

MAY
16-31,
2014

VOL. 22
#9

\$1.50

people's VOICE

May Day
2014 reports
See page 12

Printed in Canada by union labour
on recycled paper  118-44
Publications Mail Agreement #40011632

The 2014 Ontario Election:

People's Needs, Not Corporate Greed! Another Ontario is Possible!

The 2014 provincial budget was clearly an election budget aimed to position the Liberals to the left of the NDP on a range of social policy issues. These include the proposed defined benefit pension plan, increases to the child benefit program and the extension of free dental services to impoverished children, cost of living increases to the minimum wage, a small increase to single recipients of Ontario Works, and small wage increases to Personal Support Workers.

The 10 year, \$29 billion investment in infrastructure renewal and jobs, a portion of which were to be earmarked for youth employment, would have provided significant economic stimulus and jobs, and improved urban and inter-urban public transportation. \$11.4 billion was set aside for hospital construction, and another \$11.1 billion for School Boards to repair aging schools and build new ones.

The budget also proposed a miniscule corporate tax increase, eliminating the tax break of 7% on the first \$500,000 of income (currently taxed at the small

business tax rate of 4.5%). It also projected a small tax increase for the 2% of the population with incomes over \$150,000.

But the budget was clearly a Big Business budget, with privatization at the core of the funding proposals, the transformation of many public services into private public partnerships (AFR's), and the promise of future deep cuts to the corporate tax rate, from the current 11.5% down to 10%. Public sector layoffs and wage cuts are built-in, implicit in a package that contains continued restraints to operating budgets in hospitals and healthcare, public and post-secondary education, and social programs. This is the Drummond Report, implemented over 10 years.

The Tories opposed the budget because they are ideologically opposed to any and all progressive measures, and they wanted more privatization, more cuts, and more corporate tax cuts. They also wanted to force an election, win it, and then introduce massive austerity measures with right-to-work legislation, mass privatization, de-regulation, and



Zaharuk

inter-provincial free trade to knock down any remaining obstacles to the free reign of capital. Wages, living standards and pensions would drop down to the basement in no time, and labour, social and

democratic rights would virtually disappear.

The NDP's stated reason for opposing the budget and bringing down the government was the gas plant scandal and government

corruption. In fact they had nothing to say about the budget, or about the NDP's agenda for Ontario. It's true continued from page 1 the Liberals

see ONTARIO, page 3



Winds of change blow through CLC

Challenger Hassan Husseini (at left) congratulates Hassan Yussuff (at right), newly elected President at the Canadian Labour Congress convention in Montreal

- story on page 3 -

2

Bugging your e-mail

It turns out that Canadian law enforcement agencies routinely ask telecoms for access to the private communications of individuals... and at least one company is happy to comply with the cops.

INSIDE

5

C-23 still a problem

Under pressure, the Harper Tories have made some changes to Bill C-23. But the "Fair Elections Act" is still far from acceptable.

11

Behind Boko Haram

The violent abduction of girl students in Nigeria has been widely condemned. But would western military intervention improve or worsen human rights abuses in Africa?

Telcos asked to disclose subscriber data every 27 seconds

Dr. Michael Geist is a law professor at the University of Ottawa. He is a syndicated columnist on technology law issues with regular columns in the Toronto Star and the Ottawa Citizen.

Every 27 seconds. Minute after minute, hour after hour, day after day, week after week, month after month. Canadian telecommunications providers, who collect massive amounts of data about their subscribers, are asked to disclose basic subscriber information to Canadian law enforcement agencies every 27 seconds. In 2011, that added up to 1,193,630 requests. Given the volume, most likely do not involve a warrant or court oversight (2010 RCMP data showed 94% of requests involving customer name and address information was provided voluntarily without a warrant).

In most warrantless cases, the telecommunications companies were entitled to say no. The law says that telecom companies and Internet providers may disclose personal information without a warrant as part of a lawful investigation or they can withhold the information until law enforcement has obtained a warrant. According to newly released information, three telecom providers alone disclosed information from 785,000 customer accounts in 2011, suggesting that the actual totals were much higher. Moreover, virtually all providers sought compensation for complying with the requests.

These stunning disclosures, which were released by the Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada, comes directly from the telecom industry after years of keeping their disclosure practices shielded from public view. In fact, the industry was reluctant to provide the information to even

the Privacy Commissioner.

According to correspondence I obtained under the Access to Information Act, after the Commissioner sent letters to the 12 biggest telecom and Internet providers seeking information on their disclosure practices, Rogers, Bell and RIM proposed aggregating the information to keep the data from individual companies secret. The response dragged on for months, with Bell admitting at one point that only four providers had provided data and expressing concern about whether it could submit even the aggregated response since it would be unable to maintain anonymity.

The correspondence also confirms that the telecom providers were concerned about how the government and law enforcement would react to public disclosures. In one email, Bell says that "we are walking a delicate line between supporting privacy and not antagonizing Public Safety/LEAs [law enforcement agencies], so the materials will be pretty factual, not much commentary."

While the current situation, which amounts to disclosure of subscriber information thousands of times each day often without a warrant, is enormously problematic, the situation is about to get even worse.

First, Bill C-13, the government's lawful access bill, will expand warrantless disclosure of subscriber information to law enforcement by including an immunity provision from any criminal or civil liability (including class action lawsuits) for companies that preserve personal information or disclose it without a warrant. The immunity provision makes it more likely that disclosures will occur without a warrant since the legal risks associated with such disclosures are removed.

Second, Bill S-4, the newly-

introduced Digital Privacy Act, proposes extending the ability to disclose subscriber information without a warrant from law enforcement to private sector

Other Voices...

organizations. The bill includes a provision that allows organizations to disclose personal information without consent (and without a court order) to any organization that is investigating a contractual

breach or possible violation of any law. This applies both past breaches or violations as well as potential future violations. The disclosure occurs in secret without the knowledge of the affected person.

Third, the industry has steadfastly refused to address the lack of transparency concerns regarding its practices. Providers admit that they do not notify customers that their information has been requested, thereby denying them the ability to challenge the demand in court.

Moreover, documents released earlier this year suggested that companies such as Bell have even established a law enforcement database that may provide authorities with direct access to subscriber information.

The systems may create great efficiencies for law enforcement - click, access subscriber data, and receive a bill from the telecom company - but they suggest a system that is entirely devoid of oversight with even the Privacy Commissioner excluded from ensuring compliance with the law.

Liberal TFWP plan "no solution to Tory mess"

Toronto - The Migrant Workers Alliance for Change (MWAC), Canada's largest migrant worker coalition, believes that the 5-point demands issued by the Liberal Party of Canada on the Temporary Foreign Worker Program (TFWP) fail to respond to the needs of migrant workers or the Canadian labour market. Discussions on the TFWP must include the voices of migrant workers. MWAC calls for the following short, medium and long-term steps:

- Short term: The Federal and provincial governments must ensure that migrant workers can exert their rights at work. This means: open work permits, TFW specific anti reprisal protections, equal access to social entitlements and strengthening labour legislation for all workers

- Medium term: Full immigration status for migrant workers in Canada as we justly transition to a long term solution;

- Long term: Permanent immigration status for all migrants coming into Canada, including workers in low-skilled occupations and the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Program.

"The Liberal plan fails to

recognize that it is provincial and federal laws together that work to make migrants a second-class category of workers that are then pitted against unemployed citizens and permanent residents," explains Tzazna Miranda Leal, organizer with Justice for Migrant Workers, member organization of MWAC. "The solution is to simply remove those exclusions from labour protections for all workers, thus making migrant workers and unemployed citizens allies in the fight for better jobs and stronger communities."

Vinay Sharma, Human Rights Director for UNIFOR, Canada's largest private sector union and MWAC member adds, "Once the provinces and the feds have cleaned up their act, we need to account for migrants already here. We can't just get rid of them. Migrant workers in Canada need full immigration status. That's the next step."

"The Liberal demands fail to recognize the expansion of TFWP as part of a dangerous shift in Canadian immigration policy towards temporariness and exclusion," explains Perry Sorio, member of Migrant Canada, an

MWAC member. "Permanency and stability are necessary to build healthy communities. We need to overhaul the entire immigration system and re-institute access to permanent status for immigrants in low-skilled occupations."

Syed Hussan, MWAC Coordinator agrees. "Our members are a fundamental part of the labour market and economy. To treat them as a separate entity as the Liberals and Tories do makes no economic sense, and continues the divisiveness drummed up over the last month. Migrants are our friends and family, not just a market-input brought in when needed. Workers need to be at the table, making joint decisions."

Migrant Workers Alliance for Change (www.migrant-workersalliance.org) includes *Asian Community AIDS Services, Caregivers Action Centre, Justicia for Migrant Workers, Legal Assistance of Windsor, Migrante-Ontario, No One Is Illegal-Toronto, Parkdale Community Legal Services, Social Planning Toronto, South Asian Legal Clinic of Ontario, UNIFOR, United Food and Commercial Workers, and Workers Action Centre.*

PV Fund Drive moving ahead!

Once again, the pressure of political events across Canada, especially the June 12 election in Ontario, makes it hard to keep up with the details of the Fund Drive. We are now well over the half-way mark, with nearly \$30,000 of our \$50,000 target either received or accounted for by the May Day ads in our previous issue. That issue was circulated across the country,

from the annual labour march in Vancouver to the May Day of Action in Toronto and many other events. Your solidarity and commitment to celebrating the annual International Workers' Day are deeply appreciated!

That issue was also distributed to delegates at the Canadian Labour Congress convention, held May 5-9 in Montreal. We can modestly note that our

ongoing effort to help promote a more democratic and militant strategy by the labour movement contributed to the successful push to "take back the CLC". See our initial report from the Convention on page 3, and watch for more analysis as the new Congress executive moves into action.

