

MARCH
16-31,
2011

VOL. 19
#6

\$1.50

people's VOICE

Quebec on the march

See page 12

Printed in Canada by union labour
on recycled paper  118-M
Publications Mail Agreement #40011632

STOP imperialist intervention in Libya!

...pages 6-7



The USS Kearsage (above) and the USS Ponce steamed into the Mediterranean on March 3. The Kearsage "amphibious ready group" includes 800 marines, a fleet of helicopters and a vast range of weaponry to conduct military operations such as an assault against Libya.

Corporate tax cuts...

billions in revenue
handed over to the
wealthy: page 5

3 More of the same?

British Columbia has a new premier to replace the hated Gordon Campbell. But Christy Clark sings the same song as her former boss, to the tune dictated by the same corporate interests.

INSIDE

5 UK wage cuts loom

Studies indicate that British workers are in for a shock, as major cuts to their wages and social benefits are set to take place over the next few years.

10 Seeger backs BDS

Pete Seeger, the 92-year-old folksinger/songwriter and human rights activist, has declared support for the international "boycott-disinvestment-sanctions campaign against Israel's apartheid policies.

Petition against F-35 stealth fighters

Ceasefire.ca has launched a petition against the purchase of F-35 stealth fighters for the Canadian military. Check out the petition at www.ceasefire.ca, and read these 10 plus one great reasons to sign.

1. The F-35 is for "shock and awe" combat missions
Its stealth capability and weapons are intended for U.S.-style first strike attacks, a role Canada does not need to play.

2. The F-35 is way too expensive
According to National Defence's estimates, the cost of purchasing 65 U.S.-built F-35 stealth fighters is between \$16 and \$21 billion - the most expensive military project in Canadian history.

3. The government's finances are in bad shape
The annual federal deficit is expected to reach \$56 billion this year, and cuts to social programs are expected.

4. The F-35 is ill suited for the Arctic
Its stealth characteristic is not needed, and only one engine instead of two puts pilots at risk of being stranded in the far north by an engine failure.

5. Little, if any, of the \$16 billion will stay in Canada
Unlike previous military contracts, in this one the Harper government has not required the U.S. manufacturer Lockheed Martin to invest "dollar-for-dollar" in Canada.

6. It is costing Canada job opportunities
Buying any other aircraft would allow the government to require "Industrial and Regional Benefits." Instead, the Harper Conservatives just hope we'll get contracts from Lockheed Martin.

7. The F-35 is still a model airplane
The F-35 is still being tested and production is years behind schedule, leaving operating and maintenance costs completely unknown.

8. There was no competition
In a sweetheart deal, the Harper Conservatives committed to Lockheed Martin rather than inviting other firms to put in proposals, increasing the cost by an estimated 20 per cent.

9. There is no hurry to replace our CF-18s
Canada's current fleet of CF-18s just completed a \$2.6 billion upgrade, and could easily remain in service until the mid-2020s.

10. There is no Russian arctic threat
NORAD's U.S. commander said he sees no military challengers in the arctic, and he is focused on preventing another 9/11 type of attack.

PLUS There is no contract to break
Despite the government's commitment to Lockheed Martin's F-35 stealth fighter, there is no signed contract and no firm price expected until 2013, or even later. ●

Fight the capitalist media monopoly Support the PV Fund Drive!

The first replies to our 2011 Fund Drive are arriving. Since our appeal was mailed in Vancouver, most of the initial replies have been from British Columbia, which has so far racked up about \$1210 in donations. Another \$935 has arrived from other provinces, including \$558 from Ontario. Just a few days into the Drive, we have received a total of \$2145! Thanks to all those who have sent contributions. Remember that we want to raise as much as possible before a possible federal election may force us to switch gears temporarily, so please send your donation today if possible.

The growing domination of the media is a global problem. Things are bad enough in Canada, where Stephen Harper's Tories are treated with kid gloves. Now, as we go to press, one of the world's most right-wing "media moguls", Rupert Murdoch, is moving to take over nearly half of the British mass media.

As the Avaaz website notes, Rupert Murdoch has used his media empire to clamour for war in Iraq, to help elect George W. Bush, to spread hatred against Muslims and immigrants, to block global action on climate change, and to smear politicians who refuse his orders.

Seizing control of the British media would give Murdoch enormous new power to control the flow of news and information, and to spread disinformation against campaigns for peace, human rights, social justice and the environment. Britons are angry about Murdoch's bid, and even right-wing Prime Minister Cameron's Con-Dem government is said to be divided over the issue.

Rupert Murdoch consistently threatens elected leaders with biased media coverage unless they do his bidding. He has manipulated US, British and Australian politics for years, and now he wants more complete control. In the US, most of the likely Republican presidential candidates are actually paid employees of Murdoch! When his Fox News Network was shunned by Barack Obama as a propaganda mouthpiece, it spawned the far right "tea party" and broadcast hate-filled attacks against the President's healthcare reforms, setting the stage for Republican gains in the 2010 congressional elections.

Last year, Murdoch had lunch with Prime Minister Stephen Harper, whose chief aide is working to set up a Fox-style propaganda TV network in Canada. Widespread protests have so far prevented this network from being funded by taxpayers, and another mass campaign has temporarily blocked an attempt to remove journalistic standards that prevent media outlets from spreading deliberate lies to the public.

But the struggle for media democracy has another, even more important side. Even if Rupert Murdoch disappeared tomorrow, the mass media in countries like the U.S., Britain and Canada would remain firmly in the hands of capitalist corporations. Most of the content found on the Internet is provided by the same corporations.

That's why it's crucial for the working class to build and strengthen our own media outlets, particularly those like People's Voice which challenge the ideology of capitalism. By fighting for a socialist alternative, People's Voice goes to the heart of the matter, demanding that the working people who create all wealth must also have the power to decide their own futures. A stronger print edition of



Here's my contribution to the PV Fund Drive!

Enclosed please find my donation of \$ _____
to the 2011 People's Voice Press Fund Drive.

Name _____

Address _____

City/town _____

Prov. _____ Postal Code _____

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

OUR CITY, OUR SERVICES, OUR FUTURE!

April 9 Community Day of Action in Toronto

Call issued by Good Jobs For All Coalition, Canadian Federation of Students-Ontario, Toronto and York Region Labour Council, Ontario Federation of Labour, Canadian Labour Congress

Since taking office in November, Toronto Mayor Rob Ford has begun implementing his own personal agenda, frighteningly similar to the Tea Party Republicans in Wisconsin and Ohio whose actions have sparked massive protests. Ford has made it clear that he is hell bent on selling off public services, derailing public transit, targeting trade unions and rolling-back Toronto's environmental plans. This style of "aggressive conservatism" is designed to usher in a new wave of Harris-style cuts across Ontario.

Toronto should be a city that everyone can be proud of - one that serves all its residents regardless of income, which celebrates its diversity and plays a leadership role in crucial areas like climate change and social equality. Today, all of these priorities are under threat in Toronto. Tomorrow they could be challenged in any town or city in Ontario!

What's at stake?

- * Services and programs that serve every resident and community
- * Public transit serving all neighbourhoods
- * Environmental leadership in challenging climate change
- * Keeping public control of public services
- * Safeguarding vital public assets
- * Good jobs and the fundamental rights of workers

On Saturday, April 9, come to Toronto City Hall to help defend good jobs, public services and greener cities throughout Ontario. Together, we can challenge the conservative agenda that is threatening our jobs, our livelihoods and our neighbourhoods.

For information on the rally and about buses to Toronto, contact the rally organizers:

Eddie Ste. Marie (CLC), 416-441-3710 x226 or estemarie@clc-ctc.ca
Laurie Hardwick (OFL), 416-571-3087 or lhardwick@ofl.ca ●

People's Voice will have an immediate impact on the Internet - check out our Facebook page for one important example of how we are reaching a much larger readership.

Once again this year, we want to express our appreciation of your solidarity. For each donation of \$100, contributors will have their choice of a PV 2011 Calendar, a framed portrait of a revolutionary fighter, or a copy of "Great October," a DVD dedicated to the Great October Socialist Revolution of 1917. Check out your recent appeal letter for details, and please respond

quickly and generously!

Vancouver-area readers are urged to mark one of our first fundraisers on your calendars. On Sunday, March 27, the monthly Left Film Night (at the Centre for Socialist Education, 706 Clark Drive) welcomes you to a Pasta Dinner starting at 6 pm. Admission is just \$12 (vegetarian option available) with proceeds going to the Fund Drive. The film to follow at 7 pm will be "Peace, Propaganda and the Promised Land," about biased North American media coverage of the Israeli occupation of Palestine. ●

MAY DAY 2011 GREETING ADS

To mark May Day 2011, 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 22; if PV is preparing the layout, the deadline is April 20. Please check with us about the format if your ad is being sent electronically.

Ad rates (based on 5 column page):

One column-inch.....	\$15
One column x 2 inches.....	\$25
Two columns x 2 inches.....	\$45
Two columns x 3 inches.....	\$60
Two columns x 5 inches.....	\$90
Three columns x 4 inches.....	\$110
Two columns x 7 inches.....	\$140
Three columns x 7 inches.....	\$180

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

Same club led by different smile and a different gender

The new leader of the BC Liberal Party, Christy Clark, may be the only person who believes that Gordon Campbell left the province in better shape at the time of his departure than at his debut. Sam Hammond, BC provincial leader of the Communist Party, points out that, "This is more than naïveté. It is a declaration of more of the same old, same old."

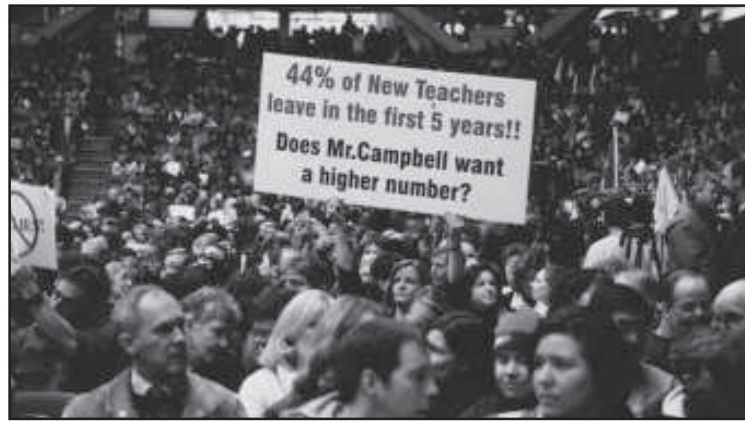
"Christy Clark claims to put 'Family First' but her vision of family values nicely skips over unemployment, homelessness, child poverty, education cuts and the impacts of privatization," points out Hammond. "Her vision of family does not include the working people".

Despite having portrayed herself during the leadership campaign as an outsider, Clark played a leading role in the first draconian term of the

Gordon Campbell Liberals. Her term as Education Minister was marked with unprecedented conflict and chaos.

"Christy Clark made attacking the BC Teachers Federation one of her main priorities," Hammond points out. "The imposition of collective agreements on teachers is the most glaring example of her hostility."

Clark also made legislative changes, and changed the school funding formula, with the result of increased class sizes and decreased supports for all students, but particularly those with special needs. She not only froze education funding, but also announced the government would not pay for teacher salary increases agreed to by the previous NDP government. School Boards were forced to cover the increases,



Christy Clark was B.C.'s Education Minister for much of Gordon Campbell's first term, a period of unrelenting attacks on teachers and other public employees. (PV photo: K. Cariou)

resulting in unprecedented cuts, amounting to \$25.5 million in Vancouver alone. Even future Liberal Cabinet Minister, Mary Polak, then a Surrey School Board trustee, expressed anger at Clark's actions.

She was famous for a flurry of policy announcements that School Boards were expected to implement with little or no notice.

Clark's short term at Ministry of Children and Families, was similarly marked by chaos. Nor should it be forgotten that Christy Clark was Deputy Premier for the scandal-ridden sale of BC Rail.

