

From another perspective, BC Métis Federation President Keith Henry stated, "Many Métis families across Canada are connected to the historic lands of the Red River in Manitoba, and to have the highest court in the lands rule that the Federal Government failed to implement the land grants is known to many of us. The decision will have to be fully reviewed to better understand the future impacts but clearly this is a major victory and will open the Federal Government up to future Métis land claims. Many of us Métis know today that the Federal Government continues to fail our people, and this is another court ruling supporting Métis rights."

## Communist Party of Canada 37th Convention Banquet



Saturday, April 6, 2013  
SteelWorkers Hall  
25 Cecil Street, Toronto  
Cocktails at 6 pm - Dinner at 7 pm

Tickets \$25 - Low income \$15, available from CPC office, 416-469-2446

Meet the delegates and support the CPC!  
Dinner ~ Music ~ Cash bar

# The Achievements of Hugo Chavez

**From Counterpunch, by Carles Muntaner, Joan Benach, and Maria Paez Victor. This article was published on Dec. 14, 2012, while the late Hugo Chavez was hospitalized in Cuba. For a list of footnotes, visit [www.counterpunch.org](http://www.counterpunch.org).**

While Venezuela's president Hugo Chavez is fighting for his life in Cuba, the liberal press of both sides of the Atlantic has not stopped trashing his government. The significance of his victory (12 points ahead of his contender) has yet to be analysed properly, with evidence. It is remarkable that Chavez would win, sick with cancer, outgunned by the local and international media and, rarely acknowledged, an electoral map extremely biased towards the middle and upper classes, with geographical barriers and difficult access to ID's for members of the working classes.

One of the main factors for the popularity of the Chavez Government and its landslide victory in this re-election results of October 2012, is the reduction of poverty, made possible because the government took back control of the national petroleum company PDVSA, and has used the abundant oil revenues, not for benefit of a small class of renters as previous governments had done, but to build needed infrastructure and invest in the social services that Venezuelans so sorely needed. During the last ten years, the government has increased social spending by 60.6%, a total of \$772 billion.

Poverty is not defined solely by lack of income nor is health defined as the lack of illness. Both are correlated and both are multifactorial, that is, determined by a series of social processes. To make a more objective assessment of the real progress achieved by the Bolivarian Revolution in Venezuela during the last 13 years it is essential to review some of the key available data on the social determinants of health and poverty: education, inequality, jobs and income, health care, food security and social support and services.

With regard to these social determinants of health indicators, Venezuela is now the country in the region with the lowest inequality level (measured by the Gini Coefficient) having reduced inequality by 54%, poverty by 44%. Poverty has been reduced from 70.8% (1996) to 21% (2010). And extreme poverty reduced from 40% (1996) to a very low level of 7.3% (2010). About 20 million people have benefited from anti-poverty programs, called "Misiones" (Up to now, 2.1 million elderly people have received old-age pensions - that is 66% of the population while only 387,000 received pensions before the current government).

Education is a key determinant of both health and poverty and the Bolivarian government has placed a particular emphasis on education allotting it more than 6% of GDP. UNESCO has recognized that illiteracy been eliminated furthermore, Venezuela is the 3rd county in the region whose population reads the most. There is tuition free education from daycare to university; 72% of children attend

public daycares and 85% of school age children attend school. There are thousands of new or refurbished schools, including 10 new universities. The country places 2nd in Latin America and 5th in the world with the greatest proportions of university students. In fact, 1 out of every 3 Venezuelans are enrolled in some educational program. It is also a great achievement that Venezuela is now tied with Finland as the 5th country with the happiest population in the world.

Before the Chavez government in 1998, 21% of the population was malnourished. Venezuela now has established a network of subsidized food distribution including grocery stores and supermarkets. While 90% of the food was imported in 1980, today this is less than 30%. Mision Agro-Venezuela has given out 454,238 credits to rural producers and 39,000 rural producers have received credit in 2012 alone. Five million Venezuelan receive free food, four million of them are children in schools and 6,000 food kitchens feed 900,000 people. The agrarian reform and policies to help agricultural producers have increased domestic food supply. The results of all these food security measures is that today malnourishment is only 5%, and child malnutrition which was 7.7% in 1990 today is at 2.9%. This is an impressive health achievement by any standards.

Some of the most important available data on health care and public health are as following:

- \* infant mortality dropped from 25 per 1000 (1990) to only 13/1000 (2010);
- \* An outstanding 96% of the population has now access to clean water (one of the goals of the revolution);

**"The changes in Venezuela are not abstract. The government of President Chavez has significantly improved the living conditions of Venezuelans and engaged them in dynamic political participation to achieve it. This new model of socialist development has had a phenomenal impact all over Latin America."**

- \* In 1998, there were 18 doctors per 10,000 inhabitants, currently there are 58, and the public health system has about 95,000 physicians;

- \* It took four decades for previous governments to build 5,081 clinics, but in just 13 years the Bolivarian government built 13,721 (a 169.6% increase);

- \* Barrio Adentro (i.e., primary care program with the help of more than 8,300 Cuban doctors) has approximately saved 1,4 million lives in 7,000 clinics and has given 500 million consultations;

- \* In 2011 alone, 67,000 Venezuelans received free high cost medicines for 139 pathologies conditions including cancer, hepatitis, osteoporosis, schizophrenia, and others; there

are now 34 centres for addictions, \* In six years 19,840 homeless have been attended through a special program; and there are practically no children living on the streets.

- \* Venezuela now has the largest intensive care unit in the region.

- \* A network of public drugstores sell subsidized medicines in 127 stores with savings of 34-40%.

- \* 51,000 people have been treated in Cuba for specialized eye treatment, and the eye care program "Mision Milagro" has restored sight to 1.5 million

collection as from the sale of oil, since it strengthened its capacity for tax collection and wealth redistribution. In just one decade, the State obtained \$251,694 million (US) in taxes, more than its petroleum income per annum.

Economic milestones these last ten years include reduction in unemployment from 11.3% to 7.7%; doubling the amount of people receiving social insurance benefits, and the public debt has been reduced from 20.7% to 14.3% of GNP and the flourishing of cooperatives has strengthen local

considering the enormous financial and strategic help that the USA agencies and allies gave to the opposition parties and media. Since 2002, Washington channeled \$100 million to opposition groups in Venezuela and this election year alone, distributed \$40-50 million there.

But the Venezuelan people disregarded the barrage of propaganda unleashed against the president by the media that is 95% privately owned and anti-Chavez. The tide of progressive change in the region has started to build the infrastructure for the first truly independent South America with political integration organizations such as Bank of the South, CELAC, ALBA, PETROSUR, MERCOSUR, UNASUR, TELESUR and thus have demonstrated to the rest of the world that there are, after all, economic and social alternatives in the 21st century. Following a different model of development from that of global capitalism in sharp contrast to Europe, debt levels across Latin America are low and falling.