The Vancouver East Club's recent Pasta Dinner was a great success, drawing a big turnout to help boost our Fund Drive. Similarly, many readers and friends enjoyed the annual Pancake Breakfast organized by supporters in Burnaby on Mother's Day. Thanks also to our Toronto supporters, who organized the United May Day event which drew about 200 at the Steelworkers Hall, with half of the proceeds going to our Fund Drive!

The 22nd annual People's Voice Victory Banquet is set for Saturday, May 31 (doors open 6 pm), at the Russian Hall, 600 Campbell Ave. in Vancouver's historic Strathcona neighbourhood. Call 604-254-9836 for tickets and other details.

Here's my contribution to the PV Fund Drive!

Enclosed please find my donation of \$_____ to the 2014 People's Voice Press Fund Drive.

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Historic CLC Convention elects new President

By Stuart Ryan, Ottawa

The 27th Constitutional Convention of the Canadian Labour Congress, held May 5-9 in Montreal, was, to borrow a phrase from Hassan Husseini, a very "unconventional convention". Some very significant firsts made this convention untypical.

For the first time in fifteen years, incumbent president Ken Georgetti was deserted by his other executive officers in their refusal to run on a slate with him. It was the first time a CLC president was forced to put together a slate of relatively less known newcomers, the first time an Executive Vice-President, Marie Clarke Walker, circulated an open letter alleging abuse by the CLC President, and the first time that an incumbent CLC President was defeated.

It was the first time that an election debate occurred as part of the convention agenda, resulting from a motion to amend the agenda which was overwhelmingly endorsed by delegates. It was the first time that delegates voted at polling booths, rather than at their desks, allowing all the delegates

to express their wishes by a truly secret ballot.

These important events were initiated by a young experienced trade unionist, Hassan Husseini, who had the courage and vision to announce a challenge to Ken Georgetti for President and to launch, with his supporters, a "Take Back the CLC Movement". Although he pulled out of the contest at the leadership debate the day before the election and threw his support behind Hassan Yussuff, Husseini's platform clearly placed the issues, captured the undercurrents of discontent rippling through the labour movement, and set the stage for Yussuff's candidacy and the defeat of Georgetti.

Husseini's program "What We Stand For" was sub-titled: "Make the CLC Work For Workers, Beyond Fairness: Developing an Independent Labour Vision, Build Grassroots Workers Activism". This program set the parameters for the Yussuff campaign and will remain a challenge for the post-convention period and the new leadership.

Husseini's support for Yussuff

was based on commitments by the new President to mobilize the rank and file and to put equity at the heart of all of the CLC's work.



Hassan Yussuff (top left), the new CLC President, and Hassan Husseini, whose entry into the race broke the convention wide open.

It is clear in hindsight that Georgetti was caught off guard by the impact of Husseini's candidacy and the palace revolt of his fellow executive officers. He was late in rather hastily assembling a slate consisting of Nathalie Stringer (CUPE) who stood for Secretary-Treasurer, and Laurie Antonin (Teamsters) and Kelly Murphy (NUPGE), who ran for the

Executive Vice President positions. They called their slate "Team Win," and together they lost.



President.

Only 2000 delegates voted for the latter three executive positions, an indication of how many were bussed in or recruited simply for the presidential vote by the unions supporting Yussuff or Georgetti.

The new Table Officers include three members of the previous CLC Executive, no longer under the thumb of Georgetti, and a new representative of one of the most militant unions in the country.

It will be very interesting, and possibly a source of future analyses to see if the convention initiates grater unity or greater rivalry. In any case it surely signals the potential for more fight-back and more independent labour political action.

The forces in the "Take Back the CLC" movement are encouraged by the results, but are not resting on their laurels. At a May 9 Action Caucus meeting, they decided to throw support behind the Save Canada Post campaign, and to meet at the People's Social Forum in August in Ottawa to strengthen their network and to continue to build an effective fight-back movement within the labour movement. ●

Ontario election...

continued from page 1

can't be trusted, but why didn't the NDP use its clout to hold the government's feet to the fire in this minority government to secure deliver of the progressive proposals and scuttle privatization?

On the face of it, the NDP has no major disagreements with the budget; and is mainly focused on defeating the government by defeating Liberal MPPs, securing more (Liberal) parliamentary seats for itself, and moving up to Official Opposition or government. A very short-sighted tactic and a failed strategy that the NDP used in the last federal election, and which helped open the door to one of the most right-wing Tory majority governments in Canadian history.

For working people, youth, women and the unemployed, the main danger in this election is the election of a Hudak Tory government. Their agenda is no secret, and it starts with smashing

labour and democratic rights and turning the clock back 75 years in Ontario. By forcing an election now, the NDP is playing a very dangerous game, as leaders of the labour and people's movements have indicated in their responses to the budget.

For our part, the Communist Party will continue to warn of the dangers of a Tory government in the first instance, and to campaign for complete reversal of the pro-corporate, anti-people austerity and privatization policies introduced by both Tory and Liberal governments, and supported by the NDP caucus on too many occasions.

Working people and youth can count on the Communist Party to fight for real restraints on corporate power and to deliver an agenda that serves people's needs and curbs corporate greed. Another Ontario is possible! Electors can make their vote really count in this election by casting a vote for the policies and objectives below.

The CPC (Ontario) and its candidates will fight for a People's Agenda:

- * Good jobs, better pensions, a livable minimum wage
- * An industrial and manufacturing strategy for Ontario
- * Affordable housing and rent controls
- * Quality public services, healthcare and hospitals
- * One universal, quality, secular education system
- * A quality, affordable public childcare system
- * A healthy, sustainable environment
- * Public auto insurance & improved public transit
- * Public power and lower rates
- * Strong labour, democratic and equality rights
- * Democratic electoral reform
- * Tax relief for working people - tax corporations and the wealthy

people's needs
not corporate greed!

vote
COMMUNIST
Another Ontario is possible!

Election Rally

The 2014 provincial election is a critical one for Ontario's working class.

The Communist Party is running 12 candidates, on a platform of full-employment, massive housing and infrastructure construction, and progressive tax reform that puts the burden on corporations and the very rich. We are also campaigning for increased public transit, public auto insurance legislation, free post-secondary education, and expansions to public healthcare, education and childcare programs. We need Communist MPPs at Queen's Park that will curb corporate power.

Come out to our election rally to meet our candidates and hear from the provincial leader, Elizabeth Rowley. It will be a spirited evening of politics and entertainment!



Saturday, June 7

7 PM

Beit Zatoun

612 Markham St., Toronto
(Bathurst subway - Markham St. exit)

Info: 416-469-2446



Authorized by CPC (Ontario)

For other election rally locations and dates, see page 11

For the detailed Communist Party (Ontario) platform and candidates, see pages 6 & 7, or visit www.communistpartyontario.ca



EDITORIALS

Salute to YCL/LJC convention!

The May 24-25 weekend will see a unique gathering in Toronto - the 26th Central Convention of the Young Communist League/Ligue de la jeunesse communiste du Canada. The editorial Board of People's Voice sends warmest greetings to YCL/LJC delegates from across Canada, who represent the revolutionary potential of youth to challenge the domination of big capital.

The Young Communist League has never had an easy path in Canada. Yet the organization has played a critical, even leading role in many historic struggles. During the Thirties, YCLers were prominent in the On to Ottawa Trek and the Mackenzie-Papineau Battalion which fought fascism in Spain. After WW2, Young Communists helped to organize workers in basic industries across the country, and to resist the integration of Canada into US imperialism's war machine. They played important roles in solidarity campaigns with the people of Vietnam, Cuba, southern Africa, Nicaragua and Palestine. YCL members were key activists in the progressive student movement, from the formation of the Canadian Federation of Students to the anti-tuition uprising of 2012 in Quebec. The YCL takes a principled stand against racism, sexism, homophobia, big nation chauvinism and other divisive ruling class ideologies.

Young people today face a grave and uncertain future, with the dangers of war, economic crisis, environmental catastrophe, and "free trade" deals imposed by big capital. To defeat these threats will require much more than spontaneous, small scale acts of resistance. Ultimately, winning a socialist alternative will require collective, mass struggle, uniting millions around demands for real change, and a coherent strategy to overcome the combined powers of the capitalist state. As the YCL celebrates its 90th anniversary, we are confident that it has the political strength and the revolutionary ideology to win the support of youth in all parts of Canada for these ideals!

Hudak threatens Ontario workers

While the Liberals feint to the left, and the NDP race to the right, the Tories have unleashed a campaign for another right-wing "revolution" in Ontario. Tim Hudak is trumpeting his plan to lay off 100,000 public sector workers, slash wages, and demolish public services and social programs. He aims to bust unions with US right-to-work (for less) laws that would drive down wages and living standards across the province, as Ontario becomes the test tube for eliminating the Rand formula and the closed union shop across Canada. And oh yes, Hudak wants more corporate tax cuts, because 11.5% (the lowest CIT rate in the industrialized world) is way too high.

Hudak's promise? To create a million jobs. Details: scanty, but directly connected to stripping the so-called "fat cats": the unions and the public sector. His target? The one million unemployed workers and never-employed youth, bankrupt business owners, dispossessed farmers, people falling through the huge cracks who are desperate for some kind of job and security.

And Hudak has some traction. Polls show the Liberals and Tories in a tight race, with NDP in the basement. No orange wave here as the NDP openly embraces austerity, tax cuts, and sops to Big Business. NDP leader Andrea Horwath is gambling that a Liberal collapse will elevate her party to Official Opposition, as in the federal election. But the high price paid for those seats was a Tory government, and it could be again.

The OFL has mounted a well organized campaign against Hudak's attack on labour and democratic rights. Unions are split in their support for the Liberals and NDP, but are focused on getting out the vote to defeat the Tories at all costs.

The Communist Party's candidates are gaining traction with voters worried about the right turn by Ontario's political parties. For more information, contact the CPC (Ontario) campaign at www.CommunistPartyOntario.ca.