"Clark championed the giveaway of the publicly owned BC Rail to private ownership",

Hammond stated, despite having helped write the Liberal election platform that promised not to sell BC Rail." The new Premier Clark has repeatedly rejected calls for a public inquiry into the BC Rail scandal.

"She is not an outsider," says Hammond. "She actively participated at the Cabinet table in some of the worst attacks on working families in the history of BC, from tearing up labour agreements and reducing welfare, to presiding over one of the greatest transfers of wealth from the public coffers to private hands. It is clear from her record that the family that really comes first for Christy Clark is the 'Coalition of Corporate Interest'. The Liberal Party in British Columbia has not changed leadership. It is the same club led by a different smile and a different gender."

Clark has moved the HST referendum up to June 24. "It is imperative for labour and its allies - for all progressive voters in BC - to give the first signal of resistance to the new Premier", Hammond states. "Defeat the HST!" ●

Why human rights, safe schools, and Pink Shirt Day matter

By Jane Bouey, Vancouver

February 23 is Pink Shirt Day in B.C., an opportunity to redouble our efforts in combating all forms of bullying and discrimination, and their root causes - especially in our schools.

Pink Shirt Day should also bring special attention to Bill C-389. This federal bill would add gender identity and gender expression to the list of prohibited grounds of discrimination in the Canadian Human Rights Act, and also add gender identity and gender expression to the Criminal Code sections dealing with hate speech and sentencing for crimes where hate was a motivating factor.

Closer to home, during the Feb. 21 meeting of the Vancouver Board of Education, my motion of support for Bill C-389 was passed unanimously. The motion also states the board will express this support to senators, who are now considering C-389, which has passed third reading in the House of Commons.

Why is this bill school board business?

Harassment over gender expression can be for something as simple as wearing pink. The widely celebrated Pink Shirt Day started when Nova Scotia Grade 12 students David Shepherd and Travis Price heard that a Grade 9 student had been threatened and called a homosexual for wearing pink on the first day of school.

Shepherd and Price bought 50 pink shirts and e-mailed friends to get them on board. The next day, hundreds of students showed up wearing pink clothing. It then became a provincial phenomena, Canada-wide campaign, and is now an internationally recognized day.

Egale's recent national climate survey determined that 95 percent of transgender students feel unsafe at school, that nine out of 10 trans students are verbally harassed because of their expression of gender, and that two out of five are physically harassed due to their expression of gender.

Harassment due to expression of gender isn't just experienced by trans, lesbian, gay, or bisexual

students. The majority of those harassed for dressing or acting in ways that defy gender stereotypes are kids that don't even identify as LGBTQ.

Harassment drives LGBTQ youth out of school. Research in the U.S. shows LGBTQ students drop out at three times the national average. A large number of Canadian and international

how we see it...

studies point to the fact that such youth make up a disproportionate number of the students on the streets.

In February 2004, the COPE school board passed groundbreaking policy that included the following: "the Board is committed to establishing and maintaining a positive learning environment for all students and employees including those who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered, transsexual, two-spirit, or who are questioning their sexual orientation or gender identity. These students and employees, as all students and employees, have the right to learn and work in an environment free of discrimination and harassment... Specifically, the Board will not tolerate hate crimes,

harassment or discrimination, and will vigorously enforce policy and regulations dealing with such matters."

The Vancouver school board is one of very few across the country that lists gender identity as an area of protection for students and staff. But once trans students leave our schools they are guaranteed no protection under the Canadian Human Rights Act or the Criminal Code. The VSB is working hard to make our schools more welcoming, safer, and inclusive places for all students to learn.

As our motion says, we urge the Senate "to consider how Bill C-389 will make Canada a more welcoming, safer, and inclusive place for all citizens, but particularly for transgendered youth who may constitute a small minority of the Canadian population but disproportionately drop out of school because of harassment and may then face poverty, discrimination, harassment and hate-motivated violence."

Bill C-389 and the human rights it addresses are clearly issues that fall squarely on the shoulders of school districts across the country. The lives of our youth are literally at stake. I hope we can ensure that the Canadian Senate understands this and passes Bill C-389.

(Bouey is a Coalition of Progressive Electors school trustee in Vancouver. This article first appeared in the Georgia Straight online edition.) ●



COPE contingent at Vancouver Pride Parade. (PV file photo)

THE ECONOMIC DIVIDE

Despite the myth, wage gap for immigrants persists

New studies suggests that the wage gap between immigrants and those born in Canada has widened, despite the myth of a multicultural Canada where everyone is equal.

As a recent *Globe and Mail* commentary noted, changes to Canada's immigration policies since the 1960s mean that recent generations of immigrants and their children are much more likely to belong to a visible minority: "Now that the eldest are in their 40s and have established themselves in the work force, it's evident that Canadian-born visible minorities (and those who came to Canada as young children) earn less than their similarly qualified white counterparts."

Despite the fact that children of immigrant families go to university at higher rates than the rest of the population, their earnings are lower than those of their Canadian-born white colleagues, by 18 percent in the case of males, and 3 percent for females.

Simon Fraser University economist Krishna Pendakur says the wage gap has increased from 1970 to the present.

"My instinct would have been to count on time to do the job for us. Let Canadian society evolve on its own and it'll get steadily more diverse and everything will work out. That's not what's going on," Prof. Pendakur said.

There are differences between various racialized communities. A study by Waterloo economist Mikal Skuterud found a wage gap of only 8 percent for Chinese Canadians whose parents were immigrants. For South Asians of the same generation, the gap was roughly 13 percent, and for blacks it was about 19 percent.

There are also regional differences, according a study by Prof. Pendakur and his brother, sociologist Ravi Pendakur. In Montreal, the gap for men is about 30 per cent, compared to 15 percent in Toronto, and less than 10 percent in Vancouver.

In the public sector, where employment equity law still applies, a StatsCan study found the wage gap for men was only 3 percent.

Prof. Pendakur is reluctant to suggest "government intervention" in the labour market, but says that extending employment equity laws to the private sector might be necessary. He cites a recent study by economist Philip Oreopoulos, who found that job applicants with English-sounding names were 40 percent more likely to get an interview than those with identical résumés and an Indian or Chinese name.

"The magnitude of the differential seems to be increasing, not decreasing. That suggests we need to take a step up and take a more active public role in the private sector," he said.

But while the Harper Tory government remains in office, progress towards employment equity for racialized communities is unlikely. The Tories have attacked pay equity gains for women in the public sector, and PM Harper opposes any measures to advance social or economic equality as "attacks on the free market." It may take a change in government to open the doors to any real debate on this urgent issue. ●

EDITORIALS

Yes, it CAN happen here

Last year, when the ruling class "solution" to the economic crisis was met with anger in the streets of European cities, working people here looked on with admiration, and perhaps also a bit of confusion. Some swallowed the corporate lie that the "austerity" being rammed through in Europe was somehow the fault of workers for "living beyond their means". The old racist view that the "advanced" English-speaking capitalist countries are superior to those in the Mediterranean region was dusted off to sow divisions.

Now the widespread attack on union rights across the United States and in Ontario brings the impact of the capitalist crisis into our own workplaces and homes. The attack in Ireland - where neoliberal politicians seek to raise the retirement age to 75! - is connected with U.S. Steel's theft of the pensions of Hamilton steelworkers and retirees. Everywhere, the capitalist profit agenda includes a drive to reduce the cost of labour by forcing more workers to stay on the job as long as possible.

Similarly, transit workers in Ontario and public sector workers in Wisconsin are being hammered by a global capitalist agenda, not just rotten politicians. Today, nothing is safe, from wage rates to pensions to social programs. Nothing can be gained by trying to dodge the capitalist attack, or hoping that the corporations will spare one or another group of workers.

The only answer is to follow the lead of the so-called "backward" countries, from India to Greece to Ireland, where workers have mounted struggles involving millions of people. Resistance is not a guarantee of victory, but failure to fight back is certainly a guarantee of defeat. This spring, the labour movement in Quebec is back in the streets, mobilizing to block the Charest government's anti-working class budget. When delegates gather for the CLC Convention in Vancouver on May 9, the leadership should be compelled to learn from these examples and begin building the broadest possible militant fightback.

US troops coming soon?

Once again, the Harper government has signed a backroom deal giving the U.S. empire further new power to intervene in Canadian affairs. Signed on Feb. 14 in Texas, the agreement paves the way for the military forces of either Canada or the U.S. to send troops across each other's borders during an "emergency." The agreement was not announced by the federal government, despite (or perhaps because of) its grave new implications for Canadian sovereignty. The U.S. military's Northern Command has publicized the agreement, signed by its top officer, Gen. Gene Renuart, and Canadian Lt.-Gen. Marc Dumais, head of Canada Command.

There is certainly wide potential for this agreement to militarize civilian responses to emergency incidents, and work is underway on a joint plan to protect common infrastructure such as roadways and oil pipelines. As the Council of Canadians pointedly asks, "Are we going to see (U.S.) troops on our soil for minor potential threats to a pipeline or a road?"

There are other questions about this treasonous deal, which is certainly not an agreement between equals. Since the U.S. military does not allow its troops to operate under foreign command, Yankee forces on Canadian soil would be beyond the control of Canadian governments, despite bland assurances that "civilian authorities" would be in charge of supposedly "benign cooperation."

For several years, the trend towards closer integration of the Canadian Armed Forces into the U.S. military has been gathering momentum. There is only one tragic destination to this sellout of Canadian sovereignty: the elimination of any ability to control our own destiny in the northern half of the continent. Perhaps Mr. Harper's aim is to be governor of the 51st U.S. state, but the peoples of Canada must reject such a scenario with all our power.

PEOPLE'S VOICE

ISSN number 1198-8657 Published by New Labour Press Ltd.
Canadian Publications Mail Sales Product Agreement #40011632

Return undeliverable Canadian addresses to Circulation Dept.,
People's Voice, 706 Clark Drive, Vancouver, BC, V5L 3J1
Tel: 604.255.2041 Email: pvoice@telus.net

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LETTERS

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Haiti :

Baby Doc is back
and he's still not toilet trained



SPEAKING FRANKLY

UFCW calls for Jason Kenney's resignation

Wayne Hanley, the national president of UFCW Canada, has called for the resignation of Jason Kenney, the Minister of Immigration and Citizenship for allowing his parliamentary office to be used in a partisan attempt to fundraise for a pre-election advertising campaign.

The call comes in the wake of a misdirected letter on Kenney's constituency letterhead that was sent to Harper MPs, asking them to quickly raise \$200,000 to pay for an advertising blitz aimed at Chinese, South Asian, Ukrainian and Jewish voters in ten ridings across Canada: four of them in Greater Toronto; four on B.C.'s Lower Mainland; and one each in Manitoba and Quebec.

The letter also outlined the Conservative strategy for a spring election, referring to a \$378,000 "pre-writ" ethnic media campaign to begin March 15.

"Minister Kenney should resign without delay. He and the Prime Minister have proven once again all they care about is politics, and not the rules of Parliament which forbid the use of parliamentary resources for partisan purposes," says Hanley. "The Harper government claims it doesn't want an election, but in the meantime the office of his immigration minister has become a campaign headquarters, cranking out fundraising letters."

Kenney apologized for the incident but refused to resign. He categorized it as an unfortunate mishap that he would have prevented, except he was overseas when the letters were sent. Instead, his director of multicultural affairs, Kasra Nejatian took the blame and tendered his resignation.

"A minister is responsible for what happens on his watch. Nejatian's resignation is just a scapegoat for Kenney's untenable stance to take advantage of his parliamentary office for selfish political gains. If there is any degree of transparency or ethics left in the Prime Minister's Office, then Mr.

Harper must demand Mr. Kenney's resignation, not that of a civil servant," says the UFCW Canada national president.