The changes in Venezuela are not abstract. The government of President Chavez has significantly improved the living conditions of Venezuelans and engaged them in dynamic political participation to achieve it. This new model of socialist development has had a phenomenal impact all over Latin America, including Colombia of late, and the progressive left of centre governments that are now the majority in the region see in Venezuela the catalyst that has brought more democracy, national sovereignty and economic and social progress to the region. No amount of neoliberal rhetoric can dispute these facts. Dozens of opinionated experts can go on forever on whether the Bolivarian Revolution is or is not socialist, whether it is revolutionary or reformist (it is likely to be both), yet at the end of the day these substantial achievements remain.

This is what infuriates its opponents the most both inside Venezuela and most notable, from neocolonialist countries. The "objective" and "empiricist" *The Economist* will not publicize this data, preferring to predict once again the imminent collapse of the Venezuelan economy and *El Pais*, in Spain, would rather have one of the architects of the Caracazo (the slaughter of 3000 people in Caracas protesting the austerity measures of 1989), the minister of finance of the former government Moises Naim, go on with his anti-Chavez obsession. But none of them can dispute that the UN Human Development Index situates Venezuela in place #61 out of 176 countries having increased seven places in ten years.

And that is one more reason why Chavez's Bolivarian Revolution will survive Venezuela's Socialist leader.

*Carles Muntaner is Professor of Nursing, Public Health and Psychiatry at the University of Toronto. Maria Paez Victor is a Venezuelan sociologist, specializing in health and medicine. Joan Benach is a Professor of Public Health at the Universitat Pompeu Fabra, Barcelona. ●*



**Hugo Chavez - PRESENTE!**

Venezuelans.

An example of how the government has tried to respond in a timely fashion to the real needs of its people is the situation that occurred in 2011 when heavy tropical rains left 100,000 people homeless. They were right away sheltered temporarily in all manner of public buildings and hotels and, in one and a half years, the government built 250,000 houses. The government has obviously not eradicated all social ills, but its people do recognize that, despite any shortcomings and mistakes, it is a government that is on their side, trying to use its resources to meet their needs. Part of this equation is the intense political participation that the Venezuelan democracy stands for, that includes 30,000 communal councils, which determine local social needs and oversee their satisfaction and allows the people to be protagonists of the changes they demand.

The Venezuelan economy has low debts, high petroleum reserves and high savings, yet Western economists that oppose President Chavez repeat *ad nauseam* that the Venezuelan economy is not "sustainable" and predict its demise when the oil revenues stop. Ironically they do not hurl these dire predictions to other oil economies such as Canada or Saudi Arabia. They conveniently ignore that Venezuela's oil reservoir of 500 billion barrels of oil is the largest in the world and consider the social investment of oil revenues a waste or futile endeavour. However these past 13 years, the Bolivarian government has been building up an industrial and agricultural infrastructure that 40 years of previous governments had neglected and its economy continues to get stronger even in the face of a global financial crisis.

An indication of the increasing diversification of the economy is the fact that the State now obtains almost as much revenue from tax

endogenous economies. In general, the Venezuelan economy has grown 47.4% in ten years, that is, 4.3% per annum.

Today many European countries would look jealously at these figures. Economists who studied in detail the Venezuelan economy for years indicate that, "The predictions of economic collapse, balance of payments or debt crises and other gloomy prognostications, as well as many economic forecasts along the way, have repeatedly proven wrong... Venezuela's current economic growth is sustainable and could continue at the current pace or higher for many years."

According to *Global Finance* and the CIA World Factbook, the Venezuelan economy presents the following indicators: unemployment rate of 8%; 45.5% government (public) debt as a percent of GDP (by contrast the European Union debt/GDP is 82.5%); and a real GDP growth: GDP per capita is \$13,070. In 2011, the Venezuelan economy defied most forecasts by growing 4.2 percent, and was up 5.6 percent in the first half of 2012. It has a debt-to-GDP ratio comfortably below the U.S. and the UK, and stronger than European countries; an inflation rate, an endemic problem during many decades, that has fallen to a four-year low, or 13.7%, over the most recent 2012 quarter. Even *The Wall Street Journal* reports that Venezuela's stock exchange is by far the best-performing stock market in the world, reaching an all-time high in October 2012, and Venezuela's bonds are some of the best performers in emerging markets.

Hugo Chavez's victory had an impact around the world as he is recognized as having spearheaded radical change not only in his own country but in all Latin America where progressive governments have also been elected, thereby reshaping the global order. The victory was even more significant



# GLOBAL CLASS STRUGGLE

## Spain protests slam jobless rate and corruption

Tens of thousands of demonstrators marched in Spain on March 9 to protest record unemployment and the government's handling of the economic and corruption scandals. Rallies were held in Madrid and 60 other cities by 150 organizations, including trade unions representing the construction, car, television, police, and health services industries. The actions were called "against unemployment and for the renewal of democracy," the UGT, one of the biggest trade unions, said in a statement.

General Workers Union spokesperson Candido Mendez told the media that most people reject austerity policies, which were pushing many people toward poverty and away from democracy.

"Bread and a roof at a fair price," read some of the signs waved by protestors. Others brandished pictures of Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy with the words "Wanted: serial con man".

The UGT urged "a radical and urgent change in economic policy in Europe as well as Spain", adding that "the policies of 2012 have been a resounding failure in tackling the crisis and have only made all our problems worse."

Rajoy and his government insist that budget cuts are necessary to meet the deficit-cutting targets set by the EU, and claim that austerity will strengthen Spain's economy in the long run. But the number of unemployed people in Spain has topped the 5 million mark for the first time since such records began.

The overall jobless rate is at 26 per cent, but for youth the figure is over 50 per cent. Many of Spain's young graduates and qualified professionals are emigrating to other countries to find work. Spain's economy is embroiled in its second recession in three years, sparked by the 2011 collapse of the country's housing market.

## Public employees march in Costa Rica

Thousands of public workers and teachers demonstrated on March 8 in the Costa Rican capital of San Jose to oppose a move to eliminate extra salary benefits. Protesters marched from the La Hispanidad roundabout in San Pedro, east of the capital, to the presidential palace, carrying banners, balloons, and flags against a bill that would cut bonuses negotiated decades ago by unions.

Benefits include bonuses to educators, including higher severance pay, extra pay for work outside of the classroom, and "exclusivity" pay, a salary bonus so that teachers don't take a second job. These payments, according to government officials, "create inequities among public workers."

The Labor Ministry drafted the "Public Sector Salary Bill," which

was supposed to be discussed with union representatives. But union representatives refuse to attend a meeting on the legislation. "We will not discuss any elimination of acquired rights," said Beatriz Ferreto, president of the High School Teachers' Association.

The bill would cut nearly 40 percent of teachers' overall salaries by eliminating bonuses earned "on the streets" many years ago, and will affect employees from the entire public sector.



Union leaders point out that tax exemptions to large companies represent 6 percent of the gross domestic product, yet the government insists on blaming teachers wages for Costa Rica's fiscal deficit. A general strike may be called if the government moves forward with the bill in the Legislative Assembly.

## Police raids hit Turkish unions

At five in the morning on Feb. 19, police raided homes across Turkey, arresting 169 members of KESK, the independent confederation of public service unions. The police said this operation was related to DHKP, a banned left wing party. But Lami Ozgen, president of KESK, pointed out that those arrested were members or officials of unions affiliated to KESK.