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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706 Clark Drive, Vancouver, BC, V5L 3J1 or
pvoice@telus.net

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World Peace Council denounces Odessa massacre

Statement of the WPC regarding the massacre of Odessa and the developments in Ukraine

The WPC denounces strongly the recent massacre of Odessa where reactionary fascist groups, set on fire the locked Trade Union building of the city, with hundreds of protesters seeking protection inside the building on Friday 2nd May 2014. The clear murderous attempt was completed when the protesters were trying to escape from the fire by jumping from the windows of the mentioned building and the armed gangs were beating and shooting these people to death.

The Kiev interim regime, which came to power by a Coup d'état and by the open imperialist intervention of the USA and the EU clearly favours and supports such actions and armed groups. The hypocrisy and double moral reached highest levels when the USA and EU refer to the "rule of law and respect of the constitution" after having trampled everything through an armed coup. The regime has even sent troops to several cities in the eastern part of Ukraine to combat people in protest to the authoritarian and fascist regime, who express their discontent with the regime generally and its

attitude towards ethnic and language minorities along with the revanchist actions against the history and monuments of the resistance, restoring the rule and symbols of the collaborators of the Nazis in Ukraine.

We denounce firmly the authoritarian harassment of political parties and leaders who oppose the regime, which led even to the exclusion of the Communist Party of Ukraine from Parliament sessions, after earlier attempts to physically attack its leaders and the occupation of its Head office.

The European Union and its governments, hand in hand with the US administration bear heavy responsibilities for the developments in the Ukraine, pushing the country into an internal armed conflict for their geostrategical interests and competitions with Russia in the region. The open support to fascist and chauvinist forces and policies is aggravating the situation which is provoking the sentiments of the Ukrainian people and the whole region, stimulating ultra-nationalist feelings by many people.

The US administration is further escalating the tension by the remarks of the Secretary of State John Kerry on 29th April in

Washington who openly invokes in the case of Ukraine the article 5 of the NATO treaty which refers to "an armed attack against one or more of them in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against them all", considering the Ukraine NATO territory, when it is not a member of it! The WPC observes with deep concern the military preparations of NATO in several neighbour countries, while many US and European military agents are already in the country triggering the tensions in support of the Kiev regime.

We express our solidarity with the Ukrainian people, the peace loving and anti-imperialist forces who oppose the affiliation of their country to NATO and their inalienable right to decide freely and democratically about the future of Ukraine, free from any foreign political or military intervention and domination.

The peoples of Ukraine and of the region can live in peace together!

NATO and EU out of the Ukraine!

World Peace Council Athens,
8th May 2014 •



Members of the Ukrainian far-right radical group Right Sector stand outside the parliament in Kiev

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Marxist Theory

"Democracy" Is Dead

By Margaret Kimberley, *Freedom Rider, Black Agenda Report, April 22, 2014. Reprinted from mltdoy.com*

Too many Americans love to boast that the United States is a democracy. That idea is accepted uncritically and celebrated as proof of this country's superiority. Every public activity and event is an opportunity for the false narrative to be repeated and indulged.

Events as disparate as elections, holiday celebrations, advertisements, school commencements and religious worship are all used to propagandize and create false belief about the degree of power the average citizen has vis a vis their government.

Of course all evidence shows that this narrative is and always was a lie. Dictionaries define democracy as government representing the citizens through elected representatives, or as majority rule, or a society which provides equal rights to all. The history of this country has rarely lived up to any of those descriptions but in the recent past the notion that this country is a democracy has become openly farcical.

We have nothing but meaningless trappings and any power exercised by the people is sadly in short supply. This state of affairs has been obvious to anyone who has been paying close attention. Americans not only don't get what they want from the political system, they actually get the opposite of what they want.

The pace of the oligarchic state has quickened lately but the dynamic has been evident for quite some time.

Even elite academia is taking notice and has given official imprimatur to a conversation that had been ignored. Professors Martin Gilens of Princeton University and Benjamin Page of Northwestern University are the authors of the study "Testing Theories of American Politics: Elites, Interest Groups, and Average Citizens."

While their work does not as news stories suggest use the word oligarchy, the authors are quite clear about their findings. Professor Gilens gave this brief summary of their conclusions: "I'd say that contrary to what decades of political science research might lead you to believe, ordinary citizens have virtually no influence over what their government does in the United States. And economic elites and interest groups, especially those representing business, have a substantial degree of influence. Government policy-making over the last few decades reflects the preferences of those groups - of economic elites and of organized interests."

While this study has however briefly changed public discourse, it is important to note that the disregard of popular will is obvious for all to see. If this were not true, the minimum wage would be higher, there would be no cuts to entitlement programs, and Americans would have a single payer health care system.

There would be no NAFTA or TPP free trade agreements which

force a race to the bottom for workers, destroy entire ecosystems and violate national and popular sovereignty.

If this country were truly democratic, the city of Detroit would not have filed for bankruptcy for the simple reason that voters in Detroit and in the state of Michigan voted to repeal the emergency manager law which brought bankruptcy into being.

Americans don't want the increasingly frequent interventions abroad forced upon by them by president after president yet that is what they get.

We want to address the problems created by human made climate change. We don't want hydraulic fracturing, or the pollution or earthquakes that come with it, but that is what we have.

We don't want rich people to control the political process but the Supreme Court has said time and again that money equals speech and those decisions prove the point of the study. Simply put, money talks and those without money have no voice.

If that were not the case, American workers would not be poorer than their counterparts in the rest of the world. The so-called middle class workers in this country had the distinction of being better off than their peers around the world. That is no longer the case with stagnating wages and job loss and a country that does not practice income distribution that would keep people out of poverty.

In a democratic country, Walmart and its low wages would

not be the largest employer. The manufacturing that once dominated the economic landscape would still employ the bulk of the work force with its higher wages and other benefits that provide economic security.

In a democracy, the financial services industry that created the worldwide economic meltdown would not have been bailed out. Workers would be bailed out. Corporations wouldn't get tax breaks and other government subsidies. Workers would get them. And if the average person had any say in the matter, the big time banksters would now be behind bars.

The myth of American democracy is just one of many that are cherished out of ignorance and suspension of disbelief but that is not a reason to continue the confusion and self-delusion. The only time we get any taste of democracy is when we proclaim that we don't have it but assert plainly and loudly that we intend to get it.

The phony narrative wears thin as the quality of life diminishes. The United States of America is not a democratic nation if the only right that citizens have is to go to a polling place every few years. It is time to stop fetishizing what clearly does not work for the majority of people and start talking about something new.

After all, the definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over but expecting a different result. The only result we have to show is rule by the elites and if that is acceptable then the people have gone truly insane.



Serious shortcomings remain in Bill C-23

Statement by the Central Executive Committee, Communist Party of Canada

The Conservative federal government has finally announced significant changes to Bill C-23, its undemocratic "Fair Elections Act." While the legislation is still being debated in Parliament, and serious shortcomings still need to be addressed, these amendments represent an important partial victory for advocates of electoral democracy in Canada.

Serious concerns regarding Bill C-23 were raised by the Communist Party of Canada and other registered political parties currently without representation in the House of Commons, which met on April 10-11 in Ottawa. As the joint statement issued by that meeting stressed, the legislation had been condemned almost universally by Canadian and international elections officials and experts, and supported only by Conservative politicians who stood to benefit from its worst provisions. We warned that Bill C-23 would help criminals get away with election fraud, create confusion and delays on Election Day, and deprive hundreds of thousands of Canadians of their right to vote.

The government's proposed

amendments include: allowing the Chief Electoral Officer and the Commissioner to speak more freely with the public and with one another; elimination of the "fundraising loophole" which



would enable the political parties (especially the Conservatives) to evade spending caps; retaining a form of the "vouching" procedure; removing the proposal that the winning political parties nominate central poll supervisors; and extending the retention of voter contact data from one year to three years.

Voters whose personal identification lacks a street address would be able to sign a written oath of residence, which must be co-signed by another voter with full ID (both name and address). This change could reduce the disenfranchisement of

eligible voters, but the government must consult closely with advocates for First Nations, seniors, students, and homeless citizens to include guarantees to safeguard the right to vote for these citizens. The proposed ban on using Voter Information Cards must be lifted, since this form of ID is important to protect the constitutional right to cast a ballot for all citizens.

A significant omission from the proposed amendments is the failure to provide the Commissioner with the power to compel witness testimony. This will seriously impede investigations from finding all the facts in criminal abuses of the electoral system.

And while the Chief Electoral Officer would be permitted to speak with the public and to continue to work with school educational programs, the proposed amendments do not allow Elections Canada to engage in advertising campaigns to reach out to all citizens affirming their right to vote, and encouraging eligible voters to exercise their franchise.

Despite these serious weaknesses, the proposed amendments have been achieved through weeks of public pressure by supporters of electoral rights

and democratic freedoms. This campaign succeeded in dividing the Conservative caucus in the Commons and Senate, forcing PM Harper and so-called "Democratic Reform" minister Pierre Poilievre to retreat on key provisions of C-23.

This retreat represents an important partial victory. The attempt by the Harper Conservatives to use U.S. Republican-style tactics to rig the next federal election has met a

serious setback. But efforts must continue to protect every Canadian's right to vote in fair and honest elections, free of voter suppression schemes and fraud, watched over by an independent and effective Elections Canada.