"You cannot use your position as a minister or as an MP to solicit funds for a purely partisan initiative," says Naveen Mehta, UFCW Canada Director of Human Rights. "In all likelihood, and based on the past responses of this Tory Government, little if anything will be done and Kenney will walk away from this scandal with his job intact. Unfortunately, this is the unethical and morally bankrupt type of government that the Tories are trying to sell to immigrant communities." ●

Colombia: leader in forced displacement

Some 5.2 million people were displaced from rural areas of Colombia between 1985 and 2010, according to a report released in February by the Consultancy on Human Rights and Displacement (CODHES). Colombia heads the list of countries with the greatest number of people forced to flee their homes by political violence, as indicated in 2009 by the UNHCR, the United Nations refugee agency.

The study "Consolidation of What? Report on Displacement, Armed Conflict and Human Rights in Colombia in 2010" was completed in the final stretch of the government of Alvaro Uribe (2002-2010).

In the last 25 years, the civil war in Colombia has forced "11.4 percent of the population to change their residence, because their lives, physical integrity or freedom were threatened," says the 140-page report, published in Spanish.

Half of the internally displaced persons fled their homes during Uribe's two four-year terms in office. The Accion Social group reported that 86,312 people were displaced in 2010, but CODHES puts the figure at 280,000, based on its daily monitoring of the phenomenon, fact-checking and verification of the information. ●

Letters to the Editor

Sleeping with a Tyrant

There is widespread alarm in the world today over the events that have occurred in Egypt. The social/political rebellion taking place there came so soon after a similar situation erupted in Tunisia. A pertinent question is why the USA has been so supportive of the tyrannical leader of Egypt, Hosni Mubarak, who has for thirty years oppressed his people. To show support for him, the US has been providing foreign aid (including military aid) to the tune of \$1.3-\$2.0 billion a year. When protesters discovered that the tear gas

canisters that were used against them were made in the U.S., their disdain for American foreign policy will have deepened.

It is evident that the American foreign policy strategy in the Middle East is to divide and conquer the Arab states. So Egypt and Saudi Arabia, in particular, have become "purchased allies" of the US in their approach to recolonize in the region. Such a coalition is designed to keep contemptuous states like Iran and Libya in their places, while ensuring the national security of Israel, a nation that has a legitimate right to

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Corporate tax cuts could be major election issue

By Kimball Cariou

The Harper government is being less than accurate about the cost of its corporate tax cuts, judging by a report from Parliamentary Budget Officer Kevin Page.

The PBO released a report on Feb. 27 in response to a request from the House of Commons finance committee, seeking cost estimates related to corporate tax cuts, crime bills and the government's planned purchase of F-35 fighter jets.

Globe and Mail reporter Bill Curry wrote that "On all three issues, the PBO reports that Ottawa would only provide a small amount of the data requested to assess the veracity of the government's own estimates."

That left the PBO unable to price the justice bills, but Page's office will provide its own estimate on the cost of the fighter jets in the next few weeks.

Using recent information on corporate profits, the PBO reports that Finance Canada appears to be taking an "overly optimistic" view of future corporate profits and tax revenue.

"Finance Canada's estimate of the costs of the planned corporate tax rate reductions appears to be understated," according to the report. According to Finance Canada, the Tory move to reduce the corporate tax rate from 18% in

2010 to 15% in 2012 is estimated to cost \$10 billion from 2011-12 to 2013-14. But the PBO estimates the cost would be \$11.5 billion over those three fiscal years.

The PBO says it cannot explain the \$1.5 billion difference between the estimates. The office has asked Finance to provide more detail regarding its figures.

Meanwhile, after years of waffling on the issue, opposition leaders have finally begun to speak out against the ongoing corporate tax cuts. The issue could become a hot campaign topic if Finance Minister Jim Flaherty's 2011-12 budget is defeated. Recent speculation is that the budget will be introduced on March 22. If the Liberals, Bloc Quebecois and NDP vote against the budget, a federal election would be triggered as early as May 2.

Speaking to a business luncheon in Halifax in late February, Flaherty tried to deflect criticism, condemning the former Liberal government of Jean Chretien for slashing fiscal transfers to the provinces back in the mid-1990s. The cuts in Liberal finance minister Paul Martin's budgets downloaded billions of dollars in health and social program spending onto the provinces and municipalities, tearing huge holes in the social safety net. But at the time, those cuts were dismissed as insufficient by the Conservatives and other

right forces.

For their part, the Liberals now argue that the corporate tax cuts, the \$16 billion F-35 fighter jet purchase, and huge spending on "maga-prisons" will make it difficult to maintain federal health transfers to the provinces. The federal government is committed to increasing health transfers by 6% annually through to 2013-14, but there are no guarantees after that date.

By raising these issues, the Liberals appear to be trying to marginalize the NDP in the impending election. NDP leader Jack Layton has done little over the past few years to focus on these topics, apparently trying to appeal to the business sector and the centre-right of the political spectrum. Instead of demanding lower military spending, Layton has often joined the call for "better equipment" for the armed forces, and his party has been reluctant to challenge the "law and order" wedge politics of the Harper Tories.

The Communist Party of Canada is gearing up to nominate about twenty candidates across the country if an election takes place this spring. The Party's platform

will include reversing the corporate tax cuts which began under the federal Liberals, slashing the military budget, and cancelling plans for a major expansion of prisons.

Corporate profits are nearing the pre-crisis levels of about \$250 billion annually. Restoring the 29% tax rate on corporate profits - the level of just a decade ago - would bring more than \$100 billion into federal coffers over a four-year

period. Cutting the military budget by 75% would provide at least another \$40 billion over this time, and halting the "law and order" projects would save billions more.

The Communist Party's plan would provide the federal government with at least \$140 billion to invest in social housing, child care, job creation, environmental initiatives, and other urgent priorities, without adding any new taxes for working people. ●



HAS THE ECONOMY HIT BOTTOM YET, NATASHA?

Wage crisis looms for British workers

By John Millington,
Morning Star

Britain's workers will see a huge cut in their wages by 2015, as the capitalist crisis looks set to get worse. Shocking new figures released on Feb. 28 by think tank Resolution Foundation showed that wages had already stopped growing as far back as 2003 - when economic growth was strong.

The think tank also found that working couples with children could be up to 4,250 pounds worse off this year because of low wage rises, inflation, higher taxes and benefit cuts. And as the Conservative/Liberal Democrat coalition government launches a savage assault on public-sector spending, the foundation predicted that median wages by 2015 will have fallen for full-time

employees to 25,559 pounds from 25,570 pounds in 2003.

UNITE union general secretary Len McCluskey said that the figures had to be put in the context of the VAT rise initiated by the Con-Dem government at the start of the year.

"Added to the VAT rise, the inflation hike and changes to family incomes due to hit in April following the Chancellor's assault on support, we face a perfect storm for home incomes," said McCluskey. "If we do not want to force millions of people and their children to live a life below the headline, this government must think again and think quickly about resetting its economic course."

The think tank has launched a new independent organisation the Living Standards Commission in the hope of providing an analysis of

the effects of the recession on low-to-middle earners. Speaking at the launch, Labour leader Ed Miliband said that people were "working harder for longer, for less. The central task is to build a different sort of economy - with prosperity rooted in high-productivity, high-skill industries, creating quality jobs and a better quality of life."

But Miliband stopped short of demanding the end to capitalism. Instead he claimed that the "task was to create a more prosperous capitalism and also one that is fairer than we had before the financial crisis."

Miliband's words failed to impress left economists who lined up to advocate a range of alternatives. Professor of industrial relations Roger Seifert said: "Ed Miliband is trying to rebrand new Labour as Keynesians with a human face, but fails to provide policies and intentions that would both curtail and regulate the neoliberals in the marketplace as well as significantly redistribute income and wealth towards the working-class."

Seifert went on to argue that public ownership and management should be extended to "health, education, local and central government as well as transport."

Left Economics Advisory Panel (LEAP) co-ordinator Andrew Fisher urged Miliband to step back from the "third way" ramblings of Tony Blair and to oppose the Con-Dem cuts agenda.

University of the West of Scotland Professor John Foster said: "If Ed Miliband wants a 'fairer capitalism,' it will only be by restoring trade union rights and massive state intervention to rebuild the productive economy and stop the banks exporting capital." ●

Rich schools get richer in Ontario

Special to PV

The *Toronto Star* reported on Feb. 28 that "two public and two Catholic high schools in Greater Toronto are bringing in more than a million dollars a year through student fees, private revenue and fundraising, with dozens more each taking in at least half a million dollars."

Other similar-sized schools report a fraction of these totals, raising questions about equity in the public education system.

In Toronto alone, the top 20 money-generating public schools, primarily in wealthy neighbourhoods, collected \$4.4 million compared to just \$103,000 for the bottom 20 schools, most in needy areas.

The figures obtained by the *Star* provide a school-by-school look at how \$240 million in private money flows into the public system across the GTA region. "School-generated funds" include student activity and athletic fees, cafeteria and vending machine profits, and money collected for field trips, book orders and charity fundraisers.

The four high schools in the million-dollar club include Turner Fenton in Brampton (\$1.4 million), Mayfield in Caledon (\$1.3 million), St. Aloysius Gonzaga in Mississauga (\$1 million), and Michael Power/St. Joseph in Toronto (\$1.3 million). These schools charge exam fees as high as \$1,200/student for the International Baccalaureate program, and student activity fees topping \$100.

School-generated funds help cover the shortfall between provincial funding and the real cost of educating students.

For schools that can raise a lot of money, "it ends up becoming a private school in the public system," said Annie Kidder of research and advocacy group People for Education. "It's hard to resist as a parent, but it really undermines the overall ideal of public education."

The aggregate dollar amount is "significant," said Education Minister Leona Dombrowsky, who pleaded ignorance in refusing to comment on whether the province would consider asking rich schools to share with needier schools.

People for Education has been tracking trends in school-generated funds since the province began asking boards to collect the data in 2005.

"We always used to think fundraising for extras was fine," said Kidder, "But what's an extra? I think we even used to think fundraising for playgrounds was okay, but then should kids in low-income neighbourhoods have crappy playgrounds? The hardest question is where you draw the line."

Three-quarters of Ontario secondary schools charge student activity fees, but families cannot be forced to pay them, says People for Education. While schools often call such fees "mandatory", the practice is not allowed under the Education Act. ●



No to US-NATO Military Intervention in Libya! No to Canadian Military Involvement!

As the crisis in Libya deepens, the Canadian Peace Congress denounces the rapid moves by imperialist forces - including the U.S., E.U., NATO, Canada and Israel - to intervene and exploit the conflict to their advantage. We call on the minority Harper Conservative government to withdraw the offensive Canadian JTF-2 Special Forces who have been deployed to the region, recall the heavily armed HMCS Charlottetown and refrain from deploying logistical air refuelling and support power, and halt the implementation of offensive CF-18s to the region. Furthermore, the Canadian government must oppose the United Nations Security Council's imposition of sanctions which will only result in the death and injury of Libyan people, and reject any form of foreign military intervention including the use of no-fly zones which will involve massive bombardment to neutralize existing Libyan air defences.

While the composition and demands of the movement against the Qaddafi regime are not clear at this point, there is a strong component that is decidedly reactionary in nature. This element, centred in Eastern Libya, includes the so-called "National Front for the Salvation of Libya" which is funded by the National Endowment for Democracy and is closely tied to anti-Qaddafi exiles; pro-monarchist forces which have never forgiven Qaddafi for overthrowing the king in 1969; and the Muslim brotherhood. These forces are pressing for theocratic, feudal and pro-imperialist objectives, and it is they who have attracted the keen interest and support of large oil corporations and the Western governments.

The recent, successful uprisings in Tunisia and Egypt have placed those countries at the delicate,

opening stages of profound change. How these societies develop remains an open question, but two things are already clear: first, the events in Tunisia and Egypt have served as a catalyst for similar popular protests throughout the Middle East and North Africa; second, the emergence of powerful, sovereignist people's movements poses a dramatic threat to the balance of forces in the region, which has until now favoured the policies of transnational energy corporations, the imperialist states of Europe and North America, and



The armament carried by the HMCS Charlottetown includes 24 Honeywell Mk 46 torpedoes, 16 surface-to-air missiles, 8 anti-ship harpoon missiles, six .50 caliber machine guns, a 57 mm Bofors Mk2 gun, and a Phalanx close-in anti-ship weapons system manufactured by General Dynamics.

the government of Israel. This threat is the primary motivator behind the desperate attempts to generate pretexts for foreign military interference in Libya.