This is the third operation against KESK trade unionists in 12 months. Police took 73 members in two previous operations in February and June 2012. These trade unionists were charged with involvement in the Union of Kurdish Communities, alleged to be an urban wing of the Kurdistan Workers Party, the armed Kurdish movement fighting for autonomy.

Between 7,000 and 10,000 people are in prison in Turkey facing terrorism trials. Human rights groups accuse the Turkish government of a "vague and overly broad definition of terrorism in Turkish law." Terrorism convictions are frequently obtained on the basis of people's writings, association with certain political groups or participation in peaceful demonstrations.

## Harassment in the workplace

News reports around International Women's Day give some idea of the scale of sexual harassment of women workers across the planet.

According to United Nations figures, between 40 and 50 per cent of women in the European Union experience unwanted sexual advances, physical contact, verbal suggestions or other forms of sexual harassment at their workplace; in Asia-Pacific countries it is 30 to 40 per cent.

In Australia, according to the country's Human Rights Commission, 25 percent of women have been sexually harassed in the workplace. Men can also be victims of workplace sexual harassment but this is much less common.

"Sexual harassment and other forms of harassment and abuse - physical, verbal or psychological - bullying, mobbing, work-related stress and violence affect all professions and sectors and both women and men," says Jane Hodges, ILO Director of the Bureau for Gender Equality. "However, there is still no explicit international human rights treaty prohibition of violence against women and the issue remains poorly-defined and understood under international human rights law."

Many women do not report harassment for fear of losing their jobs. The cost for workers, says Hodges, is heightened stress, loss of motivation and increased risk of accidents at work: "Workplace violence and harassment present a significant barrier to women accessing and progressing through the labour market. It erodes decent working conditions."

Harassment in the workplace also leads to absenteeism, increased turnover and lower job performance and productivity, according to the ILO.

The ILO is working on projects in Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, and with other partners in Brazil, Angola, South Africa, India and China. ILO experts, working with trade unions and employers, have helped draft guides and codes of conduct on preventing sexual harassment in several countries, including China and Viet Nam.

In Viet Nam, for instance, the ILO advised on a new Labour Code, to come into force in May 2013, which for the first time prohibits sexual harassment in workplaces.

## Cleanup dangers at Fukushima nuclear plant

A nuclear worker has told the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) how he was ordered inside wearing insufficient protective gear to tackle the 2011 Fukushima nuclear plant meltdown. The man told ABC that two of his colleagues suffered beta-ray burns when they had to wade through radioactive water. The worker has 17 years' experience at nuclear facilities run by TEPCO, including the Fukushima plant.

Ten days after the tsunami triggered meltdowns in three reactors, the worker and five of his colleagues were ordered into the crippled plant. Wearing raincoats, facemasks and radiation readers, the workers had to cut their way into the damaged turbine building.



They were told to connect a cable and not to worry about the radiation.

"Because I had worked at the Fukushima plant I was told to help lay cables to get power back on to the Reactor 3 turbine building. I was not told what it was like inside," he said. "As we started to work, our radiation readers started beeping. We couldn't see anything inside because it was so dark. When I switched on my head lamp I looked down and saw water reflecting in the light. Water was everywhere."

Three of his colleagues descended into the basement of the building into contaminated water. One of the men had long rubber boots on, but two only had ankle-high boots, and the water was quickly sloshing inside them. The pair suffered beta-ray burns to their feet and legs, although the injuries were not life threatening.

Most of the men complained to their team leader that their radiation readers were sending out warnings that radiation limits had been reached. But the team leader, a manager with a large subcontractor to TEPCO, dismissed their concerns, saying the readers must be broken. Three of the team were exposed to 180 millisieverts of radiation, or nearly four times the annual safe limit.

Hiroyuki Watanabe, a councillor in Iwaki City, was among those sent to investigate work practises at the plant. He says conditions were poor.

"Every time I would return home I would have to strip off my clothes at the entrance and take a bath immediately, just so I didn't bring radiation into my home and family," Watanabe said. "Workers are losing their passion to work there because conditions are deteriorating. Some have had their danger pay ripped off them by subcontractors. Others have been dumped and left without any work at all as soon as they reach their radiation exposure limit."

## Oil workers strike in Gabon

Gabon's powerful ONEP oil workers' union announced on March 9 it had begun an unlimited strike to demand the enforcement of contract terms on working conditions. ONEP is demanding the observance of a November 2010 agreement between the government and oil workers, guaranteeing better labour terms and greater use of Gabonese staff. The strike was being followed at 90 percent of companies operating in Gabon, slowing down their operations, reported the union.

The central African nation of around 1.5 million people produces roughly 240,000 barrels per day of crude oil from a sector dominated by France's Total and Royal Dutch Shell. The oil revenues contribute around 60 percent of the state budget in Gabon, one of the few sub-Saharan African countries to have a dollar-denominated bond.

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

## Send me information on the Communist Party of Canada



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

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

**Parti Communiste du Quebec** (section du Parti communiste du Canada)  
5359 Ave Du Parc, Suite "C"  
Montreal, QC, H2V 4G9  
Email: [pcq@cpc-pcc.ca](mailto:pcq@cpc-pcc.ca) Tél: 438-338-8890

**B.C. Committee CPC**  
706 Clark Drive, Vancouver, BC, V5L 3J1  
604-254-9836 <[cpcinfo.bc@gmail.com](mailto:cpcinfo.bc@gmail.com)>

**Edmonton CPC**  
Box 68112, 70 Bonnie Doon PO  
Edmonton, AB, T6C 4N6  
Tel: 780-465-7893 Fax: 780-463-0209

**Calgary CPC**  
5421 - 8th Ave. SE  
Calgary, AB, T2A 4L7 Tel: 403-248-6489

**Saskatchewan CPC**  
Email: <[mail@communist-party-sk.ca](mailto:mail@communist-party-sk.ca)>

**Ottawa CPC**  
Tel: 613-232-7108

**Manitoba Committee CPC**  
387 Selkirk Ave., Winnipeg, MB, R2W 2M3  
Tel/fax: 204-586-7824

**Ontario Ctee. CPC**  
290A Danforth Ave., Toronto, M4K 1N6  
Tel: 416-469-2446

**Hamilton Ctee. CPC**  
265 Melvin Ave., Apt. 815  
Hamilton, ON, L8H 2K3  
Tel: 905-548-9586

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



# Land remains key to negotiated peace in Colombia

By W.T. Whitney, *People's World*

Small farmers formed the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) in 1964 to defend land. Now land is the first agenda item in peace talks in Havana between the FARC and Colombian government.

Renewed struggle over land roiled the talks in late February as the government delivered a controversial tract of land to new owners and the FARC raised the issue of food sovereignty.

Expressing hope earlier in the month, Humberto de la Calle, leader of the government's negotiating team, envisioned "a true opportunity to end armed conflict in Colombia through dialogue." Optimism vanished, however, on Feb. 23 when Colombian President Juan Manuel Santos threatened, "If talks don't advance, we'll leave the table."