We will continue working with the other smaller political parties to raise this demand in the courts, in the streets, in elections, on social media, in class rooms - wherever Canadians who believe in democratic rights are present. ●



The Fifth of the Month to Free the Five

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

E-mail: president@whitehouse.gov

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

Phone 1-202-456-1111 Fax 1-202-456-2461

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

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

Vote for your Communist Party (Ontario) candidates on June 12



BRAMPTON SPRINGDALE Elizabeth Hill

Elizabeth grew up a working class family in Toronto and became politically involved while in high school. She was leader of the Young Communist League of Canada in the early 1970's and is now the co-chair of the Canadian Network on Cuba. In 1988 she was elected to the City of York Board of Education and served as a trustee for 18 years. Hill is committed to bringing a university campus to Brampton, and to introducing legislation to bring public auto insurance to Ontario. "Public auto insurance will cut insurance premiums in half, while increasing benefits to cover the full costs of medical care and recovery. Public auto insurance has worked well in four provinces for almost 40 years." Hill has also been a sharp critic of healthcare policy in Ontario, citing the Osler hospital as the wrong way to build hospitals. "Instead of fat profits for investors with P-3 hospitals, Ontario should raise corporate taxes and build public hospitals with sufficient beds and nurses to meet the needs of the population." Elizabeth was an office worker most of her life. She has two sons and two grandchildren, and is working to finish a biographical novel.



GUELPH - Juanita Burnett

Juanita Burnett first became politically active when Mike Harris threatened to close daycares in the mid-'90s. She and her four-year-old went on a march down to the MPP's office with many of the other children, parents, and caregivers from their daycare centre. "Ontario is long overdue for a system of quality, regulated and safe public childcare. We need Workers are speaking out against privatization and cuts made in the name of austerity, and for stronger public services that we need to function as a community," said Juanita. She is a part-time library worker, an activist, feminist, and proud union member.



DAVENPORT - Mariam Ahmad

Mariam Ahmad is an activist and young worker running in the riding of Davenport. She recognizes that young people are not only the workers of tomorrow, but also the workers of today. "Young people are a force for the radical change in direction Ontario needs." Mariam became politically active while in high school in youth organizations struggling for LGBTI* equality rights including the rights of LGBTI* refugees in Ontario. "Victories against racism, sexism, transphobia, and homophobia mean progress for all. Ontario needs to strengthen and enforce the Human Rights Code and hate crime laws, combat homophobia in schools, enact transgender rights, and fight against racist immigration laws." Mariam is also an author, artist, and the organizer of Toronto's Young Communist League.



DON VALLEY WEST Dimitrios (Jim) Kabitsis

Dimitrios (Jim) Kabitsis immigrated to Canada 53 years ago from his home country of Greece. A speaker of five languages, Jim has been active in the movement for democratic electoral reform with Fair Vote Canada. "In Ontario the big pro-austerity parties are blocking electoral reform. At Queen's Park we need to move now to pro-proportional representation and have the right to recall MPPs". Kabitsis is retired and is a fighter for the rights of seniors. "Retirees shouldn't have to choose between eating and paying the rent and should live with dignity. The CPP needs to be expanded to have a universal, portable secure and liveable public pension system." Jim has run for municipal government in Toronto (Ward 5) and Orillia. He has been a member of the Communist Party since 1962.



HAMILTON CENTRE - Bob Mann

Bob Mann is a lifelong resident and labour activist in Hamilton. He has served on the Hamilton District Labour Council for many years as well as being an activist in the USWA 1005, a tenants' organizer, and involved in the local Health Care Coalition. "Ontario has lost 500,000 manufacturing jobs since 2000, with thousands of those jobs disappearing in Hamilton. We need a government that stands up to corporate job destroyers. If US Steel doesn't want to run the plant, then the people of Ontario should run it", said Mann, a retired steelworker and a committed campaigner for social justice.



LONDON NORTH CENTRE Dave McKee

Dave McKee is the Communist Party candidate in London North Centre. "All three parties at Queen's Park supported some version of austerity policies, making working people pay for corporate stability and profit. It's time we had party at Queen's Park who is prepared to curb corporate power and put people's needs first!" A long-time activist, Dave was involved in community organizing against the Mike Harris government in the 1990's and helped coordinate the massive demonstrations against the US-led invasion of Iraq in 2003. Since 2008, Dave has been President of the Canadian Peace Congress. As a parent of young children, Dave believes that a single, secular, public education system is essential for Ontarians. This includes a needs-based funding formula for public schools, as well as a province-wide, public child care program. Dave is a printer by trade, and has many years of experience as a union steward. "Workers in Ontario need to unite, with unions and community groups, and fight to defend and expand our rights. Tim Hudak's anti-labour agenda has to be defeated, and labour needs to lead the way to a progressive, prosperous future in London North Centre and across Ontario."



OTTAWA CENTRE - Larry Wasslen

Born in 1952 to a working class family in Winnipeg Manitoba, Larry and family moved to the Ottawa area in 1979 to continue his work as a Registered Nurse and to study political science at Carleton University. A strong advocate of worker's rights, Larry was a key leader in the formation of the nurses union at CHEO in 1983. He retired from neonatal intensive care nursing in 2013 after forty years service. "Health care is in crisis in Ontario. We need to reverse privatization and delisting and enforce the Canada Health Act. Expand health care to include dentistry, eye care, pharmacare and longterm care." Larry, who speaks three languages, is active in the peace and Latin American solidarity movements. He strongly believes that Canada's future is Socialism and fights for expanding public ownership and democratic control of important sectors of the economy while expanding public services such as education, child care and Canada Post. It is time that working people set the agenda for Canada. "The 1% are solely focused on their own narrow interests. Only the working class has the vision needed for a truly democratic Canada where people's needs come before corporate greed".



WINDSOR WEST - Mark Davies

Mark Davies is a long-time resident of Windsor West, having graduated with a Master's degree in sociology from the University of Windsor. After spending three years as a Learning Commons Specialist with the Windsor Essex Catholic District School Board, he took a job as Library Technician at St. Clair College where he continues to work today. "Education is a right and we need to reverse cutbacks and privatization with increased funding. As the UN has recommended, Ontario needs a single secular education system in Ontario and we need to remove tuition fees from the post-secondary system," Davies said. Mark was born and raised in Hamilton, where his first job was as a dock worker at Stelco. Later, he became involved with a number of activist causes including working in the fields of mental health and LGBTI* rights, as well as HIV/AIDS awareness and lobbying. Mark has been a proud union member for many years and has been involved with the Communist Party of Canada (Ontario) for over 10 years.



OTTAWA SOUTH Espoir Manirambona

Espoir Manirambona is a student at Carleton University finishing a Bachelor's degree in Public Affairs and Policy Management. He's been involved in politics since he was very young is running in this election to stand with people forced to live in poverty. "The minimum wage needs to be raised immediately to a living wage of \$19/hr, we need to introduce a livable Guaranteed Annual Income and raise social assistance above the poverty line." He's been active in the movements for environmental sustainability, a higher minimum wage, and democratic reform. He's currently the Ottawa organizer of the Young Communist League and is helping to build the youth and student movement in Ottawa. "Now is the time to organize, unite and build the movement for democracy in Ontario and beyond. I'm running in this election to serve Ottawa South residents in their quest for liberation from poverty".



ST. CATHARINES - Saleh Waziruddin

Saleh Waziruddin is running because "we need someone in parliament to represent most of us who have been conscripted into poverty and unemployment. We used to have good jobs in Niagara. Companies don't invest when the economy is down, so instead of tax breaks for corporations that won't hire we need to use mass political action to keep jobs here and fund the public services we need." Saleh is a 36 year-old call centre worker who is an activist in the peace and Cuba solidarity movements, and has two years experience working in municipal government. He has a degree in chemical engineering & public policy and management.



TORONTO CENTRE - Drew Garvie

Drew Garvie is a recent student and young worker. He is running in Toronto Centre to stand with youth and student movements demanding a future for youth in the face of capitalist economic and environmental crisis. "In Toronto Centre and across Ontario we'll be fighting for a real alternative to the austerity agenda which is being felt especially sharply by young people. We'll be putting forward policies like the elimination of tuition fees, raising the minimum wage to \$19/hr, and full-employment policies to combat skyrocketing youth unemployment and underemployment," said Garvie. Drew's recent experience includes fighting for student interests in an elected position at the student union at the University of Guelph. He is the organizer of the Young Communist League-Ontario (YCL).



TORONTO DANFORTH Elizabeth Rowley

Elizabeth Rowley is leader of the Communist Party of Canada (Ontario). A former Public School Trustee in East York, Elizabeth was also co-chair of the East York Days of Action, organizing protests against the last Tory majority government in Ontario. "Working people and youth can count on the Communist Party to fight for real restraints on corporate power. We need to double corporate taxes while cutting income taxes to those earning under \$40,000 per year. We need to tax those with the ability to pay!" A frequent contributor to People's Voice newspaper, Elizabeth has been active in the labour and people's movements for 35 years. She is the parent of two young adults.



www.communistpartyontario.ca
Authorised by Communist Party (Ontario)



people's needs

On June 12
vote~~not~~ corporate greed!

COMMUNIST

Another Ontario is possible!

Out of the Frying Pan...

The Liberals' sorry record starts with their broken promises to reverse the cruel and destructive legacy of the last Tory government. They expanded P3 hospitals and private clinics, forced mergers, delisted drugs and healthcare services. They imposed belt-tightening, school closures, sell-offs, lay-offs, suspended free collective bargaining, over-rode School Boards and trampled local autonomy and democracy. They delivered huge tuition increases and massive debt for university students.

They cut corporate taxes, imposed the HST, and slashed social spending, privatizing public assets and services as they went. They attacked poverty by attacking the poor. They bailed out corporations like Caterpillar and US Steel and then watched as those companies bailed out of Ontario, leaving 500,000 workers jobless. They refused to raise the minimum wage. They presided over martial law at the G20 in Toronto, corruption at ORNGE, and prorogued the Legislature in the face of mass protests.

Into the Fire...

The Tories supported the Liberals every time they cut corporate taxes and social spending, privatized, and attacked labour and democratic rights. Their main critique of the Liberals? They didn't go far enough!