The current efforts by Western governments to demonize Qaddafi as a murderous madman who has committed crimes against humanity are eerily reminiscent of the similar treatment that Saddam

Hussein received prior to the US-led invasion of Iraq, and should give pause for sober reflection. Reports of Libyan military strikes

against unarmed civilians are distressing and such actions, if substantiated, deserve strong condemnation. However, it is dangerously hypocritical to demand that Qaddafi answer for

these allegations without demanding that imperialist leaders answer for their role in bombing civilians in Yugoslavia in 1999, or for bulldozing trenches filled with live Iraqi soldiers in 2003, or for massacring thousands of civilians in US-NATO actions over the past decade, or for knowingly handing Afghan detainees over to torture.

The Canadian Peace Congress

is concerned that some voices in the broader peace movement have called for the governments of Canada and other countries to intervene in Libya, citing the doctrine of "Responsibility to Protect" or R2P. While the outrage over reports of civilian deaths is understandable, the R2P doctrine is framed in a manner that ignores the geopolitical realities of the current imperialist world order. From the experiences of NATO's intervention in Yugoslavia, two US-led invasions of Iraq, the invasion and occupation of Afghanistan, and the coup in Haiti in 2004, it is very clear that foreign interventions under the guise of humanitarianism immediately transform into violent, exploitative campaigns whose aim is to control regions, peoples and resources for the benefit of powerful international entities. By citing the "Responsibility to Protect", the peace movement inadvertently becomes a political fig leaf for imperialist intervention.

The danger of war, including the use of nuclear weapons, is very real and is being fuelled by the military involvement of the US, EU, NATO and Israel. There are reports that hundreds of American, British and French military personnel have already landed in Libya, along with Canadian JTF2 forces, to act as "defence advisors" to sections of the anti-Qaddafi forces. The United Nations Security Council has imposed sanctions on Libya and there are moves to militarily enforce a no-fly zone over the eastern part of the country, a military measure that would necessarily be preceded by massive bombardment. Several countries - including Canada - have already contributed heavily armed

warships to a naval armada in international waters off Libya.

If there is to be any hope of peace, democracy and progress in Libya, this interference must be opposed and reversed. Libya must not be allowed to become a US-NATO military base in North Africa, the springboard for imperialist efforts to manipulate and corrupt the popular movements in Tunisia, Egypt and beyond. Ostensibly, imperialist moves to interfere in Libya emerge from their opposition to democratic, sovereignist and progressive forces in Libya and throughout the entire region. Libya could serve as a dangerous precedent for imperialism to block all popular uprisings in the region and throughout the world.

It is the sole right and task of the people Libya to determine the course of their political and economic development, free from foreign interference. As the World Peace Council stated, "We underline the right of the Libyan people to express their anger and agony and their demands for changes in the social and economic field and their sovereign right to determine the political developments in their own country. The [imperialist governments] which are serving the interests of the multinational corporations and international capital are searching for opportunity to take more and open control of the oil and gas resources of Libya and expand their spheres of influence."

The key responsibility of the peace movement in Canada is to prevent Canadian involvement in aggressive, unjust and illegal military endeavours. In light of this responsibility, the Canadian Peace Congress:

- * declares its solidarity with the Libyan people and demands an end to the bloodshed;
- * denounces the UN sanctions against the Libyan people;
- * calls on the Canadian government to withdraw from its military interference, including cancelling the deployment of the HMCS Charlottetown;
- * opposes any foreign military intervention, including efforts to impose a no-fly zone over Libya. ●

WFDY on the situation in Libya

The World Federation of Democratic Youth (WFDY) says that it has watched the recent developments in Libya "with deep concern and alarm."

In a Feb. 28 statement, the world's largest alliance of anti-imperialist youth movements, said "It is terrible for WFDY that the answer to the Libyan people demands and street demonstrations has been repression and, in many cases, death of the protestors. This deserves from us our full condemnation as it is unacceptable and represents a violation of the basic rights of expression and freedom of association, inherent to all peoples of the world."

"At the same time, it is for WFDY alarming that, under these circumstances, the imperialist powers (USA and EU) gathered in NATO have launched, through the dominating media, a campaign to justify an external intervention in that country,

under the pretext of defending the protestors' rights.

"In this moment, it is important to underline that NATO or any of its members never cared when in Yemen or Bahrain (allies of the imperialist powers) brutally repressed the protestors in those countries. Furthermore, it is a total hypocrisy that those same countries (particularly in the EU) with high level relations with the government of Libya are now pretending to be historical enemies of Khadafi's rule of the country.

"In this situation, WFDY calls for a peaceful understanding between all parts inside Libya and totally rejects any sort of exterior interference, particularly any sort of military intervention, as we believe that only the Libyan people is able to solve its own problems, and an intervention from NATO or any military bloc could only mean death and stealing of resources, as happened in Iraq or Afghanistan." ●



With an area of almost 1,800,000 square kilometres, Libya is the fourth largest country in Africa by area, and the 17th largest in the world. The capital, Tripoli, is home to 1.7 million of Libya's 6.4 million people. The three traditional parts of the country are Tripolitania, Fezzan, and Cyrenaica. Libya has the highest HDI in Africa and the fourth highest GDP per capita in Africa as of 2009, due to its large petroleum reserves and low population. Libya is one of the world's 10 richest oil-producing countries.

About the Canadian Peace Congress

The Canadian Peace Congress was formed in 1949 as an organization of Canadian people that works for world peace and disarmament. We maintain that peace, not militarism and war, is the guarantor of democracy, human rights, and social and economic justice. The Congress is affiliated to the World Peace Council and is a founding member of the Canadian Peace Alliance.

The roots of the revolution in Egypt

Excerpts from the speech given by Salah Adly, member of the political bureau of the Communist Party of Egypt, during a conference of communist and worker's parties held Feb. 25-26 in Cyprus at the invitation of the AKEL, that country's Marxist-Leninist party.

I have come to you from Egypt which is blazing with revolution in every corner. The revolution of January 25, which broke out across the country, is a social revolution launched by the youth, and the Egyptian people of all groups of men and women, the old and the youth, Muslims and Christians. Workers alongside with toilers and the middle and marginalized classes took part in a heroic epic and demonstrations of millions demanding the overthrow of the regime.

The main slogan for the revolution was freedom, social justice, human dignity. Those roaring mass demonstrations carried on throughout the governorates of Egypt in a civilized, peaceful and moral manner that terminated all the regime's plots to crush or oppress them using its powerful security arsenal. The central security forces number around 1.7 million, three times as many as the military forces, with their arms, armoured vehicles, bombs and live bullets coming from the snipers on the roofs of the buildings. But the great Egyptian people managed to triumph and abolish all the conspiracies of the counter-revolution plotted by the regime, its agents, secret police, the leadership of the ruling party, and the looters of its businessmen.

In addition (the regime) cut off the internet connection and disabled all mobile networks on the eve of the January 28 "Friday of anger", which indicated that it was intent on committing a massacre. But the people abolished that plot too, and defeated that gigantic system. They directed their anger toward the oppressive figures of the regime, as 2000 police vehicles and police stations, in addition to the headquarters of the ruling party and its branches in the governorates, were burned down as symbols and tools of daily oppression, torture, and humiliation of the citizens...

The fascist plot was overturned because of the patriotic attitude of the military, in which they refused to use violence against demonstrators, and because of the vigilance of the revolutionary people who founded social committees in all the neighbourhoods. Those social committees protected the buildings, facilities, and citizens.

After the million-strong demonstration on Tuesday, February 1, the forces of the counter-revolution tried to organize bribed pro-dictator-Mubarak demonstrations on bloody Wednesday, February 2... (They) deployed criminals and thugs in order to dissolve the revolution, and drive the demonstrators away from Tahrir Square, which has become a symbol of revolution and its persistence and continuity, but the revolutionaries stood against those barbarians, defeated them, and liberated the "Square of Liberation".

That bloody day was a critical day to the victory of the revolution

in a historical scene, which manifested to the whole world the barbarism and brutality of the ruling regime, which used horses, camels, and bullets in a clear contrast between this savageness... and peaceful demonstrations where not even one stone was thrown,



The Egyptian Federation of Independent Trade Unions supports the demands of the people's revolution and calls for a general strike of Egyptian workers," reads a banner in Tahrir Square.

nor witnessed one single accident of religious intolerance, or sexual harassment during the 18 days of sit-ins and demonstrations until the dictator fell... It has been proven to the masses and governments of the world the erroneousness of the lies that claimed the Egyptian people was unable to practice democracy.

The Egyptian people paid a high price with its resistance and insistence to overthrow the dictator Mubarak. According to the official statistics, the number of martyrs reached 365, besides 5500 injures. Those wrote with their blood-ink pure pages, and achieved a dream for which the Egyptian people had been waiting for decades.

There is no question the Egyptian and Tunisian revolutions have re-considered the concept of social revolutions which the supporters of capitalism claimed had become outdated. Those masses have proved that revolution is the locomotive of history, as Marx said, and the tool that depicts the capability of the masses for deep-rooted, peaceful, democratic change, in the face of oppressive regimes that block all the doors for the mechanism of change by traditional democratic means.

The revolution of January 25 did not happen accidentally, nor did it happen by a high-level decision. It happened as a result of a total revolutionary crisis, whose objective and subjective conditions were available, and which were preceded by thousands of protests, strikes, and sit-ins, which rippled the political and social life of Egypt in recent years, carried out by workers, students, and the toilers. Those protests represented the alarms for the imminent birth of this great revolution, which nobody could predict its timing, and which stunned everyone with its rich and diverse social participation, and the tremendous abilities of the youth, and the politically high roof of demands and goals from the first day of the revolution...

Also, the Tunisian revolution's success in overthrowing dictator

Bin Ali was an important factor to inspire the Egyptian people, as it emphasized the capability of the masses to accomplish the victory and change the fates of their countries.

Some numbers give indications about the growth of the

homeless, and 500,000 reside in graveyards (*Central Agency for Mobilization and Statistics*)... Egypt comes first in terms of road accidents, as 8,000 get killed and tens of thousands are injured every year... Egypt comes last among 134 states regarding the rate of the appointment of relatives and cronies in various positions, 115th among 134 states to corruption perceptions index (*Global Competitiveness Index*), and 115th in the Index of transparency and Fairness (*Transparency International*). We have a child mortality rate of 50 in 1000 children, and the highest rate of Hepatitis infection (*Statement issued by the Egyptian Minister of Health*). We have ten million unemployed between the ages of 15 and 29 years, which means 22% of the workforce. Additionally, we have 9 million young men and women who passed 35 years without marriage, with a maidenhood percentage of 17%, and many more numbers.

Add the inheritance of power to Gamal Mubarak, which was being orchestrated, and forging elections relentlessly and systematically until the latest elections, where the NDP completely dominated the parliament (97% of the total seats), and the control of state security officers over all political and economic life, professional syndicates, trade unions, faculty members, and civil society organizations, in addition to the daily practices of oppression and torture inside police stations under the emergency law for 30 years.

All that implied it would be impossible for those circumstances

see EGYPT, page 11

Libya: no foreign intervention under any pretext!

Statement of the World Peace Council on the situation in Libya and the plans for foreign intervention

The World Peace Council expresses its deepest concern and indignation with the recent and ongoing developments in Libya. While condemning the killing of hundreds of innocent civilian protesters by the heavily armed military of Libya, as well as the suffering of the very many migrant workers forced to leave the country by the political unrest and the aggressive pressure exerted by foreign forces and media, we express our categorical rejection for any foreign military intervention by the USA, NATO or the EU under any pretext.

We underline the right of the Libyan people to express their anger and agony and their demands for changes in the social and economic field and their sovereign right to determine the political developments in their own country and that foreign interference is boosting the risk of the violence escalating into a civil war.