Santos was reacting to FARC criticism of his visit three days earlier to San Vicente del Caguan where he transferred 247,000 acres of land in the area to 342 farm families. In an open letter, FARC Commander Timoleon Jiménez rejected Santos' contention that the land had belonged to FARC commander Jorge Briceño, killed by government forces in 2010. "Let's save the peace, Santos," he asserted.

With an average parcel size of 727 acres, far in excess of most small-farm operations, the land deal raised questions. In fact, reported human rights activist Horacio Duque, Santos was "delivering land titles to members of the Army ... and to their paramilitary stand-ins, land taken away from thousands of peasants." Duque contends Santos sought to "lower pressure from the ultra-right military leaders, loyal to ex-President Uribe, who are demanding that the peace negotiations be suspended."

The land transfer event took place on the anniversary of the military takeover in Caguan in 2002 that marked the end of two years of peace negotiations there. Jiménez castigated Santos' commemoration of failed peace talks, his having "insulted the FARC in every possible way," and his silence on current peace talks. He warned that "official attitudes

... threaten to sink the process into a swamp."

Santos's plans for running for re-election in 2014 are unclear, and his opinion poll ratings are down. Predecessor Alvaro Uribe is spearheading efforts to return right-wing orthodoxy to the presidency and congress.

The FARC general staff on Feb. 26 expressed confidence peace talks would continue. The Colombian people were called upon "to mobilise against what caused and who was responsible for the plundering of 20 million acres over 20 years, [in order to] to facilitate delivery of a good part of the national territory to trans-nationals."

In an interview that day FARC delegation head Ivan Marquez broadened discussion of land to encompass larger societal needs. He referred to "war-making sectors quite interested in sabotaging this process of dialogue that know there are themes they don't want discussed like concentration of land." Land for small farmers would come "from cattle raisers, for example, who have 100 million acres in their hands and a herd of 22 million cows that live like princes on large stretches of land we could put into cultivation, to produce food."

Marquez cited "studies calling for distribution of 50 million acres among small farmers and dedicating them to food sovereignty. We need to produce food for Colombians. Until just recently Colombia was more or less self sufficient, at 90 percent. Now with neo-liberal politics this changed and now we have to import more than 10 million tons of food products."

A week earlier the FARC delegation publicised ten food sovereignty proposals. First, access to food would become a fundamental right. The people would be empowered "to define their own strategies for sustainable production commercialisation and consumption of food products."

Other proposals were: "eradication of hunger; Production of food in stable, health-promoting, and environmentally sustainable ways; consumers guaranteed access to food; protection, stimulation, and financial support" for small

farmers; co-existence of varying production models; protection against land diversion to "mega projects;" cooperation between farmers and city consumers to remove intermediaries; infrastructure improvements; and democratic decision-making.

Nevertheless, while negotiators were coping with the land question, a widespread coffee farmers' strike materialised on Feb. 25. Coffee farmers and cacao, cotton, sugar cane, and rice farmers are now

victims of changing world market conditions and the impact of US, Canadian and European free trade agreements. Food importers undersell Colombian producers. Coffee prices and production have dropped precipitously.

Police violence directed at the strikers reinforced media-inspired prejudice against agrarian agitators. Government spokespersons hinted strikers were taking orders from the FARC. Analyst José Antonio Gutiérrez

points out that, "As is typical of the Colombian government, social protest has been turned into a military problem, and internal security problem."

Gutiérrez reports, however, that "small [coffee] farmers complain [government] help serves only to benefit big producers, and the mid-level and small ones don't see a peso." Says Gutiérrez, "Although the government wants to exclude discussion of the economic model from the peace negotiations, it's impossible to talk about agriculture without taking that model into consideration."

He adds: "Coffee and cacao farmers are showing that social mobilisation in Colombian streets and countryside will make sure such discussion becomes the order of the day. Although Santos ... believes problems of class struggle can be confined to a negotiating table, the Colombian people are demonstrating that deep transformation of the country comes about through the daily construction of ... new political horizons. These winds blowing in favour of the people can no longer be contained by means of violence. Something is happening in Colombia." •



Ivan Marquez, head of the FARC delegation, reads a statement during peace talks in Havana with the Colombian government.

## Venezuelan Communists express homage to President Hugo Chavez

*The leadership of the Communist Party of Venezuela, which was the first political party in that country to endorse the campaign for president by Hugo Chavez in 1998, and which has remained in full solidarity with the Bolivarian Revolution led by Chavez, issued the following statement on his death.*

The Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Venezuela, with deep sorrow over the passing of our President Hugo Rafael Chavez Frias, undisputed leader of the Bolivarian process in Venezuela, Latin America and the world, wishes to express its firm conviction to continue raising the flags of struggle for socialist revolution and revolutionary popular unity.

President Hugo Rafael Chavez Frias dedicated his life to efforts that helped in the construction and defense of the country, seeking the conquest of a society of justice and freedom for the working people of Venezuela, Latin America and the world, who are facing global imperialism and its lackeys.

It is indisputable that our comrade president always took, with exemplary revolutionary discipline and selflessness, the difficult and demanding task of leading our country through the paths of the construction of a more just society, and assumed this task as a lifetime commitment.

From the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of Venezuela we condemn the war politics and media manipulation undertaken by reactionary sectors of Venezuela, under the guidance of U.S. imperialism, the main enemy of the working class and all working people.

We call on the Venezuelan

people, the revolutionary political and social forces to close ranks, to remain alert and vigilant against the claims of imperialism to create chaos and instability in our country. This is why we must demonstrate high levels of organization and disciplined mobilization of our people, building from all instances created in recent years.

We extend to his closest loved and those who loved him dearly in life, our expressions of solidarity and condolences, especially to his sons and daughter and other relatives.

The Political Bureau pays tribute to Comrade President Hugo Chavez, revolutionary who will forever be framed in the collective imagination of our country as an example of strength, dedication, courage and revolutionary greatness.

We call on the Venezuelan people to continue to strive for the courage, fortitude, unselfishness and infinite love for humanity and behaviour specific to revolutionary action of Comrade President Hugo Chavez, to now and forever be an example to our people and new generations of fighters for life. •

### Far-right lose in Austrian votes

Austria's far-right lost power in its stronghold of Carinthia after a drubbing on March 3, when state elections were held in Carinthia and in Lower Austria.

The neofascist Freedom Party saw its share of the vote in Carinthia fall to around 17%, from 45% in 2009, following a string of corruption cases. The Freedom Party also dropped 2 points in Lower Austria to 8.5%, relegating it to fourth place behind Team Stronach - a new eurosceptic party.

Federal Chancellor Werner Faymann's Social Democrats (SPOe) looked set to regain Austria's southern-most state for the first time since 1999, coming on top with 37% of the vote - up 8 percentage points.

Faymann's coalition partners, the centre-right People's Party, retained a majority in Lower Austria with 51%, while the SPOe fell 3.9%, to 21.6%.

The late Jorg Haider sent shockwaves through Europe in 2000 when his far-right party became part of the Austrian federal government. After his drink-driving death in 2008, Carinthia remained the right's main bastion, but corruption cases have eroded its support. The scandals have also added to accusations that Haider, along with making light of nazi concentration camps and praising the Waffen SS, used his power to line his pockets. •

### Communists re-elected in Tripura

By R.K. Sharma

Election results are out for the state of Tripura in northeast India. Communists were re-elected to power for a fifth consecutive term. The Communist Party of India-Marxist and Communist Party of India bagged a total of 50 seats out of 60 in the state parliament.