Now the Tories want to smash the labour movement, eliminate the Rand Formula and enact right-to-work (for less) laws. This will drive down wages and living standards everywhere, and turn the clock back 75 years on labour rights.

Hudak says he's dropped this from his election platform, but it's still top of the Tory agenda. The Tories will also legislate new public sector wage and job cuts, privatize more public services, cut corporate taxes, deregulate, and attack equality rights.

That's why the Tories pose the greatest danger in this election.

Another Ontario is Possible! And Urgent!

Ontario needs new policies and priorities to create good jobs, raise wages and pensions, enact a Guaranteed Annual Income, and raise living standards.

Working people, youth, the unemployed and the poor need champions in the legislature who will oppose austerity and fight for a people's recovery. We need MPPs who will join with the labour and people's movements to fight for working people and win real, progressive change in Ontario. Another Ontario is possible! And urgent!

The NDP used to advocate a progressive agenda, but not much of it remains today. Today's NDP is focused on replacing the Liberals in government, while maintaining their anti-people policies. That's why the NDP advocates a minimum wage of \$12 (in 2016) tied to small business tax cuts. It's why they abandoned public auto insurance, public ownership of energy and natural resources, and shifting the tax load onto the corporations. They've embraced austerity - and capitalism.

The Communist party has a long history - inside and outside the Legislature - fighting for progressive policies and for the broadest unity to win them in the struggles ahead. In this election, and after, Communists will campaign for radical reforms that can curb corporate power and put people's needs before corporate profits. We fight for working people, and for people's power - for socialism. Our Prescription for a People's Recovery is our detailed policy platform in this election. Check it out online at www.comunistpartyontario.ca

Prescription for a People's Recovery

1) Create Jobs

- * Build 200,000 units of affordable social housing in 4 years. Enact rent controls
- * Develop an industrial strategy for Ontario
- * Restore and expand value-added manufacturing and secondary industry
- * Nationalize US Steel - Restart Canada's domestic steel industry
- * Build a Canadian car that's small, affordable, fuel-efficient, and environmentally sustainable
- * Rebuild crumbling provincial / municipal infrastructure
- * Expand apprenticeships - jobs for youth
- * Expand social programs
- * Convert military to civilian spending

2) Raise Wages and Incomes

- * Raise the minimum wage to \$19
- * Introduce a livable Guaranteed Annual Income
- * Raise social assistance and disability above the poverty line
- * Expand Employment Insurance to cover all unemployed for the duration of unemployment at 90% of previous earnings

3) Expand the Canada Pension Plan for universal, portable, secure, livable Public Pensions

- * Substantially increase pensions now
- * Reduce the voluntary age for a full pension to 60, including the GIS
- * Defined benefit pension plans for all - No to PRPPs (market-driven pooled pensions)

4) Tax Corporations and the Wealthy

- * Enact progressive tax reform based on ability to pay
- * Rescind the HST
- * Double corporate income tax rate to 23%
- * Restore the capital tax on corporate wealth
- * Increase capital gains tax to cover 100% of the gain
- * Introduce wealth and inheritance taxes on estates over \$750,000
- * Eliminate taxes on personal incomes under \$40,000
- * Remove education from the property tax and cut taxes by 50%

5) Invest in Quality Public Services - Stop Privatization!

- * Provide adequate funding for public hospitals and healthcare
- * Stop hospital closures and mergers
- * Stop P3s and private for-profit clinics. Enforce the Canada Health Act
- * Reverse delisting of services
- * Prosecute ORNGE profiteers
- * Expand healthcare with denticare, vision care, pharmacare, mental health care and long-term care
- * Enact a single, secular and quality public school system open to all
- * Deliver a needs-based funding formula for public education
- * Eliminate tuition fees and increase funding to post-secondary education
- * Amnesty for student debt
- * Build a provincial system of quality, affordable, regulated, and safe public childcare
- * Invest in amateur sports and recreation, TVO, public broadcasting, and democratic Canadian culture

6) A New Financial Deal for Cities

- * Deliver stable statutory transfers to cover the real costs of city services, or give cities new wealth-taxing powers
- * Upload the Harris download and adequately fund the costs of public transit, health, housing, childcare and social assistance
- * Return 50% of gas & road user taxes to cities
- * Repeal Current (market) Value Assessment
- * Eliminate development charges and scrap the OMB

7) Enhance Food Security

- * Stop bank foreclosures of family farms; guarantee long-term, low-cost loans
- * Protect marketing boards, and roll back prices on food essentials
- * Abolish factory farming and genetically modified food
- * Protect farmland from urban sprawl and landfills
- * Fight for Canada's food sovereignty

8) Introduce Public Auto Insurance

- * For lower rates and better coverage - take the profit out of auto insurance

9) Public Ownership and Democratic Control of Energy

- * Develop publicly owned wind, solar, and thermal energy; phase out nuclear energy
- * Rebuild Ontario Hydro: public ownership and affordable public power

10) A Healthy Sustainable Environment

- * Stop Line 9
- * Stop fracking
- * Close the Alberta Tar Sands - Stop climate change
- * Strengthen and enforce air and water quality legislation
- * Protect and expand provincial parkland
- * Make the polluters pay

11) Just Settlement of Aboriginal Land Claims

- * Press Harper to negotiate just land settlements now
- * Stop corporate, private or public development on lands with Aboriginal claims
- * Raise living standards: build housing, create jobs, provide quality education and healthcare on reserves and off
- * Recognize Aboriginal right to self-government and self-determination

12) Equality Rights for All

- * Put police under strict civilian control. Eliminate tasers
- * End racial profiling and enforce hate crimes laws
- * Stop criminalizing dissent and enforce the Human Rights Code
- * Support gay-straight alliances in Ontario schools
- * Enact transgendered rights. Restore legal funding for court challenges
- * Fight to eliminate racist immigration and refugee laws

13) Curb Corporate Power - Strengthen Labour and Democratic Rights

- * Protect free collective bargaining and the right to strike
- * Oppose right-to-work (for less) laws
- * Cancel CETA, NAFTA, TPPP and other pro-corporate trade agreements * Fair trade - not free trade - with the world.
- * Strengthen foreign investment laws. Enact plant closure legislation with teeth
- * Enact anti-scab laws, bankruptcy protection for workers, and card check union certification for all workers
- * Guarantee migrant workers equal rights and protections under labour laws, and a path to citizenship in Canada
- * Enact Proportional Representation - make every vote count!

About the CPC (Ontario)

The aim of the Communist Party is a socialist Canada; a society in which the wealth is owned equitably by the working people who create it, and where exploitation and oppression of one human being by another is ended. With this aim, the CPC works with the labour and democratic movements, and all those who struggle for peace, democracy, and social progress. The CPC's history is intertwined with the struggles of the labour and peoples' movements since 1921. Join the Communist Party! Another world is possible - and worth fighting for! We welcome everyone who shares our vision of a socialist Canada.

www.comunistpartyontario.ca

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GLOBAL CLASS STRUGGLE

Fast food workers, unite!

Fast food workers around the world face the same issues of precarious work, low wages, and fierce opposition to union organization. A handful of giant transnationals dominate the business, so workers and their unions are organizing to change conditions. A meeting organized by the International Union of Food, Agricultural, Hotel, Restaurant, Catering, Tobacco and Allied Workers' Associations (IUF), held in New York City May 5-6, brought together over 80 workers and union representatives from 26 countries as part of building a worldwide fast food union network.

On May 7, participants joined an action in front of a Manhattan McDonald's restaurant and then delivered a letter calling on the fast-food giant to raise wages and respect workers' rights. At the same time, they announced US-wide strike action at fast food restaurants on May 15 in support of their demand of \$15 per hour and the right to form a union without fear of retaliation. IUF members are planning support actions and protests in dozens of countries around the world.

"The Fight for 15 in the US has caught the attention of workers around the world in a global fast-food industry where workers have recently been mobilizing," said IUF General Secretary Ron Oswald. "It has added further inspiration and led them to join together internationally in a fight for higher pay and better rights on the job. This is just the beginning of an unprecedented international fast-food worker movement-and this highly profitable global industry better take note."

Union executive fired in Philippines

The Metal Workers Alliance of the Philippines (MWAP) has condemned the management of the NXP Semiconductors Company in Cabuyao, Laguna for its illegal dismissal of 24 union officials. The dismissed officers, which include all members of the union Executive Board as well as the Shop Steward Council, were immediately put on a blacklist and were barred from entering the company premises. All their benefits were blocked including their educational subsidy due to be released on May 15.

The MWAP calls the move a malicious attack on the workers who are struggling to conclude a

new collective bargaining agreement. In a memo dated May 5, NXP management said the union officers "participated knowingly in an illegal strike" and "are deemed to have lost their EMPLOYMENT status pursuant to law". It further said that "the officers were terminated for just cause ... illegal strike on April 9, and other following holidays."

The management was referring to the workers' refusal to work overtime last April 9, 17, 18 and May 1, which are all public



holidays in the Philippines. April 9 was Araw ng Kagitingan (National Valor Day) while April 17 and 18 were Maundy Thursday and Good Friday which are widely-observed in this Catholic-dominated country. As for May 1, the union and the company have a standing agreement that all union members will be off from work to participate in May Day activities.

Reden Alcantara, president of the NXP Semiconductors Company Workers Union (NXPSCIWU) and also of MWAP, said that the management treated the absence of the workers on these particular holidays as concerted actions of the union in relation to their bargaining fight.

"The termination of all union officials is yet another harassment of the NXP management to force us to give up on our just demands to improve the lot of the workers," said Alcantara. "The management is trying hard to bust our union and the dismissal of the officers is meant to sow fear among the workers and threaten them against supporting the union," he added.