The Imperialists that are serving the interests of the multinational corporations and international capital under the pretext of "humanitarian intervention", are searching for opportunity to take more and open control of the oil and gas resources of Libya and expand their spheres of influence.

We denounce the military presence of warships of various NATO states and the 6th US Fleet in the international waters in front of Libya which proves the preparations for a possible attack and demand their complete withdrawal from the area. Independently from the opinion one may have on the regime in Libya and its commitments and priorities in its foreign policy especially in the last years, it is the sole right and task of the Libyan people to formulate and impose whatever changes it considers necessary, without any foreign military or political imposition.

The WPC expresses its full-hearted solidarity with the people of Libya and foreign workers there and demands the end of the bloodshed and of the military action. We express our disagreement with the sanctions imposed by the UN Security Council which will harm mainly the Libyan people and reiterate that no foreign military aggression can be accepted by any means!

The Secretariat of WPC March 3, 2011

Yemen regime now "disappearing" activists

March 7 - According to Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East (CJPME), the Yemeni government has now resorted to "disappearing" activists calling for the resignation of President Ali Abdullah Saleh, in power since 1978. Human Rights Watch reports that at least eight people have "disappeared" in the last three weeks after Yemeni security forces detained them in the southern port city of Aden. All are members of the Southern Movement, which in addition to sharing other Yemenis' anger about poverty and soaring unemployment, has also criticised the Saleh regime for discriminating against residents of southern Yemen, an independent republic until the 1990 union with the north.

The most prominent of the detainees is Hassan Baoum (75), chair of the Southern Movement Supreme Council. On Feb. 20 masked uniformed security forces invaded the Aden hospital and took the ailing man from his hospital bed, along with his son. Government repression has been particularly harsh in Aden. Most of the 24 protesters slain in the last two weeks of national protests have been killed there. Local human rights organizations have reported to HRW that 59 protesters are being detained in Aden alone.

"These forced disappearances constitute an alarming escalation in the repression, and are a particularly grave violation of international law," says CJPME President Thomas Woodley.

CJPME believes that the Saleh government is taking advantage of the current international focus on Libya to ratchet up its own suppression of dissent, and that Western and Canadian criticism of the Saleh government is muted because of Saleh's cooperation with the US-led "war on terror."

Half of Yemen's population lives below the poverty line, one-third suffer from chronic hunger and unemployment is at 35 percent. Recent protests were sparked by a draft amendment to the constitution that would — if passed — have allowed Saleh to run for office for two more terms of 10 years. Despite the killings and disappearances, hundreds of thousands of protesters flooded the streets of various Yemen cities Mar. 4 demanding an end to President Saleh's 32-year rule.



GLOBAL CLASS STRUGGLE

Egyptian labour struggles continue

Egypt's Supreme Military Council, which has assumed leadership until elections are held, has repeatedly called on Egyptians to "return to work," threatening to take action in the name of national security. Many middle-class people who joined the struggle to topple Mubarak have taken a similar position. Sheikh Yusuf al-Qaradawi, in his Feb. 18 address to hundreds of thousands in Tahrir Square, urged striking workers to go home, stating that it is impossible for all demands to be met immediately and counselling them to be patient.

Meanwhile, the independent Egyptian federation of trade unions have published their demands, including raising the minimum wage, prohibiting pay differences in excess of 15 times between senior managers and workers, greater job security, and prohibiting the use of temporary workers. More political demands include the right to organize independent unions, removal of corrupt managers, the right to strike, and dissolution of the pro-Mubarak Egyptian Trade Union Federation. The new union body says that fair distribution of wealth, along with democratic rights, must be one of the revolution's priorities.

Since the Mubarak regime embarked in the early 1990s on the IMF and World Bank-sponsored structural adjustment programs, Egypt has become more unequal; its police forces have swelled, and its commitment to public education as a proportion of the national budget and Egypt's GDP decreased substantially, from 16% in 2005 to 11.9% in 2008. Meanwhile, 40% of the population have been reduced to living on \$2/day or less, even though during the last 20 years, the economy grew substantially.

Argentine dockers reach wage deal

Argentine dock workers reached a wage deal on March 4 and called off a three-day-old protest that paralyzed two major soy export terminals and stopped 20 grain ships from loading. The blockade by members of a dock workers' cooperative gridlocked two crushing plants and export terminals in the Rosario agricultural hub, one of the world's largest and the main exit point for Argentine soy.

"Today we're pleased because we've reached a deal and the protest measures are being lifted in Terminal 6 and Cargill," Herme Juarez, head of the dock workers' cooperative, told the media. The blockade by members of the cooperative targeted a terminal north of Rosario shared by Bunge and Argentina's AGD, and another nearby facility operated by Cargill. The two terminals account for about 16% of the South American country's soy oil-processing capacity. Argentina is the world's biggest supplier of soy oil and soy meal.

Earlier on March 4, port workers suspended a brief protest that halted shipping activity in the ports

of Quequen and Bahia Blanca. The SOMU shipping workers' union wanted exporters to use a logistics company that hires its members, but called off the protest following a request from the government. Both Bahia Blanca and Quequen are key movers of Argentine wheat, especially since the country's harvest ended last month.

Unions could block EU summit

As anger mounts against European economic governance plans, Belgian workers say they want to blockade all access to Brussels and paralyse the European capital in an attempt to shut down the European Union on March 24. The General Workers Federation of Belgium (FGTB) intends to mount barricades on highways coming into the city,



close the train stations, bring the metro and trams to a halt and even shut down Brussels airport.

"We need to strike a blow," said Nico Cue, secretary general of the metalworkers' section of the union on March 3. "The Sarkozy-Merkel duo is trying to impose a competitiveness pact that could undermine automatic indexing of salaries and threaten the retirement age of 65. This subject will be found on the menu at the EU summit on March 24-25 to be held in Brussels."

He said the union did not want a march through the city ending with everyone heading home with little achieved: "While this could be a routine demonstration, starting from the Gare du Nord [the city's north train station] to Gare du Midi [its south train station], we believe that it takes some other action, more determined."

Other unions are considering the proposal, including the country's Christian trade union, the CSC, which has approached the European Trade Union Congress to organise a large-scale action the same day. France's CGT union is also looking into backing the idea. The ETUC was scheduled to take a decision on March 8, although it is thought that German unions may oppose such plans.

One union source said, "The idea is that leaders can't get in or out of the city. If the airport is shut down, if there's no fuel for the planes, if no air traffic controllers are working, if the Eurostar is down, they can't meet. We can stop them before they can come... Even if we have a march of 100,000 people from all across Europe, they won't listen. It won't change much. They couldn't care less. We need to do something that will make them pay attention. We really need to get

serious this time."

Discussions of a European economic governance and competitiveness pact are now being moved forward by EU Council President Herman Van Rompuy and European Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso. The talks focus heavily on wage restraint, raising retirement ages and restricting public spending. The pact would also monitor public and private sector wages across the bloc, force a decentralisation of collective bargaining, end the closed union shop, and weaken the indexation of wages to inflation. The European Public Service Union, representing public-sector workers, has called on the EU to hold referendums on economic governance plans.

Jewish and Arab women march together

A joint march of Arab and Jewish women in Israel to mark International Women's Day called for "an egalitarian society, free from oppression and occupation." The call for the march was issued by the Workers Advice Centre and Sindyanna of Galilee. It stated: "In these very days, marking 100 years of Women's International Day, a new chapter is being written in history by millions of women and men in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Yemen, Bahrain and elsewhere. We salute the workers who first raised the banner of revolt in Egypt in 2008, who persisted and who now see the fruit of their sacrifices. This is the springtime of the peoples in the Arab world, opening a gateway of hope for all. At last we may dare to believe that we can determine our destinies, securing the right to live and work in dignity.

"It is inspiring to see Arab women marching at the head of the protests, breaking the boundaries of patriarchy, tribalism and fundamentalism that have been imposed on them for generations. These women are securing a place in a future democratic society where gender equality will be a supreme value, protecting the achievements of the revolution.

"We, Arab and Jewish women of the Workers Advice Center and Sindyanna of Galilee, are proud at what we see happening around us. It encourages us to continue our struggle in Israel. On the 8th of March we shall make a march of women - Arab and Jewish, migrant workers and refugees - for the right to work in dignity and to organize. We shall do so in solidarity with working women the world over. We ask women in our region and beyond to join their voices with ours in calling for an egalitarian society, free from oppression and occupation, in which both peoples, Israeli and Palestinian, may live together in peace."

Facebook fight by Portuguese jobless

Tens of thousands of people have pledged to take part in demonstrations on March 12

against the lack of jobs, poor wages and unjust working conditions in Portugal. More than 37,000 people responded to a Facebook site appeal for Portugal's "Desperate Generation" to publicly vent their frustration by taking to the streets of major cities. The news emerged as the prime minister and finance minister suggested taxpayers could be asked to tighten their belts even further as the crisis shows no sign of easing its grip on the economy.

The "Demonstration of the Desperate Generation" appeal was first posted on February 11. Describing the initiative as "nonpartisan, secular and peaceful", the organisers who created the appeal were surprised at the surge of interest. Two main demonstrations will take place in Lisbon and Oporto, with smaller rallies staged throughout the country.

A mission statement on the "Protesto da Geracao a Rasca" Facebook page reads: "We, the unemployed, the 500-euro-earners and other poorly paid [employees], the slaves in disguise, the subcontracted, the temps, the fake self-employed, the intermittent workers ... mothers, fathers and children of Portugal. We protest: For the right to employment, for the right to education, for the right to improved working conditions and an end to instability; for the recognition of qualifications, competence and experience, reflected in contracts and dignified salaries. Because we don't want to be forced into emigrating, dragging the country into an even deeper social and economic crisis!"

Another protest has been called for March 19 by the country's largest labour federation to denounce austerity policies,

including cuts in public employee salaries.

The largest sector of Portugal's jobless are aged between 15 and 24. Unemployment in Portugal in January this year was 11.2 percent, the same as in December 2010, affecting more than 600,000 people. Twenty-three percent of young adults aged between 15 and 24 in Portugal are currently unemployed, 27.5 percent of whom have a university degree.

WFTU statement on Libya

The World Federation of Trade Unions strongly condemns the bloodbath in Libya organized by the regime of Gaddafi, a regime that was allied with USA and Great Britain and followed a deep anti-democratic course in favor of international capital.

We express our solidarity and support to the popular forces that struggle for working rights and democratic freedoms. A struggle against the dictatorship regime of Gaddafi is a struggle against its policy, against the brutal exploitation, against the lack of democratic freedoms, against the imperialist intervention and the scheme of the bourgeoisie.

The blood of the innocent people of Arab Maghreb will be the seed for a true democratic change if the dictators leave together with their imperialist policy. This blood ought to be the seed for a new organized class-oriented trade union movement in these countries, struggling on the side of the workers and their rights. The World Federation of Trade Unions will support this effort by all means possible.

Athens, Feb. 23, 2011, WFTU Secretariat

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

Send me information on the Communist Party of Canada

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

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Egypt and Iran: giants of the Middle East

By Jane Green, Morning Star (UK)

Egypt and Iran have long been sleeping giants of the Middle East. Throughout history they have been major Middle Eastern powers, significant centres of trade, science and religion.

Both fell prey to the imperial interests of Britain - Iran for its oil, Egypt for its natural resources and strategic location. Both hit back.

Egypt declared itself an Arab republic in 1953 and expelled British forces three years later, shortly before president Gamal Nasser nationalised the Suez canal, a vital asset for world shipping.

And, as Egypt was asserting its national independence, so too was Iran. It had not been occupied by British forces, but its corrupt leadership had served as a willing client of the empire. Leader Mohammed Mossadeq set out on a different course in 1953 when he nationalised the oil industry.

Nasser remained in power despite the best efforts of Egypt's former imperial masters. He trod a more independent path until his death, but Anwar Sadat's rise to power in 1970 redirected the country to the West. Hosni Mubarak's 1981 takeover consolidated Egypt's position as a key Western ally in the Arab world.