Communists have won that state's elections seven times in total since 1978. They lost marginally in 1988-93.

The remaining 10 seats went to the Indian National Congress Party, the ruling party nationally.

More than two million voters went to the polls on February 14. There were long queues still at closing time forcing polls to extend their hours in order to let all vote. The turnout hit a record 94 percent.

Communists are seen as honest and devoted to the people. It is often said that Chief Minister Manik Sarkar has the lowest "bank balance" of any other state chief ministers. In contrast, the opposition Congress Party is roiled in deep allegations of corruption at the federal level.

Even before Tripura became a state, in 1952, Communists won the area's first elections. Now what people have appreciated is the level of development. After the results came in Sarkar said, the voters' "verdict" went in favour of "development, peace, stability and good governance." The charges of increasing unemployment and income disparity hurled by opposition did not seem to stick.

While other eastern states face violence and instability from both terrorist sources and the military, Tripura has been managed to avoid this by reaching the public for support. The media says, "Curbing militancy is rewarded."

The other two bastion states for Communists are West Bengal and Kerala, although currently Communists are out of power there. Observers say those states could likely swing back to Communist government as corruption cases on current rulers abound. •

# SOUTH AFRICA: Mobilising to fight the scourge of violence against women and children

By Blade Nzimande,  
General Secretary, South  
African Communist Party

The latest public and media exposition of a series of grotesque incidents of rape, epitomized by the rape and murder of Anene Booyens in Bredarsdorp, has further underlined one of the most serious challenges facing South African society. This is a moment that requires both a broader societal reflection as well as focus on the organizational challenges posed by this.

The SACP has joined millions of other South Africans in their outrage against the latest incidents of rape. We pledge to continue mobilizing all our structures and our people to confront the scourge of the violence against women and children in all its manifestations.

These incidents of sexual violence against women and children are partly a reflection of some of the very serious challenges of social disintegration facing some of our communities, especially the working class ones. The combination of poverty and patriarchy has often turned anger inward in some of our poorest communities. While the scourge of rape, women and children's abuse faces all communities, it is true that it tends to assume its most violent and grotesque forms in poorer communities.

Whilst sections of our society have often legitimately turned to government to deal with these matters, the SACP rejects the stance of some of the opposition parties, the media and other opportunists who put all the blame on government for the scourge of violence against women and children. The SACP of course supports engagement with government on its strategies to deal with this, but this is a broader

societal challenge, that must be tackled as such.

It places particular responsibility on the shoulders of especially progressive organized formations in our society, whether they are political, civic, social or economic, including government. Of course government must be robustly engaged around issues such as the necessity for specialized courts or police units that must deal with crimes against women and children. Whether we go this route or not, it is very urgent that the capacity of the criminal justice system is strengthened to deal swiftly and effectively with crimes against women and children.

Indeed for the SACP, the principal structural foundation for violence against women and children is the capitalist system - a system that reproduces, and in fact often thrives on, class, racial and gender inequalities, including reinforcing patriarchy in society. Within this context not only does capitalist exploitation impoverishes workers and their communities, but particularly creates conditions for the super-exploitation of women workers and their diminished status in society. For the SACP the struggle against violence against women must be premised on a broader struggle against capitalism.

It is important that we intensify the struggle to confront the triple challenges of poverty, inequality and unemployment in the current period. It is in the context of these challenges that the breeding ground for patriarchy and violence against women is to be found. Much as the struggle to defeat violence against women and children has a moral dimension, but it cannot be won simply on this front. It will in the end be won in organized struggles, led by the

working class, for the radical transformation of our socio-economic terrain. But even this struggle on its own will not succeed, unless premised on the organization of women as part of the overall struggle for radical socio-economic transformation.

In order to deal with this scourge it is important that the struggle against violence against women and children becomes an everyday people's struggles rather than something that is periodically highlighted when cases like those of Anene hit the media. Media driven struggles are not capable of a sustained battle against the scourge of violence against women, as it tends to be sensationalist, important as the role of the media is in this struggle. Media driven responses can assist to highlight these cases, but have the limitation of encouraging our people to respond primarily to cases that have been publicized.

The principal challenge for all progressive social and political formations is that of mass mobilization in our communities against violence against women in general, and particularly against the scourge of rape. The ANC's call for the establishment of street committees is one important platform through which we can mobilise local communities and even households in order to conscientise, mobilise against, and expose the perpetrators of violence against women. Women

should also be organized to play a prominent role in our street and area committees, so that they themselves become the principal drivers in the transformation of our streets, localities and households. The struggle against violence against women and children must be at the centre of the challenge to rebuild vibrant street and area committees.

The struggle against the scourge of violence against women must also be elevated into all of our sectoral formations and struggles. All of our activists in these formations must ensure that the issue of women's struggles and dignity feature prominently. This means that fighting the scourge of violence in society must be part of the activities of these bodies - whether they be school governing bodies, the churches, civic organization, stokvels, co-operatives, trade union collectives in the workplace, etc. Every terrain of struggle and organized activity must simultaneously become a terrain for intensifying the struggle against violence directed at women.

In the light of the above, particular responsibility rests with the voting district-based branches of the SACP. These structures are closest to the households in our various communities, and the SACP is deliberately restructuring itself to get closer to our communities. We also expect our branch cadres to actively participate in all the sectoral

structures at local level, and also ensure that the issue of women's struggles and dignity is placed at the centre of the activities of these structures. This is in fact the vanguard role that the SACP branch can play at local level.

It is also of absolute importance that we incorporate a strong component on women's struggles, patriarchy and transformation of gender relations into all of our political education activities. Dedicated pamphlets and guidelines must be developed to be studied and used by our own cadre. This will serve a double purpose of empowering our own cadres and well as educating them as some are not themselves innocent on these matters, as well as to develop a commissariat capable of educating communities broadly.

The history of the struggles against women's oppression as well as our own history of the struggle against apartheid tells us that this is a struggle that will be won through hard work on the ground amongst our communities. And it is only a principled co-operation between mobilized communities and state organs that will ultimately defeat the scourge of all forms of violence in our society, including violence against women. It is also on the terrain of fighting violence against women that we must intensify the struggle and propaganda against the capitalist system.