Prior to the dismissal, the management also harassed peaceful actions of the workers, such as a protest march in front of the gates of the industrial enclave. Security guards were deployed to bar workers from getting off buses to participate in the union activity. The workers were forced to jump from the windows of the buses to get out and join the protest march. In

another incident, protesting workers were met by a heavy deployment of ERP personnel and a fire truck.

The CBA negotiations started in January this year and already had 23 sessions. The union is demanding for an 8% increase in wages while the company stopped its offer at 3.5% increase, only half of the hike given to the workers in their last CBA. The management has twice declared a deadlock and decided to seek a 3rd-party negotiator.

NXP Semiconductors is located at the Light Industry and Science Park I in Cabuyao, Laguna. It is one of six test and assembly sites of NXP Semiconductors worldwide, with more than 5,000 total workforce. The regular rank and file workers number around 1,500.

Another death at World Cup site

Electrical work at a World Cup stadium under construction in the Brazilian city of Cuiaba was halted on May 9 until safety precautions were taken, following an electrical accident that killed a worker. The labour prosecutor's office in Mato Grosso state said that Etel Engenharia, the electrical contractor, must assure safety conditions for workers before it can resume work at Arena Pantanal.

Muhammad-Ali Maciel Afonso, 32, who worked for the contractor, died after an electrical accident at Arena Pantanal. He was the eighth worker to die during construction of twelve arenas that will host games for the month-long soccer competition. Builders are scrambling to finish several stadiums on time before the tournament starts on June 12.

Arena Pantanal, in the heart of Brazil's farm belt, is one of three delayed World Cup stadiums still being built. The unfinished stadium held a test match last month, but workers are still adding seats, wiring and other final touches. An October 2013 fire caused structural damage at the stadium that has since been repaired.

The 2014 World Cup, the first to be held in Brazil since 1950, has been beset by delays, cost overruns and broken promises. In addition to the late delivery of stadiums, several key public transportation projects have been scaled back or abandoned altogether.

UK unionists join SodaStream picket

Members from eight UK trade unions joined the long running weekly picket of SodaStream's only UK shop, EcoStream in Brighton, on May 3. Members from the Public and Commercial Services Union (PCS), National Union of Journalists (NUJ), University and College Union (UCU), National Union of Teachers (NUT), Solidarity Federation (SolFed), Unison, Unite and GMB all showed up to show solidarity with Palestinian workers living under occupation. There is a growing world-wide

boycott campaign against SodaStream, an Israeli company which has one of its main manufacturing facilities in the illegal settlement industrial zone of Mishor Adumim. The EcoStream store has been picketed by Palestine solidarity campaigners on a weekly basis since it first opened its doors in 2012. Shortly after the activists started targeting the shop, local Zionists began a counter demonstration, and SodaStream's PR machine went into overdrive to prove that their business on occupied territory was beneficial for the West Bank, as the company employs some Palestinians.

One union member, when asked why he was there, said: "This is employment in conditions of illegal occupation. The Palestinian villages, land, economy and people were wiped out to make way for the building of an illegal Israeli colony, and then SodaStream tries to convince the world that they are a benevolent provider of employment. Unbelievable!"

Fiji union leader enters election

The long-standing leader of the main Fijian national union centre, Felix Anthony, has stood down from his union post to lead the People's Democratic Party in the September 2014 elections. Anthony, who led the Fiji Trades Union Congress for 15 years, is skeptical about the fairness of the upcoming elections, which should end the reign of the coup-imposed dictator Commodore Frank Bainimarama. The military regime has banned union people from becoming candidates.

The FTUC leader - who has

previously been attacked by military thugs for his union work - was also General-Secretary of the economically important Fiji Sugar and General Workers Union.

Due to the draconian election rules, specifically targeting unionists, other senior Fijian union leaders have delayed making announcements about leaving their union posts and contesting the elections.

Felix Anthony's platform for the People's Democratic Party will put its primary focus on human rights. Not just re-establishing workers rights, but also rights for women and rights to education for all the people of Fiji and iTaukei rights.

Anthony told the Fiji Times the decision to step down as a leader in the trade union movement was not easy. The unions created the People's Democratic Party after a public falling out with the leaders of the Fiji Labour Party, over the role of unions in the political process. Labour - which had once formed government in Fiji - had originally been set up by the unions but its leaders were seen as having abandoned their base.

"The decision to form the People's Democratic Party was taken after lengthy discussion, debate, consultations and a number of national council meetings of FTUC," Anthony told the Fiji Times. "It did not happen overnight, it was a process that took months."

The Labour leader, and former Fiji PM, Mahendra Chaudry, has been accused of turning his old party into a personal fiefdom which is not responsive to the needs of working people. Labour, once a multiracial party, has become a Fiji-Indian only party, according to Felix Anthony.

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

Join the Communist Party of Canada



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

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The Irish peace process in crisis

By John Wight, *the Morning Star (UK)*, May 6

Is the conflict in the north of Ireland over?

The question is relevant given the arrest last week of Sinn Féin leader Gerry Adams — the man who played the key role in steering the republican movement onto the path of peace and away from violence. He spent four days in police custody being questioned in connection with the abduction and murder of Jean McConville in 1972 at the height of the Troubles.

If the premise at the heart of the 1998 Good Friday Agreement was not to ensure that there would be no more killing, no more grieving children and families, such as McConville's, what was the point of it?

And if the trajectory of the peace process — which prior to the arrest of Adams was already in a fragile state — is going to be determined by the families and loved ones of those who lost their lives in the conflict, what hope can there possibly be of it succeeding?

The most basic and brutal truth at the heart of any political solution to a civil conflict, which leaves the kind of deep scars as did the one that raged in the six counties for 30 years, is that hard compromises have to be made for the sake of peace.

The Irish republican movement did not and still does not believe that the armed struggle they waged in the cause of ending British rule in the north of Ireland, and with it the partition of the island of Ireland, was illegitimate. On the contrary, they believed and still believe that they were engaged in a national liberation struggle that was morally justified in response to partition and oppression, based on the truism that when injustice becomes law, resistance becomes a duty.

This injustice was enshrined in a gerrymandered loyalist statelet wherein the minority Catholic/nationalist population suffered discrimination when it came to housing, employment, services and political representation.

Yes, there is no doubt that, within those parameters, acts of violence were carried out that could never be justified, with the abduction and murder of McConville by the IRA indisputably one of them. But such unjustifiable acts of violence were by no means confined to republicans. British crown forces, whether the British army or the RUC (now PSNI), were also responsible for heinous acts of violence and murder during the Troubles — as were, of course, loyalist paramilitaries.

In light of the arrest and detention of Adams, it is pertinent to ask why we have yet to see the arrest of any former members of the British Parachute Regiment in connection with Bloody Sunday, anyone in connection with the murders of Belfast solicitor Pat Finucane and Irish human rights lawyer Rosemary Nelson, and anyone in relation to collusion between British security forces and loyalist paramilitaries — a factor attributed to the Finucane and Nelson murders?

Of particular anger to republicans will be the decision by Secretary of State for Northern

Ireland Theresa Villiers, just a few days prior to the arrest of Adams, to deny the families of the victims of the Ballymurphy Massacre in 1971, when 11 people were shot dead during an operation by the Paras in West Belfast — the same regiment who later carried out Bloody Sunday in Derry to set up an independent panel to re-examine the evidence.

The one-sided nature of the hunger for retroactive justice we are now seeing take place in the

six counties feels more like vengeance. Even if not intended to be so, it's certainly the growing perception within the republican and nationalist community.

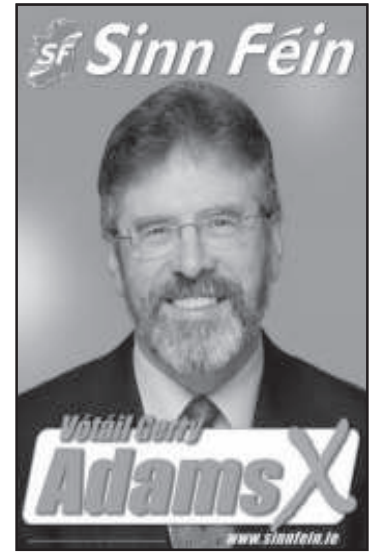
The peace process was already in a fragile state prior to the arrest of Adams. The absence of conflict and peace are not always the same thing, and reconciliation has taken place a decade and a half on from the signing of the Good Friday Agreement in 1998. In this context, who knows the lasting damage that

this event will result in going forward?

The courage and vision of Adams in leading the republican movement away from violence into a political process cannot be overstated. Many on his own side turned against him in protest at what they saw as his leadership's unacceptable compromising of the aims of the armed struggle — i.e. forcing the British out of the North and ending partition. He sacrificed many close friendships and alliances along the way, not least of which his friendship with Brendan Hughes, a man who enjoys iconic status within republicanism and whose taped testimony to Boston College academics before his death in 2008 as part of an oral history project led to Adams's arrest this past week.

A line has to be drawn somewhere if the peace process can move forward. As hard as it may be, the grieving families of the victims of the conflict, on both sides, cannot determine the future in the six counties. Otherwise, the deep scars already left will only succeed in producing more scars, as the process remains stuck in the past instead of leaving it behind.

The glaring omission with regard to the Troubles and the end of the conflict has been the absence of a mechanism to bring some sort of closure to the pain left behind, such as a South African-style truth and reconciliation committee. Arresting and potentially charging a key figure responsible for ending the conflict over 15 years after it ended is, however, not the way to



bring this closure.

The main beneficiaries of this episode has not been justice but dissident republicans, who will now be able to boast, "We told you so."

Adams leads the largest nationalist party in Ireland. He and they have a mandate not only in the North of Ireland but also increasingly in the South. It is ludicrous to imagine that the thousands who cast their vote for Sinn Féin and Adams do so unaware of the Troubles that gave rise to both.

In this context the arrest of Adams will be viewed by many within republican and nationalist communities as an attempt by the PSNI to delegitimise their votes and, worse, their right to the parity of esteem so long denied them prior to the start of the Troubles in 1968.