Oil-rich Iran was to have a different fate. Its attempts to take charge of its own resources provoked a coup, inspired by the US and Britain, which overthrew Mossadeq's democratically elected government and installed a regime

headed by the autocratic shah.

He himself was overthrown by a popular revolution in 1979. But hopes of progressive change were crushed when the uprising was usurped by Islamic fundamentalists. Washington became the great Satan and Iran began a disastrous, destructive war with its neighbour Iraq that had been orchestrated by the West.

For the past 30 years both Iran and Egypt have been dominated by autocratic regimes. And now both have the chance of decisive change.

This bubbled to the surface in Iran in June 2009, when popular opposition to the "re-election" of President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad sparked protests as widespread as they were unexpected in a country which did not tolerate mass demonstrations. The Green Movement, headed by "defeated" presidential candidates Mehdi Karoubi and Mir Hossein Mousavi, along with his wife Zahra Rahnava, had provided a focus for decades of frustration among the Iranian people.

And the protesters returned to the streets on February 14, striking a major psychological blow against the government. Despite waves of arrests, executions and attempts by the regime to label them foreign agents, this popular movement has continued.

So too has Tehran's repression. The past two weeks have seen a fresh crackdown by the regime, including mass arrests. Detainees have been transferred to the notorious

Kahrizak prison for torture.

Now it appears that Iran's theocratic dictatorship hopes to decapitate the popular movement by targeting the movement's leaders and is calling for their execution. Karoubi and Mousavi's homes have been cut off, surrounded by plain-clothes security agents posing as "defenders of Islam and the revolution," and a news blackout imposed.

Yet events in Egypt and across the Arab world continue to inspire the Iranian protesters. If mass protests could remove Mubarak after 30 years, the same could be true of the Ahmadinejad regime and the conservative clergy backing it.

The regime is keenly aware of this. However, its own policies have created the conditions for yet more unrest.

Ahmadinejad's recent neoliberal economic "shock therapy," which removed or restructured subsidies, is causing widespread price increases and is resulting in growing hardship and discontent - key factors in Egypt's uprising. And, like Egypt, Iran has a significant working-class base capable of wielding its industrial power to advance demands for greater economic justice through trades unions.

Much of this organisation remains clandestine due to the nature of these regimes. But it remains disciplined and has the potential to play a decisive role in the direction of current events.

Iran remains content to blame outside forces for its internal crisis,

meaning that US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's recent comments backing demonstrators play directly into the hands of the regime. Undoubtedly her words will be recalled by Tehran's torturers and will be repeated in forced confessions and show trials beamed to the country's TV screens.

The level of outside interference remains key to determining the scale of the changes in Egypt or Iran. Washington is being forced to change tactics by the power of popular movement. Where once it was able to directly back life-long dictators it now wants to shape the leaderships and organisations which have ousted them.

The West's policy objective is to limit the desire of the masses to force fundamental socioeconomic changes that would threaten its "vital interests." In Egypt this means that protests must not become trade union-led strikes.

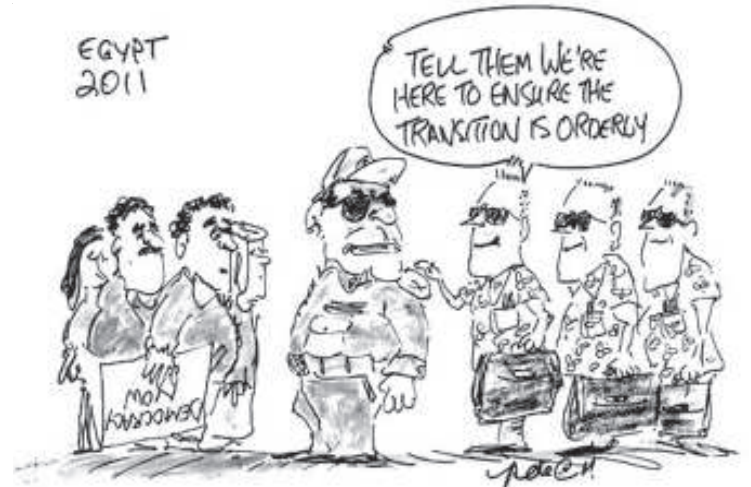
As for Iran, its increasingly organised labour movement is rarely discussed by mainstream politicians and the Western media

- a clear indication of the West's real intentions.

People across the Middle East are striving for a national united front against the ruling dictatorships and for true democracy and social justice. Such a decisive shift, driven by the people, in Egypt and Iran would change the map of the region dramatically. Not only would it weaken the base for Islamic fundamentalism, but it would strengthen the case for Palestinian autonomy and help rein in the voices of Zionist extremism.

The importance of these people's struggles for the region and world cannot be understated. Neither can the need for sustained, genuine support from progressives in the West to ensure that the goals of democracy and self-determination are achieved.

(Jane Green is UK national officer of the Committee for Defence of the Iranian People's Rights. For further information, visit www.codir.net.) ●



Gulf spill to have lasting impact

PV Vancouver Bureau

Last year's Deepwater Horizon disaster "devastated" marine life near the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico. Studies using a submersible found a layer of dead animals and oil up to 10 cm thick in places, according to Samantha Joye of the University of Georgia. The removal of these animals from the food chain will affect other species, warns Prof. Joye, disputing an assessment by British Petroleum's compensation



fund that the Gulf will recover by the end of 2012.

Millions of barrels of oil spewed into the sea after a BP deepwater well ruptured in April 2010. Assessments of the clean-up which followed have focused on the surface oil, but much oil remains at lower depths.

Prof. Joye told a recent American Association for the Advancement of Science conference in Washington that it may be a decade before the full effects on the Gulf are apparent.

The deadly layer was apparently deposited between June and September 2010. Samples taken earlier on May had showed that some sealife still remained.

Joye and her colleagues used the Alvin submersible to explore the lowest layer of water around the well head, known as the benthos.

"The impact on the benthos was devastating," she told BBC News. "Filter-feeding organisms, invertebrate worms, corals, sea fans - all of those were substantially impacted - and by impacted, I mean essentially killed. Another critical point is that detrital feeders like sea cucumbers, brittle stars that wander around the bottom, I didn't see a living (sea cucumber) around on any of the wellhead dives. They're typically everywhere, and we saw none."

Organisms on the seafloor stimulate the activity of micro-organisms and oxygenate the sediments. The lack of live organisms at the bottom of the aquatic food chain inevitably has longer-term effects on species nearer the surface. After the *Exxon Valdez* spill in Alaska, it took several years before it became clear that the local herring industry had been destroyed.

Earlier in February, the administrator of BP's \$20 billion compensation fund claimed that the Gulf of Mexico will recover from the spill by the end of 2012. But Prof. Joye says that "it's going to be 2012 before we begin to really see the fisheries implications and repercussions from this."

BP directors get huge bonuses

The Common Dreams website reports that two of British Petroleum's senior directors have taken bonus payments for their work in the year of the Gulf of Mexico oil spill. Byron Grote, finance director, and Iain Conn, head of downstream, had their \$1.3 million and \$1.2 million salaries and benefits topped up with rewards of \$640,000 and \$500,000 respectively.

BP's annual report also revealed that Tony Hayward, the former chief executive during the crisis, left the board in October with \$3.2 million in salary and severance payments, plus a \$950,000 annual pension.

According to the report, Dudley denied himself a bonus in what was a "painful year" for BP. But he is still potentially eligible for up to 581,084 shares, currently worth \$4.4 million, on top of a \$1.6 million salary.

Andy Inglis, the head of exploration and production who left following the crisis, was given a \$1.1 million pay-off, and an extra \$315,000 for "repatriation costs" on top of his \$1,180,000 salary and benefits. Carl-Henric Svanberg, the chair of BP criticised for his handling of the disaster, took home a \$1.2 million package, plus \$140,000 in relocation costs. ●

Arrests increase the stakes in Iran

Mir Hussein Mousavi and Mehdi Karoubi, candidates in Iran's controversial June 2009 presidential election, and leaders of the opposition Green Movement, have been arrested. The two men had been under house arrest since Feb. 14, when protesters returned to the streets and the Green Movement renewed its call for the resignation of president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad.

The Iranian Ministry of Intelligence had suggested that Mousavi was colluding with banned organisations to subvert the Islamic Republic.

Jamshid Ahmadi, Assistant General Secretary for the London-based Committee for the Defence of the Iranian People's Rights (CODIR), condemned the arrests.

"It is clear that the regime is inventing pretexts on which to arrest these men because of the influence they have with the popular movement", he said. "Events across the region have the leaders of the Islamic Republic worried as they can see the outcomes of popular protest in Tunisia, Egypt and Libya. Mousavi and Karoubi should be released immediately and be allowed to play a full part in the true democratisation of society in Iran."

"We fear a repeat of the situation in 1988," continued Ahmadi, "when the regime executed thousands of political prisoners in order to terrorise the opposition into submission. The record of the Islamic Republic on human rights is bleak. They are not beyond repeating such tactics."

CODIR is urging all democratic individuals and organisations, in particular the labour movement, to send letters to Iranian diplomatic missions and embassies to demand that the regime release Mousavi and Karoubi and to halt its attacks on human rights. ●

REDS ON THE WEB

www.comunist-party.ca

www.peoplesvoice.ca

www.ycl-ljc.ca

www.solidnet.org

The West's hypocrisy on the Bomb in Korea

By Sean Burton

The U.S. government recently announced that it has no intention of reinstalling tactical nuclear weapons in South Korea. Evidently this statement was deemed necessary due to recent comments by right-wing South Korean politicians, to the effect that the country should be armed with nuclear weapons to counter the supposed threat from North Korea.

A number of national assembly members from South Korea's ruling Grand National Party (GNP), as well as the conservative media, have been arguing in favour of developing nuclear weapons, or at least having the US redeploy its weapons which were removed in the 1990s. GNP representatives

apparently also handed out a survey which purports that two-thirds of South Koreans would favour the presence of nuclear weapons.

The right-wing media has seen a flurry of pro-nuclear weapon articles in recent weeks. In January, a columnist for the *Chosun Ilbo* openly called for South Korea to develop the bomb to escape the "hypocrisy trap" of making demands on North Korea without ever following through. The writer suggested that the weapons would not be "offensive or defensive", but would ensure "balance" and negotiation, in the manner of the Cold War arrangements between the USA and USSR. Similar sentiments have been put forward by GNP representatives.

Majority opinion in Seoul seems

to be against such a plan, and the South Korean regime certainly considers an absence of nuclear weapons to give them the moral high ground. At the same time, they make it clear that South Korea is already within the USA's nuclear umbrella.

In other words, the immediate presence of nukes is irrelevant, since the U.S. military can attack from wherever it wants. The announcement that the U.S. will not redeploy is doubtless a recognition of the fact they have no need to do so.

Naturally, there is tremendous irony and hypocrisy in this situation. South Korea is taking the usual path of playing the victim when it is among the perpetrators. The South does not need nuclear weapons because the US has

plenty nearby, and that has been the case for decades.

Therein lies the very reason for the North's nuclear program. Pyongyang is acting primarily to deter major U.S.-South Korean military aggression. The South Korean government turns this argument on its head, making it seem as though the South needs a deterrent, in a despicable bid to once again shift blame and drum up more anti-North sentiment.

It hardly matters if the desire to bring nukes back was genuine, or that Seoul denies any such official plan. Nor does it matter that the US denies such plans. The point is to fuel anti-North jingoism, by exploiting the hypocritical notion that it's okay for some countries to possess such weapons, but not others. Since South Korea already has the guidance of the U.S. and the "umbrella" of its nukes, these methods are all the more shameless. ●

CPC-PCC 90

Jeanne Corbin: working class organizer

Our series of articles marking the 90th anniversary of the Communist Party of Canada continues with the story of a party militant who became known to many Canadians a few years ago with the publication of *Red Travellers: Jeanne Corbin and Her Comrades*. This important book by Andrée Lévesque adds to the rich historical study of women who made a profound contribution to the early revolutionary movement, such as Annie Buller, Becky Buhay and Florence Custance, and Canada's first Communist MP, Dorise Nielsen.