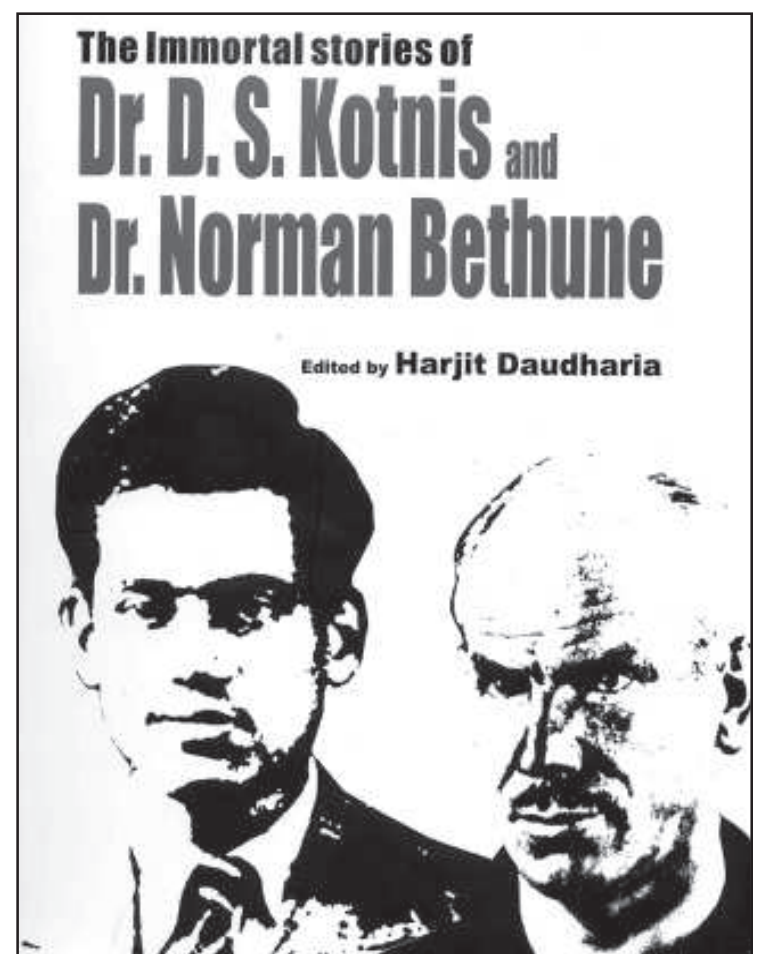
Asikhulumel!! •

## New book on Dr. Kotnis and Norman Bethune

Most progressive Canadians are familiar with the historic legacy of Dr. Norman Bethune. An early pioneer of the movement for universal medicare, Bethune was an ardent foe of the capitalist system and fascist aggression. He joined the Communist Party of Canada, offering his enormous medical talents to anti-fascist struggles in Spain and then in China, where he died in 1939.

Less well-known in this country is Dr. Dwarkanath Shanta Ram Kotnis, who went to China in 1938 as the youngest of five doctors on a medical mission sent by the Indian National Congress as volunteers in the war of resistance against Japanese militarism. Kotnis died four years later at the age of 32, while holding the post of director of the Bethune International Peace Hospital in northern China.

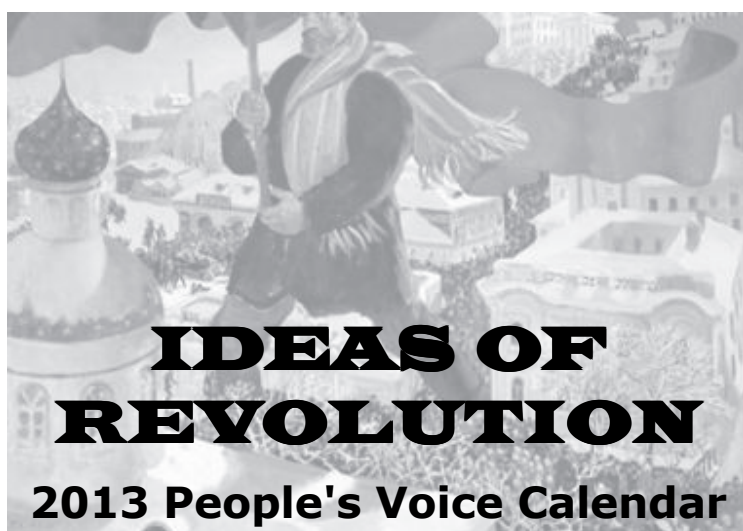
Author and political activist Harjit Daudharia brings together the stories of these two remarkable internationalists in a new book, *The immortal stories of Dr. D.S. Kotnis and Dr. Norman Bethune*. Filled with fascinating details and images of their lives, the book is a welcome addition to any library. Dedicated to the



memory of Darshan Singh Canadian, the veteran Communist activist who played important political roles in both Canada and India, the book is available for \$10 plus postage from the BC office of the Comm-

unist Party of Canada, 706 Clark Drive, Vancouver, V5L 3J1. Call 604-254-9836 for information on ordering a copy.

A more detailed review will appear in a future issue of People's Voice. •



The People's Voice Calendar for 2013 - "Ideas of Revolution" - is now on sale. Dedicated to the struggles of the international working class for peace, liberation, equality and socialism, this year's calendar features quotations by a wide range of revolutionaries, artists, and writers, such as Nelson Mandela, Rosa Luxemburg, Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, V.I. Lenin, Tim Buck, Soong Ching Ling, Germaine Greer, Evo Morales, Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, Claudia Jones, Fidel Castro, Jose Saramago, and Frida Kahlo. The 14-month calendar (Jan. 2013-Feb. 2014) also includes notable dates from the history of the people's movements, and statutory holidays and celebrations for the year.

"Ideas of Revolution" can be ordered by mail for \$10 in Canada, or \$15 in the United States (price includes mailing costs). Send a cheque to People's Voice, 706 Clark Drive, Vancouver, BC, V5L 3J1. For information on bulk orders of five or more calendars, contact our Vancouver Editorial Office: <pvoice@telus.net>, tel. 604-255-2041.

Residents of Ontario can order directly from the Ontario Bureau of People's Voice, 290A Danforth Ave., Toronto, M4K 1N6, ph. 416-469-2446. The Calendar will be on sale at our Manitoba Bureau (387 Selkirk Ave., Winnipeg), and our Quebec Bureau (5359 Ave. du Parc, Montreal).

## Solidarity with Israeli Apartheid Week

*From a statement by the International Commission, Young Communist League of Canada*

The Canadian government's position on Israel has gone from shamefully silent to actively supportive of violence, occupation and apartheid in the few short years of the Harper Conservative Party regime. The latest of the Harper government's attacks on the Palestinian people is voting against the UN's recognition of Palestine as a state. The Canadian government, along with just a handful of other countries, including the US and Israel, voted against making Palestine a non-member observer state. Canada's Minister of foreign affairs, John Baird, stated that official recognition of Palestine "will undermine the objective of reaching a comprehensive, lasting and just settlement for both sides."

Harper's blind support of this violent and racist government is in fact accomplishing the opposite. By actively supporting

the Israeli government, Harper is supporting the recent war ("Operation Pillar of Defense") that saw hundreds of Palestinian murdered, including children. Israeli "strategic" targets included soccer stadiums, media stations, and bureaucratic offices. The Canadian government's support continues the degradation and oppression of Palestine, perpetuating the cycle of poverty, violence and racism against the Palestinian people, which increases violence. The Conservatives support contributes to Israel's continued actions that do nothing but further escalate the conflict in the region, creating further bloodshed that is crippling the Palestinian people....