The peace process is in crisis. ●



On Bloody Sunday, January 30, 1972, 26 civil rights protesters and bystanders were shot by British soldiers in Derry, Northern Ireland. Thirteen males, seven of whom were teenagers, died immediately or soon after. Two protesters were also run down by army vehicles. Five of those wounded were shot in the back. The attack occurred during a Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association march; the soldiers were members of the First Battalion of the Parachute Regiment. Seen here, one of the men shot by the British is being carried from the scene.

Venezuelan opposition attack Cuban health workers

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

Cuban doctors working in Venezuela since 2003 epitomise Cuba-Venezuelan mutual solidarity. Joined there by 20,000 other Cuban health workers, 11,000 doctors are caring for patients and teaching medical students.

Longstanding objections from Venezuela's medical establishment are minor irritants in the face of recent violent assaults against Cuban health workers. They occur as part of anti-government protests that since early February have taken lives and damaged infrastructure.

Speaking recently on the 11th anniversary of Venezuela's primary health care initiative Barrio Adentro, Vice President Jorge Arreaza reported that 162 Cuban health care personnel had been attacked. Two suffered serious burns. José Manzaneda, coordinator of Cuba Information TV, blames "a gigantic campaign against Cuba created in the private Venezuelan media, [and] amplified by the international media." As a result, "[M]any people firmly believe either that the Cuban government makes big political decisions in Venezuela or that Cuban health workers are really agents or spies."

A Spanish news service, for example, commenting on President Nicolás Maduro's

election victory in April 2013, cited the role of "around 46,000 Cuban collaborators who officially live in Venezuela, all with the mission of guaranteeing the Chávez revolution." At the time, defeated opposition forces were engaged in destabilisation, and the report served as a context for attacks on 25 health centres staffed by Cuban doctors.

According to Ecuador's El Comercio newspaper recently, "[M]ilitary personnel represented the darkest side of that contingent of professionals - teachers, doctors, engineers - involved in the social programs." They are "like gods [in Venezuela]; no one can see them [in] army barracks, government ministries, intelligence offices, and petroleum agencies." Quoted by the BBC, opposition leader María Corina Machado promised, "We are going to liberate Venezuela and liberate the Venezuelan army from the humiliating presence of Cuban functionaries and Cuban military personnel."

The reality, of course, is otherwise. On March 12 in Caracas President Maduro hosted 2,585 young people at the Presidential Palace. They had finished a six-year medical school course that focused on "comprehensive community medicine" at no personal cost and were now receiving medical diplomas. They will be providing free, accessible care for under-served Venezuelans

in cities and rural areas throughout the country.

By 2013, over 14,000 such physicians were already on the job in clinics and hospitals. That year 20,000 students were working toward their own graduation. Projections are for 60,000 students to have graduated by 2019. Their program, entirely separate from traditional Venezuelan medical education, involves study and practical experience in the very communities where they live and will eventually serve. Crucially, their teachers are Cuban doctors.

Those doctors also care for patients and have engaged in half a billion patient encounters since 2003. Their presence accounts for doctors in Venezuela rising from 18 per 10,000 inhabitants in 1998 to 58 in 2012. Infant deaths fell from 20 per 1,000 live births in 1999 to 13 in 2011.

The program of educating Venezuelan doctors to replace Cuban counterparts resulted from a bi-national agreement in 2005. Under the plan Cuban health care workers serving in Venezuela would receive their regular pay plus bonuses. In return, Venezuela guaranteed a predictable supply of oil for Cuba at reduced prices, at least 70,000 barrels per day.

The fact of Cuban doctors in Venezuela is no anomaly: since 1963, over 130,000 of them have provided health care in 108 countries. In early 2013, 17,000 Cuban doctors were working in 60

countries. Since then 6,000 more have undertaken missions in Brazil.

Elsewhere in the world Cuban doctors don't face charges of political interference backed up by physical attacks. And for doctors to be capable of spying while teaching tens of thousands and caring for millions more verges on the superhuman.

Journalist José Manzaneda offers perspective on this situation. The Cuban doctors "contribute to the long-term construction of systems of public health throughout the global South, health systems that by and large were abandoned or disregarded during decades of neo-liberalism and anti-state policies. That's the basically ideological background for slander campaigns against Cuban solidarity work worldwide."

Joining this battle of ideas, the US government has long bedevilled Cuban doctors working abroad. The US State Department and Department of Homeland Security introduced the US Cuban Medical Professional Parole program in 2006. That program offers incentives for Cuban health workers on international missions to defect and move to the United States. The object, presumably, is to undermine a medical outreach program appreciated throughout the world. ●

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International Communist meeting to be held in Ecuador

Issued by the Lebanese Communist Party

The Working Group (WG) of the International Meeting of Communist and Workers Parties (IMCWP) met recently in Beirut, hosted by the Lebanese Communist Party. The meeting was attended by 20 delegates representing 15 countries, and several parties unable to attend sent letters of apology.

Dr. Khalid Hdadeh inaugurated the meeting with a political discussion on the increased imperialist offensive, under leadership of the USA, its European Allies and reactionary Arab regimes, on different people of the world and on the national sovereignty of their states. Comrade Khalid reiterated that the confrontation in our Arab region is between the aspirations of the Arab people that have risen to demand freedom, democracy, national sovereignty, social progress and democratic change on the one hand and the aggressive American-imperialist offensive which aims to reassert its hegemony on our region, and indeed throughout the world, through its continued support to counter-revolutionary forces and reactionary regimes on the other hand.

Indeed our region today lies in the eye of the storm of this

offensive, witnessing a raging conflict between the USA and its allies on the one hand and Russia on the other hand to revisit the division of their influence in the region and the world. Comrade Khalid reiterated that confronting the aggressive imperialist offensive, and its implication on world peace and violation of national sovereignty of states, puts the burden on international communist and workers parties to fulfill their historic tasks in unifying their efforts in their struggle against the world capitalist system and its aggression and supporting the rights of the people of the world to freedom, democracy, national sovereignty, self determination and social progress in the context of the struggle for socialism. Comrade Khalid reiterated the main pillars of the policy of the Lebanese Communist Party regarding the Palestinian cause and the Syrian crisis, while elaborating on the intricacies of the Lebanese situations which remains in dire straits.

The party delegates then discussed the items on the agenda and their tasks as international communist and workers parties in resisting and confronting the imperialist aggressive offensive and wars, both at the international level and within each country on an individual basis. The meeting

resulted in the following conclusions:

* Firstly, the WG of the IMCWP agreed on holding the 16th meeting for communist and workers parties in November 2014 in Ecuador, and committed to work to hold the 17th meeting in Turkey in response to the invitation of the Turkish Communist Party in this regard.

* Secondly, the WG of the IMCWP discussed the "Common Activities" Paper approved by the 15th meeting of the IMCWP in Lisbon, and outlined a calendar for these activities, including the holding of an international seminar in Egypt in September 2014 on the social and national emancipation struggles of the peoples of Arab countries and the Middle East.

* Thirdly, the delegates of the WG of the IMCWP condemned the external meddling in internal Ukrainian affairs, particularly from the USA and the EU, and condemned the atrocities perpetuated against the Ukrainian people, including the attack on the premises of the Ukrainian Communist Party, and reasserted their solidarity with the Ukrainian people and Ukrainian communists.

* Fourthly, the delegates issued a statement condemning the terrorist acts of the USA against Venezuela, reiterating their solidarity with the Venezuelan people, working class, communist party and Bolivarian government. ●

A life in politics: the Svend Robinson story

Svend Robinson: a life in politics, by Graeme Truelove, New Star Books Vancouver, October 2013, \$24 paperback; photographs, sources listed, indexed; 346 pages.



Svend Robinson and his spouse Max live in Switzerland. Svend works for a non-government organization called The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. The Global Fund disburses about \$4 billion a year in grants to ministries of health and non-governmental and community based organizations. Robinson is the senior advisor for parliamentary relations, using "his influence with contacts in legislatures throughout the world to secure more funding for Global Fund initiatives."

First elected as an NDP member of parliament in May 1979, Svend Robinson served his Burnaby riding until 2004. He had to step down because he had pocketed an expensive diamond ring at an auction and was charged and subsequently convicted for theft. An illustrious 25 year parliamentary career was vaporized.

Graeme Truelove's biography is splendidly well written and researched. Rarely, in such a work, is the Communist Party credited, but Robinson apparently looked for support from the Party to not run against him in 1979 and later elections. In closely contested ridings, the Communist Party sometimes decides not to nominate, especially when the NDP has a socialist-minded candidate on the ballot.

Robinson did not always take parallel positions to the Communist Party. In the 1999 NATO bombing war against Yugoslavia, he supported the war during the crucial early period. He later became ambivalent, and this is charted in the biography. But his initial support was damaging to the broad anti-war movement. Svend's public support of this war tipped many labour and progressive activists into the pro-NATO camp at the decisive moment. For the Communist Party - and this is not in the book - that was the end of his free pass. The Party nominated Roger Perkins in Burnaby-Douglas in the 2000 election, when it ran over 50 candidates to recover its registered federal status.

Truelove covers many of Svend Robinson's adventures in foreign policy, but presents these as examples of courageous behaviour when others were too intimidated to speak up. The biographer does not distinguish between Svend's adherence to the imperialist false doctrine "Responsibility to Protect" versus bravely violating parliamentary etiquette and heckling US President Ronald Reagan in Parliament.

Also not covered in this

otherwise comprehensive biography, is how Robinson was among those who purged the Burnaby version of COPE during the 1980s, sidelining those who did not have an NDP membership card. That included a number of Communists who had played outstanding roles in the struggles for civic reform and defense of public education. In short, the halo is a bit tarnished when viewed at close range.