Born in 1906 in Cellettes, France, Jeanne Corbin immigrated with her family to Alberta in 1911. There are few biographical details about Corbin's early years, but most of the European immigrants who were lured to "settle" the prairie lands taken from the Indians and Métis faced terrible obstacles in their struggles to overcome poverty.

Seeking to improve her chances in life, Corbin's parents sent her to school in Edmonton at the age of 15. According to Lévesque's research, "Beginning in 1922 she had been in contact with certain Communists who were lodging in the same boarding house as she, the Astor House on 103rd Avenue. She became a member of the Young Communist League and, when she turned eighteen, joined the Communist Party. During her last year at Victoria High she was actively involved in organizing the Young Pioneers..." In 1927 and 1928, she took classes at the Party's summer camp in Sylvan Lake, under the direction of Beckie Buhay.

By the time Corbin received her teaching credentials, she was already on an RCMP blacklist. Instead, she became a full-time revolutionary. As Robert Lanning wrote in a 2008 review for *People's Voice*, before her untimely death, "Corbin had become a model of the working class organizer of the 1920s and 30s: writing, speaking, raising money, demonstrating, teaching, knocking on doors and spending time in jail."

As the Dirty Thirties began, Jeanne Corbin quickly became one of the most committed and talented young activists in the communist movement. Her assignments

included raising funds for the party's newspaper, *The Worker*, and campaigning for the Canadian Labor Defence League, the organization led by Rev. A.E. Smith



Jeanne Corbin

which defended radicals facing legal charges. Corbin herself was first jailed in 1929, ironically for leading a rally during a Free Speech Conference in Toronto, where police arrested 15 people to enforce a bylaw which prohibited outdoor meetings of Communists.

Corbin toured northern Ontario and western Canada for *The Worker*, and then began a period in Montreal where she organized the Québécois working class through the Workers' Unity League. Her work took her to mining and lumber towns across northern Ontario and Québec, such as Timmins and Rouyn-Noranda. Fluently bilingual, she founded and edited the party's *L'Ouvrier canadien* (Canadian Worker) newspaper in Montreal, at the age of 24. Short of funds, and facing repression by the police and the Catholic Church, *L'Ouvrier canadien* did not survive long. But eventually a new paper was published, *La vie ouvrier*, and the Communists continued to organize among French-speaking workers. As in the rest of Canada, these were years of intense working class struggles to block evictions, organize "hunger marches", and defend arrested comrades.

During the lumber workers' strike of 1933 in Abitibi, Corbin was accused of inciting riot and of illegal assembly, a common charge against WUL organizers during the Depression era. After serving

three months in jail, she returned to Timmins to work in the Workers' Co-operative Store.

As Lanning writes, "Corbin was living what she loved, not because working among the unemployed and exploited was something like a religious vocation, but because her vision was so evidently oriented to a socialist future out of a miserable capitalist present."

Lévesque and other authors have devoted much attention to the role of Communist women during this period. Looking back through the very different prism of later decades, some have argued that issues of women's inequality were downplayed in a party largely composed of male industrial workers. But from another perspective, Corbin and her sister comrades were pioneers in a broader cultural shift which challenged prevailing gender norms and stereotypes.

Tragically, Corbin's life and contributions were cut short by tuberculosis. Unfortunately, she had been reluctant to seek consistent medical care during her years of constant political activity. As Norman Bethune stressed, tuberculosis was largely an "environmental" disease, curable for the wealthy and deadly for the poor. The death rate from TB during this period was more than four times higher in Quebec than Ontario.

To make matters worse, Corbin's doctor in Timmins missed the early warnings of her disease. By 1942, her faltering health was unmistakable, and she was admitted to the Queen Alexandra Sanatorium in London, Ontario. There she kept on top of events through left-wing publications and letters from comrades, and helped organize a patients' association. But the advances in TB treatment came too late, and she succumbed to the disease in May 1944.

A.E. Smith, Tim Buck and Annie Buller spoke at Jeanne Corbin's funeral, and she was buried in Park Lawn cemetery in Toronto, where her grave is simply marked with a small stone numbered "4427". But as Becky Buhay wrote in her obituary, "Thousands will remember Jeanne, a devoted worker and a fighter for the people and for the workers." ●

Outcry against fatwas in Bangladesh

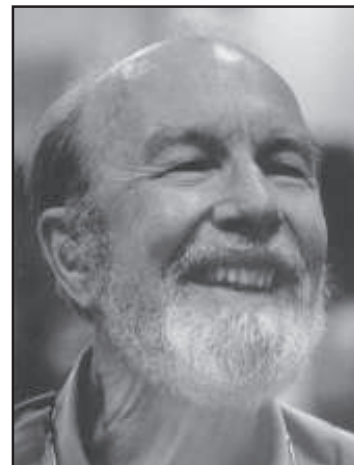
Big News Network.com - A demand to prohibit Muslim clergy from issuing fatwa is gathering momentum in Bangladesh, where 503 women have been subjected to public flogging since the year 2000. The issuing of religious edicts has not yet been banned, although a high court declared it illegal in 2001.

The issue erupted again following the death of a girl from Shariatpur, who was raped by a neighbour and then whipped 100 times after a fatwa was issued. After about 80 lashes she fell unconscious and died a day later in hospital. The case caused a national outcry after it was found that the police and the hospital colluded with the family of the alleged rapist to deny any wrongdoing. The Dhaka High Court has ordered reopening of the case and begun probes against the police and the hospital authorities.

In a 2001 judgment, Judges Mohammad Gholam Rabbani and Nazmun Ara Sultana declared that the "legal system of Bangladesh empowers only the courts to decide all questions relating to the legal opinions on the Muslim and other laws in force in Bangladesh."

That judgment was stayed by the Supreme Court, after violent clashes between police and demonstrators following the verdict. But the incident of the teenager who was whipped to death has now brought the country's social system, state machinery and performance of law enforcers into question. ●

Seeger backs BDS movement



Pete Seeger

Folk music legend Pete Seeger has officially joined the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions campaign to pressure Israel through economic means for its anti-Palestinian policies.

Seeger, now 92, has been a progressive and anti-war activist since the mid-1930s. In the 1950s he was interrogated by the McCarthyist House Un-American Activities Committee, and his career suffered the effects of the Cold War. His songs "We Shall Overcome," "Turn, Turn, Turn," "If I Had a Hammer" and "Where Have All the Flowers Gone" have all become anthems for peace movements and civil rights.

Seeger contributes half of the royalties from "Turn, Turn Turn" to the Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions (ICAHAD). He has also supported projects of the Jewish National Fund's U.S. branch, but has withdrawn to protest the JNF's role in driving Bedouins out of their Negev areas in Israel. After a recent meeting with Jeff Halper, coordinator of ICAHD, Seeger said his participation in the JNF project had been misunderstood, and announced his support for the BDS campaign. ●



"March of the Red Carnations" commemorates Ali Primera

Ali Primera died on February 16, 1985, but remains one of the most popular Venezuelan singers and is a national icon. A member of the Venezuelan Communist Party, his songs are dedicated to themes such as poverty, inequality, exploitation, and resistance. On Saturday, February 19, Venezuelans marched from Primera's house to his grave, in Paraguaná, Falcon state.

Egypt: the seeds of revolt...

continued from page 7

to keep on. The revolution was inevitably imminent, as its objective conditions were present, as Marx said. The people and the youth couldn't keep living the same way as before, their future was darkened, and the regime along with its institutions had become unable to rule using the past ways, on account of their senility, mouldiness, internal conflicts, and its dependence on the oppressive mechanism.

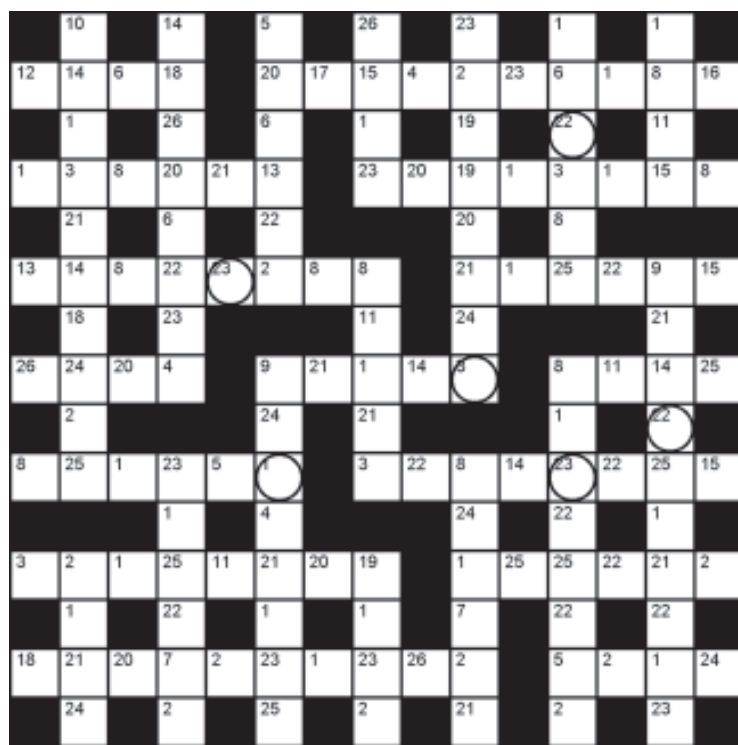
Also the availability of the revolutionary moment played a major role, due to the accumulation of the activity of political forces, and the crystallization of alternative political, economic and national programs. Thus one can confidently say that is a revolution that has its own trait, not just a movement or an uprising.

The Egyptian people, during the revolution days, proved that decades of hard years could not terminate their ethical features, their tolerant habits, and their insistence... The military's attitude has also contributed to the accomplishment of the people's demands, and the overthrow of the regime. Egyptians have also proven through its demonstrations of millions that the revolution is ongoing. The slogans of the revolution chanted and insisted on by the public were inspirational. At the same time, it wasn't possible for any political

force to claim they had mobilized the masses. The illusions of chaos, terrorism, and religious tension, promoted and used by the regime to intimidate the people, have been eliminated too. ●

People's Voice Crossword

By David Tymoshchuck



Solve the puzzle starting with these clues; see solution at bottom of this page.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
	E			Z								
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
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Prevent an imperialist military "solution" in Libya

Issued by the Central Executive Committee, Communist Party of Canada, March 8, 2011

The uprising against the Qaddafi-led regime and the resulting armed conflict in Libya is growing more intense, and the danger of foreign military intervention by the major imperialist powers including Canada looms larger with each passing day. Indeed, NATO commandoes are already reported to be inside the country, training the insurgent forces in Eastern Libya, and a massive naval armada is being assembled offshore preparing for a full-scale assault.

The turmoil and resulting loss of life in Libya is horrendous and deeply regrettable; however this crisis must be resolved by the Libyan people themselves, not through foreign interference. The Communist Party of Canada is categorically opposed to imperialist intervention in any form, or under any pretext.

Efforts to mediate a peaceful, political settlement to the conflict under the aegis of the African Union have been stymied by the imperialist powers which seek to impose a military solution that would advance their economic and political interests not only in Libya but also throughout North Africa and the Middle East as a whole.

The mainstream corporate media equates the uprising in Libya with the previous uprisings in Tunisia and Egypt, but they are not at all the same. The opposition to the Qaddafi-led regime is multi-layered and very heterogeneous. On one hand, they include those justifiably demanding greater democratic rights and freedom of expression, and an immediate end to political suppression and human rights abuses by the current government.