It's important for the youth, student and other progressive forces in Canada to stay informed, engaged and pressure the Harper government on this issue. In this direction the YCL endorses with full support Israeli Apartheid Week being held on campuses across Canada and now around the world. We demand

that the Harper Conservative government reverse its attack on the people of Palestine and their demand to become truly independent and sovereign, with full support both financially and diplomatically. Until this is won, the YCL will continue to mobilize in solidarity with the Palestinian cause and support the Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions movement. •

### CCFA calls for apology from PM Harper

Elizabeth Hill, President of the Canadian-Cuban Friendship Association (Toronto) sent the following letter on March 10 to Prime Minister Stephen Harper.

Dear Mr. Harper:

I am writing on behalf of the Canadian-Cuban Friendship Association Toronto to strongly protest your unkind, insensitive comments on the death of Venezuela's president Hugo Chavez. I call them "comments" because they were not condolences - which are supposed to be an expression of sympathy to those who are feeling pain arising from death or misfortune.

Hugo Chavez had just been re-elected president of his country and had returned home after being treated in Cuba for cancer. Hugo Chavez was deeply loved by the majority of the Venezuelan people and his record of accomplishments for the poor, the sick and uneducated is truly remarkable. His accomplishments are celebrated around the world by peoples struggling for democracy, peace and justice.

We were shocked and embarrassed by your comments which are an interference in the sovereignty of another country. It is especially hypocritical for you to comment on the democracy and respect for human rights considering what your government has been doing against the rights of the Canadian people and in particular the aboriginal peoples.

We believe an apology is due. •

[www.ycl-ljc.ca](http://www.ycl-ljc.ca)

### Pasta Dinner for People's Voice Sunday, March 31, Vancouver

Lower Mainland readers are invited to the next **Left Film Night**, Sunday, March 31, 7 pm, at the Centre for Socialist Education, 706 Clark Drive, Vancouver. Before the free screening of "The Queen of Versailles", come at 6 pm for our annual Pasta Dinner, \$12 (veg. or meat sauce, salad, garlic bread, dessert, coffee). Proceeds to PV Fund Drive. Call 604-255-2041 for details.

### Correction

We apologize for a few errors which appeared in our obituary for Al Warrington in the Feb.15-28 issue of PV. Comrade Warrington passed away at age 95 (not 93). He was financial secretary (not president) of the Mine Mill & Smelter Workers Union in Trail, BC, and he served in the Seaforth Highlanders during the WW2 battles to liberate Italy from fascism.

**Celebrating MAY DAY 2013**  
Build a Common Front Against Austerity & War  
**Political & Cultural Evening Sunday, April 28th**  
Steelworkers Hall, 25 Cecil Street, Toronto  
Doors open 4:30 pm - Program begins at 5:00 pm  
Speakers | Live Music, Poetry & Dance | Food & Refreshments  
Free Admission  
Organized by the United May Day Committee  
Come to the Rally Wednesday May 1st

**People's Voice 2013 Fund Drive... Send your contribution today!**

### Bethune door prize winner

The winner of the door prize at the annual Norman Bethune Dinner on Feb. 23 is Panagiotis Bambulas of Toronto, who receives a one-week all-inclusive trip for two to Cuba. Organizers report that it was a great evening! People's Voice looks forward to being the media sponsor for next year's Bethune Dinner, and we send our thanks to all who sold tickets and helped put together the event. •

## What's Left

### Victoria, BC

**Pre-election rally for Ancient Forests and Forestry Jobs**, Sat., March 16, meet 11:30 at Centennial Square, 12 noon rally at Legislature, organized by Ancient Forest Alliance.

### Vancouver, BC

**La Trova Nuestra**, Friday, March 29, 8 pm, monthly pena with Latin American performers, \$10, refreshments available, at the CSE, 706 Clark Drive.

**Idle No More**, rally 5 pm, Sat., March 30, from Aboriginal Friendship Centre, Commercial & Hastings.

**Left Film Night**, Sunday, March 31, 7 pm, Centre for Socialist Education, 706 Clark Drive. Screening of "Queen of Versailles", Free, donations welcome. Come at 6 pm for our annual Left Film Night pasta dinner, \$12, proceeds to PV Fund Drive. Call 604-2455-2041 for info.

**Stop cuts to the disabled in BC budget**, rally Sunday, April 14, 12-3, 800 Robson St., wear pink.

### White Rock, BC

**Social Justice Film Festival**, Friday nights, 7 pm, at First United, 15385 Semiahmoo: *Religulous*, March 22; *War Made Easy*, April 26; *ReGENERATION*, May 31. Sponsored by White Rock Social Justice Film Society.

### Winnipeg, MB

**World Festival of Youth and Students**, Manitoba preparatory committee founding meeting, Tue., March 26, 7 pm at Workers Organizing Resource Centre, 280 Smith St., mezzanine level. For info call 792-3371.

**Marxism Course**, contact the Communist Party of Canada Manitoba Committee to join up, 586-7824 or cpc-mb@changetheworldmb.ca.

### Toronto, ON

**Cafe Cuba**, Friday, March 15, 7 pm, 1432 Bathurst St. (corner of St. Clair and Bathurst), with Cuban Consul General Javier Domokos, "Ask me about the current changes in Cuba!" Free, sponsored by Canadian-Cuban Friendship Association Toronto, [www.ccfatoronto.ca](http://www.ccfatoronto.ca), 416-410-8254.

**Communist Party 37th Convention Banquet**, Sat., April 6, Steelworkers Hall, 25 Cecil Street. Cocktails 6 pm, dinner 7 pm, cash bar, music, tickets \$25 (low-income \$15), call the CPC office, 416-469-2446.

### Montreal, QC

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

## People's Voice deadlines

April 1-15 issue: Thursday, March 21

April 16-30 issue: Thursday, April 4

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

## REDS ON THE WEB

[www.comunist-party.ca](http://www.comunist-party.ca)

[www.peoplesvoice.ca](http://www.peoplesvoice.ca)

[www.ycl-ljc.ca](http://www.ycl-ljc.ca)

[www.solidnet.org](http://www.solidnet.org)



## La Trova Nuestra

Friday, March 29, 8:00 pm

### "La Peña Nuestra"

Centre For Socialist Education, Vancouver  
706 Clark Drive (Clark and Georgia st)  
\$10 Entry

About Vancouver's "La Trova Nuestra"

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

# The new scramble for Africa

By T.J. Petrowski

As the capitalist crisis continues throughout the world, the imperialist powers, with the enthusiastic support of Canada, are seeking to recolonize Africa, in what could accurately be described as the "New Scramble for Africa." The former colonial rulers, France and Britain, along with the U.S. are at the forefront of this aggression.

The latest intervention in Mali, and before that in Libya, are the more recent expressions of this new scramble. All across Africa the imperialist powers are intervening in an effort to secure geostrategic areas and precious resources, similar to the interventions in the Middle East, but with far less coverage in the media.

U.S. imperialism is expanding its African Command (AFRICOM) to include more than 35 countries, with 3000 troops permanently stationed on the continent. Currently the U.S. is undertaking military operations in countries as diverse as Nigeria, the Central African Republic, Mali, Botswana, Morocco, Somalia, Senegal, Niger, Burkina Faso, Liberia, and Uganda.

The "war on terror" ruse is being used to justify increased American military involvement in Africa, but as with elsewhere in the world, it is easy to see through this thin veil. The recent outbreak of violence in Mali, for example, can be directly linked back to the Western intervention in Libya, wherein these same Islamic extremists were armed by the West, Saudi Arabia, and Qatar to overthrow the Gaddafi government. Furthermore, the U.S. and other imperialist states as well as the Gulf states are arming the same Islamic extremists in Syria in an effort to overthrow the al-Assad government, which would provide Israel and the U.S. a launching pad for a future attack against Iran.

Western imperialism manufactures "terrorist" threats through its destructive interventions in foreign countries, and then later uses the threat of terrorism as justification for further interventions, creating a permanent state of war.

The U.S. depends on Africa for more than a quarter of the oil and raw materials it requires. But China has now surpassed the U.S. as Africa's largest trading partner, and the U.S. ruling class, unable to compete with China economically, is resorting to militarism to secure these precious resources.

The former colonial rulers,

2011, during the civil war, 2% of the world's global cocoa output sat in the harbour of Abidjan. The Central African Republic has extensive natural resources, especially oil and mineral deposits of diamonds, gold, copper, etc., and oil has been discovered in Chad.

Britain has increased its military forces in Africa in the last few

interested in building a pipeline from Nigeria to Europe, to exploit the country's oil and natural gas reserves more thoroughly.

The German ruling class is also seeking to exploit Africa's wealth in an imperialist rivalry with the U.S., France, and China.

Although Germany was not involved in the intervention in Libya, the German ruling class has been supportive of France's intervention in Mali, and German forces are active in the Horn of Africa. German energy and agricultural companies are investing heavily in the Ivory Coast and elsewhere in West Africa in competition with French and Chinese capital. A century after the genocide of the indigenous people of German South West Africa, Germany is once again a colonial power in the scramble for Africa.

Canada has been an enthusiastic supporter of these interventions. Canada shamefully assisted the U.S. and NATO intervention in Libya, and is now assisting the French intervention in Mali. Knowing Canadians would not support Canada's involvement in Mali, the Harper Government has attempted to describe our role as limited, but the mission has been extended repeatedly, and a Canadian special forces general

has been quoted saying this will be an "ongoing" mission for Canada.

In addition to direct involvement in Mali, Canadian forces are now in Niger and Mauritania, allegedly for "training" purposes and for military exercises with U.S. and European troops. Canadian military bases are being built in Kenya, Tanzania, and elsewhere on the continent.

Canada is a major economic player in Africa, and a dozen Canadian mining companies have more than half a billion dollars of assets in Mali alone. Neither the NDP nor the Liberals have opposed the Conservatives' intervention in Mali, rather they have criticized the Harper Government for not acting fast enough!

Working people should not believe the propaganda campaign of the ruling elite. The "terrorist" threat is manufactured by the ruling class to justify its imperialist agenda, while in the last decade the imperialist powers have made use of these same "Islamic terrorists" when seeking to overthrow anti-imperialist governments. Imperialist interventions abroad benefit no one but the ruling class, and Canada needs an independent foreign policy of peace and disarmament. ●



France and Britain, but also other European states, are actively engaged throughout the continent to control their share of the wealth.

France is continuing its intervention in Mali and the Central African Republic, both impoverished nations with immense natural wealth, in an effort to "defend" the countries from rebel advances. In other words, France requires compliant regimes in power to be able to exploit the resources of these countries. Much of Mali's arable land and social infrastructure have been eliminated to make way for French capital. In 2011, France intervened for "humanitarian" reasons in Libya and the Ivory Coast, and French forces are stationed across the continent in Gabon, Niger, Senegal, Chad, and Djibouti.

West Africa is crucial to the French ruling class because of its dependence on the resources of the region. The vast majority of the uranium needed for France's nuclear industry comes from West Africa, especially Niger. French special forces have been deployed in Niger specifically to defend the uranium mines from a possible spill over of the conflict in Mali. The ports in the Ivory Coast have global economic implications, and in

years and has sent troops to assist in the French intervention in Mali. Of interest to British imperialism are countries with extensive oil and gas reserves, especially Nigeria and Algeria. Algeria now supplies 5% of Britain's natural gas, and BP has a stake at the Amenas facility in southern Algeria. Additionally, Britain is

## DPRK defies imperialist stranglehold

By Sean Burton

People's Korea has faced a plethora of new challenges since December. On December 12, the DPRK successfully placed a satellite into orbit with its Unha (Galaxy)-3 carrier system. The USA and its allies view such rocket systems to be in violation of UN resolutions designed to deny the DPRK the right to produce long-range ballistic missiles. Given the obvious similarities in the technology, it is a convenient way for the imperialist clique to heap more criticism and sanctions on Korea. Despite being a peaceful launch related to space-exploration, the economic stranglehold against the DPRK is

being tightened even more.

Naturally, the mainstream media had only praise for South Korea's own satellite launch in January 2013. It is interesting that despite the South's economic clout and foreign support, they were beaten to the punch by what we are supposed to believe is a state teetering on the edge of collapse and full of starving people. The media also has not made much about new South Korean missiles designed for precision strikes anywhere within the Korean peninsula, or the order for all border troops to respond with fire to any provocation without having to first consult ROK military headquarters. Instead, people are constantly expected to accept that the DPRK is solely responsible for all problems and confrontations in the region.

Similar misrepresentations are applied to the DPRK's nuclear weapons program. No one can deny that such weapons are deplorable, but they can nonetheless prove useful when being threatened by a country with vast force and nuclear weapons of its own. The DPRK probably could have developed such weaponry decades ago if it really cared to. Only since the fall of the Soviet Union has Korea actively sought nuclear weapons, since the US was beginning to apply further pressure and direct threat of annihilation to one of the world's few remaining socialist states.

The DPRK's underground test in mid-February was significantly smaller than the US devices used in Japan in 1945. Once again, this test promoted a round of sanctions. What could possibly be left to sanction? It clearly does not bother the US that this economic warfare is causing far more harm than it solves. Indeed, that's precisely the point! They want Koreans to suffer

as punishment for not going along with the capitalist order. The imperialists constantly insist that the DPRK is squandering resources on rockets when it should be feeding its people. In that scenario, the DPRK is acting in a vacuum, without rhyme or reason, "just for the hell of it". The idea that if the DPRK were to cut back its military spending, which is already miniscule compared to its enemies, the US and its supporters would back off and become friendly to a socialist state is supremely naive. Libya serves as a fine example in that regard!

The US has continued to make threats, constantly reminding the Koreans that "all options are on the table", ominously including a preemptive strike to prevent another nuclear test. The joint US-ROK military exercises, very much a part of intimidating the Korean People's Army, are once again going ahead this March. The claim that the exercises are defensive in nature is rather ludicrous given the location and scale. Hundreds of thousands of troops participate, and the maritime exercises in particular get quite close to a disputed border zone that has been the site of past incidents.

In response, the supreme command of the Korean People's Army released an important statement on March 5, asserting the DPRK's right to autonomy and citing the war games as violations of the Korean armistice. The statement threatened to disregard the armistice agreement if it means guarding the DPRK's autonomy. The media has been going crazy over the statement, but the KPA has in the past made many such warnings not to be trifled with. This one should not be seen any differently. ●

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