Deteriorating socio-economic

conditions have also fed the fire of revolt. The social advances ushered in by the 1969 revolution which overthrew the monarchic regime significantly improved the living conditions of the Libyan working class. Financed largely through the revenues of the nationalized oil industry, universal access to quality healthcare, education (including post-secondary studies) and social services were all greatly expanded and improved, and the real incomes of the people soared, helping Libya achieve the highest level of GNP per-capita income and human development index ranking in all of Africa. However since the early 1990s, there has been a steady rollback in progressive social policies, under the tutelage of the IMF. A number of key industries where privatized, wealth became ever more concentrated in the hands of the well-connected, unemployment (especially among youth) grew substantially, and social disparities widened along both class and regional lines, aggravating long-standing tribal relations inside the country.

There can be no doubt that these political and socio-economic grievances and contradictions laid the objective basis for the resulting protest movement. The unacceptable actions of the Qaddafi-led regime in violently suppressing the largely peaceful protests further inflamed the situation, widening the social base of the opposition.

On the other hand, the opposition forces are also composed of reactionary and imperialist-sponsored elements, including pro-monarchist forces which have never forgiven the '69 revolution for dethroning King Idris, and well-financed pro-imperialist groupings such as the so-called "National Front for the Salvation of Libya" which is bankrolled by the U.S. National Endowment for Democracy, a

notorious CIA-conduit which finances counter-revolutionary forces around the globe (in Cuba, Venezuela, etc.). The NFSL has maintained a paramilitary training base for a "liberation army" across the Libya-Egypt border for years, armed and financed by U.S. imperialism.

These are the reactionary forces which the imperialist powers are actively supporting and promoting - a puppet "government-in-waiting" that U.S. imperialism and its allies, including Canada, plan to impose on the Libyan people once they have crushed the Qaddafi regime. In this sense, it is fully accurate to speak of an imperialist conspiracy to impose its own solution through military force - either unilaterally or under the cover of the UN Security Council - with the aim of securing Libya's oil resources, and tilting the political-economic and strategic balance of forces throughout the region back in its favour.

That is why it is absolutely crucial that the peace movement and all progressive, anti-imperialist and peace-loving people across Canada do everything possible to prevent such an imperialist-led military "solution" to the Libyan crisis, hypocritically disguised as a "humanitarian intervention"; to oppose the threatened imposition of a "no-fly zone" which would constitute an act of war under international law; to condemn the aggressive role of the Harper Conservative government in this dangerous misadventure; to demand the immediate recall of the HMCS Charlottetown, a heavily-armed warship it has sent as part of the NATO military build-up; to oppose that UN-imposed sanctions on Libya which will inflict further pain on the already suffering masses of Libyan people; to uphold the national sovereignty of Libya; and to promote a peaceful, political solution to this crisis. ●

What's Left

Vancouver, BC

South Africa Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow, Fri., March 11, 7 pm, 706 Clark Dr. South Africa under apartheid, and where it is going. Also report from delegates to 17th World Festival of Youth & Students held last December in South Africa. Sponsored by Young Communist League of BC.

March Against Racism, Sunday, March 20, 2 pm, from Waterfront Skytrain (601 W. Cordova), call 604-715-6990 for info.

Left Film Night/Pasta Dinner for People's Voice, 6 pm, Sunday, March 27, tickets \$12, followed by Left Film Night at 7 pm, 706 Clark Drive. For info, call 604-255-2041.

Migrant Workers: Equal in Rights? Public forum on class action suit against Denny's Restaurants, Wed., March 23, 6-9 pm, Cracked Ice Lounge, Sheraton Wall Centre, 1088 Burrard St. For info contact Migrante BC, 604-254-5850.

Cuba's Health Solidarity in Haiti, a first-hand account of Cuba's health brigades, Dr. Alvarez Consuegra, participant in Henry Reeves Medical Brigade in Haiti, Sat., April 2, 7 pm, Maritime Labour Centre, 1880 Triumph. Call Canadian-Cuban Friendship Association Vancouver, Ray, 604-254-1350.

Winnipeg, MB

Marxism course, classes begin early 2011. Pre-register with the Communist Party, 586-7824 or cpc-mb@mts.net.

Toronto, ON

Cuba's Health Solidarity in Haiti, a first-hand account of Cuba's health brigades, Dr. Alvarez Consuegra, participant in Henry Reeves Medical Brigade in Haiti, Friday, March 25, 7:30 pm, Steelworkers Hall, 25 Cecil St. Admission free, sponsored by Canadian-Cuban Friendship Association Toronto, www.ccfatoronto.ca, ph. Liz Hill, 416-654-7105.

Our City, Our Services, Our Future, April 9 Community Day of Action at City Hall to defend good jobs, public services and greener cities. For info on the rally and buses to Toronto, contact Eddie Ste. Marie (CLC), 416-441-3710 x226 or Laurie Hardwick (OFL), 416-571-3087.

Montreal, QC

Palestinians And Jews United, boycott/disinvestment/sanctions picket, every Saturday, 1-3 pm, outside Le marcheur, at Duluth & St. Denis.

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Send your
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People's Voice deadlines

APRIL 1-15 issue: Thursday, March 24

APRIL 16-30 issue: Thursday, April 7

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

Letter to the editor...

continued from page 4

exist. Overriding all other considerations is the US objective of ensuring a safe and plentiful supply of petroleum from the Middle East.

When President Barack Obama recently gave his state of the union address, he focused mainly on domestic issues that were surely a priority of the American people, and would be important to him, personally, if he decided to try for a second term. He said nothing about the oppression of the Egyptian people and what the US might do to ameliorate that deleterious situation. Not once did he mention the imperative of Earth peace. There was no mention of the vital historic role of the United

Nations to preserve Earth peace. Today, some other national leaders frequently have these aspects in their political lexicon.

As I listened to Obama, I thought about the US foreign policy: mainly irrational (Russia must reduce its nuclear arsenal, but Israel and the UK can keep theirs), immoral (as in the case of the illegal war against Iraq) and strategically bankrupt (typically resorting to "gunboat diplomacy," as in the case of North Korea's aggression toward South Korea). And, as is too often the case, a destabilizing influence at various points around the Earth. Egypt's role as a crony of the US is a disturbing case in point. The time for a change in direction is NOW.

Roy L. Piepenburg, Edmonton, AB

Crossword puzzle solution

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
A	E	D	G	Z	M	V	S	F	Q	H	J	B
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
U	Y	K	X	P	W	O	R	I	N	L	T	C

Major struggles building up in Québec

PV Montréal Bureau

Thousands of trade unionists, students, women's organizations, environmentalists and other social groups are expected to march on Premier Charest's Montréal offices on March 12, in a vocal show of protest against the Liberal budget to be presented by Finance Minister Raymond Bachand.

The mobilization is organized by two major groups, *l'Alliance sociale* and *la Coalition opposée a la tarification et a la privatisation des services publics* (The Social Alliance and the Coalition opposed to pricing and privatization of public services).

They are rallying under the slogan "Québec's budget, a question of choice!", highlighting that the budget is being rammed through the National Assembly without consultation or discussion. Bachand's austerity budget, they say, is not a necessity but an ideological decision, prioritizing profits before people.

"We oppose all forms of regressive taxation, which burden the less fortunate and those whose health is most fragile" a statement by the two groups said. "The proposed health fee of \$200 (per person, per year) in addition to being discriminatory against women, is deeply unfair, because it requires the same effort to all households, regardless of their income."

The organizations also reject the increase of tuition fees, and the wide scope of privatization and cuts.

"It is time that the government favours socially positive choices that reflect a better redistribution



March 20, 2010: 75,000 trade unionists and their allies marched through Montreal in an earlier round of fightback against the Charest government. This spring the struggle begins again.

of wealth. It must invest in services to the population and make every effort to ensure that jobs are quality," concluded the representatives of the Coalition and the Social Alliance.

At a meeting of the Parti Communiste du Québec (PCQ) the weekend before the rally, Robert Luxley, editor of the newspaper *Clarté*, explained that a mass mobilization of as many people as possible for the demonstration was a priority of all progressives.

Luxley stressed that it was essential the mobilizations continue after March 12. No official plans have yet been announced, but the spirit is optimistic.

The coalescing of these two

groups can be seen as the uniting of tendencies within the labour and people's fightback in Québec. The *l'Alliance sociale* formed in the wake of the dissolution of the Front Commun, a bargaining coalition of all the major trade union centrals in Québec which came together last year, but folded to concessions offered by the government.

The smaller group calling the demonstration, *la Coalition opposée a la tarification et a la privatisation des services publics*, is composed largely of community groups, militant unions or locals and the left-wing of the student movement.

While the dissolution of the Front commun was a serious step back for the fightback, the weapon of strike action is not off the table, Luxley said. In the coming period, the PCQ will advance the slogan of a general political or social strike and the resignation of the government. The Party will emphasize the need for a people's economic recovery and the better Québec that workers and all the people deserve.

Noting that the left party Québec Solidaire is the only political party that is an observer to the coalition

process, and a supporter of the mass united people's action, the PCQ also announced that it was forming an organized collective within Québec

The Communists hope to send a positive message that the non-nationalist left, including progressive immigrants in Montreal, are still welcome "under the tent" of Québec solidaire.

Solidaire under the name of the Communist Party of Canada.

Québec Solidaire (QS) has one elected member in the National Assembly, Amir Khadir. It was formed five years ago when the Union des forces progressiste (UFP) merged with a group stemming from the feminist movement. A founding member of the UFP, the PCQ has advocated for a federated workers' party since 1965.

In addition to providing an independent voice within Québec solidaire, the creation of a communist collective will be an important step for the participation of left forces within the broad "umbrella" left party in two other ways, the PCQ meeting

concluded.

First, the Communists will be advocating a position within Québec Solidaire in support of the right of self-determination and sovereignty up to and including separation for Québec. However, in a letter to the QS leadership applying for the status of a collective, the Communists state that they oppose a strategy of independence at the current time.

Instead, they will be arguing for the unity of the Québec working class with the Canadian working class in its struggle against finance capital. Such unity of the people should ultimately be expressed in a radically new republican constitution for Canada, guaranteeing national rights not just for Québec but also Aboriginal peoples.

Therefore, the meeting noted, if Québec Solidaire accepts this application, it will effectively send a positive message that the non-nationalist left are still welcome "under the tent" of Québec Solidaire. This includes a large number of progressive immigrants in Montréal.

The forming of a collective is also important as the PCQ is engaging militants and

activists from across the left spectrum in a major debate within QS about the content of its platform and programme.

At an upcoming QS convention, the party will debate whether to call for nationalization of the economy, including energy and banking. The PCQ advocates that Québec Solidaire take on the character of an anti-imperialist, anti-monopoly, and pro-democratic party with stronger links to labour.

The PCQ is participating in a major round-table of pro-socialist and anti-capitalist groups within QS, and is circulating its own statement which will be printed in English, in the theoretical journal *The Spark!* •



Québec Solidaire co-leaders Françoise David and Amir Khadir.

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11/06

Niagara News Bulletin

PV Niagara Bureau

* Local hospitals in Port Colborne and Fort Erie were told to "call 911" if a patient had a heart attack or stroke, after their emergency rooms were gutted by the Niagara Health System (NHS) in favour of moving the services to a P3 (public-private-partnership) hospital at the other end of the region. Meanwhile the provincial health minister insisted there would be no investigation of the decision to cut local emergency rooms in favour of profiteers.

* In Welland, 300 workers from Henniges Automotive will be laid off over this year, some of them having worked at the auto parts plant for nearly all of their working life. A USW Local 455 ex-President said his local had offered every concession and their plant was profitable (12-13%), but not profitable enough for corporate greed.

* The teaching assistants and part-time instructors CUPE Local 4207 at Brock is insisting that management "take bargaining seriously" and actually negotiate with them on their next contract instead of going to arbitration. Management is in a weak position and even offered to pay both halves of the arbitration costs.

* The federal government is completely cutting funds for a Niagara-based network that helps people across Canada suffering from mental health problems find jobs, without explaining why other than the obvious (they won't spend what it would take to meet our needs).

* Fort Erie mayor Douglas Martin, on the Canadian side of the border, decried a recent unilateral resolution by Buffalo (US side) on merging the management of border-crossings with Niagara Falls (up the river), without consulting their Canadian counterparts, a further erosion of Canadian sovereignty. •