Svend Robinson was regarded as a wild card by his colleagues in the NDP and often dismissed as a "maverick" by mass media. Nevertheless, he always maintained his socialist credo and consistently struggled for equality rights. The homophobia and hate speech directed against him in Parliament and elsewhere would have caused most to wither, but Svend remained steadfast and gained many supporters.

When he was running for leadership of the federal NDP in 1995, I asked Svend at a public meeting in St. John's whether he would consider taking a subscription to People's Voice. He assured me that he had already renewed. A lot of left wing hopes were raised during that leadership race, but Svend made a monstrous political mistake.

Three candidates were on the final ballot. With hallway advisors, Svend reasoned that as second place candidate he was going to lose. So, he walked slowly across the convention floor to announce he was withdrawing from the race, urging his supporters to vote for Alexa McDonough, the third place candidate.

In hindsight, Robinson acknowledges that he not only removed the right of his supporters to cast a ballot - a good fight well fought but lost - but also tainted Alexa's victory with undermining questions: "did she really have the majority support of NDP membership?" Really big decisions made in back rooms and hallways make the party weaker not stronger.

The author was able to interview many people involved with Svend's life and political career, including Robinson himself. However, many of the interviews show a certain credulity gap. For instance, former PM Brian Mulroney appears throughout the book. With full frontal blarney, Mulroney presents himself as Robinson's best friend. The author offers few clues about Mulroney's relentless campaign for rehabilitation in the public eye, and should have offered a "take this with a grain of salt" warning.

Svend Robinson: a life in politics is a good read. Truelove concludes, "Robinson's style made him more effective than perhaps any other opposition MP of his generation. But it was a style that may have had a shelf life."

Given that zero NDP members of parliament vote against war and threatening war these days, it is a pity that Robinson's style has indeed expired.

Review by Doug Meggison, like Svend R, born in the Year of the Dragon. ●

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U.S military option worst response to Nigeria crisis

By T.J. Petrowski

The "War on Terror" has provided Western imperialism with too many benefits for it to end in the near future, and to continue to feed the terrorism industry to justify interventions abroad, the corporate media will exploit what are no doubt tragic events to further Western imperialism's militaristic ambitions around the world. The April 14 abduction of girls by Boko Haram from a secondary school in Nigeria's Borno state - a criminal mass violation of the rights of women and girls - is an example of this.

The abduction has received international condemnation, with top U.S. officials such as U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry pledging to do "everything possible" to support the Nigerian state and President Barak Obama saying he hopes the international community will take action against Boko Haram.

The corporate media and Western officials are depicting the conflict in Nigeria as a 'Good vs. Bad' scenario, of allegedly al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM)-associated Muslim fundamentalists (don't all conflicts now involve "al-Qaeda-associated" insurgents?) terrorizing a population to enforce its extreme interpretation of Sharia. However the truth about the conflicts in Nigeria and Western

imperialism's role in creating the conditions for these conflicts is much more complicated than that.

Boko Haram started as a non-violent indigenous resistance movement to the forced imposition of Christianity and Western education from the south, which many Muslims of northern Nigeria view with suspicion, remnants of the era of British colonialism in the lower Niger River region. The desire for the imposition of Sharia law in Nigeria (Sharia law already exists in northern Nigeria) is not only a cultural sentiment; it reflects the desire for a more just system. Western corporations have looted Nigeria's natural resources, including the second largest oil reserves in Africa after Libya, while many Nigerians still live off less than \$2 a day.

The ruthless response towards suspected members of Boko Haram by the Nigerian security forces, with the support of Western imperialism, created the conditions for a violent response. Under President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua alone more than 700 people were killed, some being publicly executed. It is worth noting that the use of kidnapping as a warfare tactic by Boko Haram did not start until Nigerian security forces started taking as prisoner the wives and children of suspected Boko Haram members.

Now Western imperialism will

use this latest tragedy to continue its exploitation of Africa's resources. The statements made by U.S. and other Western officials should be viewed with suspicion; the same state that John Kerry will do "everything possible" to support in its conflict with Boko Haram is the same state that tortured and outright shot those protesting oil giant Shell's exploitation of the Niger River Delta. Where was the international community's outrage then?

In fact, Western oil corporations steal more than \$140 billion of oil wealth from Nigeria annually, but most of Nigeria's 100 million people live on less than \$2 a day and few have access to basic medical care and education. Yet Nigeria has the largest and best equipped military in West Africa, and we are told is a model of "economic development" and "democracy" in Africa, that is despite being ruled by Western-backed military dictatorships for much of its independence.

As tragic as this latest episode is the solution does not lie with a U.S. military response. What is needed is a democratic, non-violent settlement between the various parties in Nigeria to bring peace and economic justice to the country. The international community should support such an initiative, not more military responses. •

Capitalism and the Sewol disaster

Sean Burton, Seoul, May 11 2014

The sinking of the *Sewol* ferry off the southwest coast of the Korean peninsula on April 16 has been a stab in the heart of this country. Weeks later, long lines of people continue to form at memorial sites for the victims of the sinking, many of them high school students from a Seoul suburb en route to a field trip on the southern island of Jeju.

Almost immediately, there were questions directed at the conduct of the crew and captain Lee Joon-seok. South Korea's President Park even went so far as to call their actions "murderous".

It's easy to put the blame on individuals. Certainly, any misconduct ought to be punished. However, Koreans are not buying the story that all fault lies with the crew. There have been ongoing calls for the government to take more responsibility for what the public views as a botched rescue operation. Some officials, including the prime minister, have already resigned. On May 9, family members of the victims gathered near the presidential residence demanding a face-to-face meeting with Park, only to be blocked by police.

The *Sewol* sinking is South Korea's worst ever maritime loss of life. The disaster does in fact hint at something rotten in the status quo. A systemic analysis strongly suggests that the fault is capitalism's, not Captain Lee's.

Chonghaejin Marine, the owner of the vessel, was apparently in considerable debt. This led to a series of measures to boost profit

from the venture. First, the vessel itself had been purchased from a Japanese company, and had already been operating there since 1994. Additional weight was added to make space for more cabins. In addition to increasing the passenger capacity, the company seemed to make a habit of overloading the cargo. Cost-cutting measures were also pursued where the crew was concerned. Few if any were actually full-time professionals. Most were serving on a short-term contractual basis, including the captain. Thus it is difficult to say how familiar the crew actually was with the vessel.

These conditions are hardly unique to the *Sewol*. Indeed, overloaded cargo was a contributing factor to the last major shipping disaster in 1993 with the sinking of the *MV Seohae*. Sloppy enforcement of regulations can be seen in other aspects of South Korean society. Police will scarcely bat an eye at vehicles running red lights. Cheap one-room apartments thrown up in a month end up with mold growing on the walls soon after; but that's just life!

Even the rescue operation has been singled out for shortcomings. There was confusion about rescue responsibilities and an overall lack of coordination between the Coast Guard, Navy, and other medical support groups. In its report on the situation, the Coordinating Committee of the Asia-Wide Campaign Against US-Japan Aggression noted the cynical fact that these organizations have no problems working together when engaged in anti-North Korean

operations. Recently, one of the divers in the rescue operation also died. With so much pressure to recover the bodies, and the dangerous workaholic mentality of South Korean capitalism, that diver too is a victim.

These structural problems are not state secrets. Those in power here know all too well where the fault lies, and so far the people are not accepting the surface accusations. Memory of this event may well bring down the Park government, and in any case will provide another sad example in the case against neoliberal capitalism. •

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ONTARIO

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Hear CPC leader Miguel Figueroa, 6 pm, Friday, May 16, Green Cuisine, 560 Johnson St., ph. 250-920-4233.

Vancouver, BC

93rd Anniversary of the Communist Party of Canada, dinner, Latin American music, guest speaker Miguel Figueroa, tickets \$20, 5 pm, Sat., May 17, Centre for Socialist Education, 706 Clark Drive.

Left Film Night, Sunday, May 25, 7 pm at the CSE, 706 Clark Drive, screening "Love in the Time of Cholera". For info, call 604-255-2041.

Spring Concert: A Benefit for Chernobyl, Sunday, May 25, 2 pm, Russian Hall, 600 Campbell Ave. Partial proceeds to Veronika Children Leukemia Foundation (a local non-profit helping children from former USSR suffering from leukemia). 604-254-9932 or 526-5160.

People's Voice Victory Banquet, Sat., May 31, doors open 6 pm, Russian Hall, 600 Campbell Ave. For tickets, ph. 604-254-9836.

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YCL Convention Dinner, Sat. May 24, 7 pm, Steelworkers Hall, 25 Cecil St. Great food, drinks, and revolutionary politics. Guest speaker Stephen Endicott, author of *Raising The Workers' Flag: The Workers' Unity League of Canada 1930-1936*. \$15 waged, \$10 unemployed/students.

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People's Voice deadlines

June 1-15 issue: Thursday, May 22

June 16-30 issue: Thursday, June 5

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May Day rallies draw millions into the streets

This year's May First actions brought millions of working people into the streets, at rallies large and small across the planet.

As always, one of the biggest demonstrations was in Havana, the capital city of socialist Cuba. An estimated one million Cubans and foreign guests took part in the annual rally at Che Guevara Square, showing their support for the country's revolutionary alternative to capitalism.

It was a far different scene in Istanbul, Turkey, where police used water cannons and tear gas against thousands of protesters who sought to march in Taksim Square. The square was the focal point of weeks of protests last summer, in defiance of Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan and his administration.

After lifting a 32-year ban on May Day celebrations in Taksim Square in 2010, the Turkish government reinstated the ban last year. Erdogan had warned that he wouldn't allow protesters in the square. The prime minister has cast both last summer's street protests and a corruption scandal dogging his government since December as part of a plot to undermine him. The demonstrators in Istanbul were met by about 40,000 police officers, who blocked roads, fired tear gas canisters and used water cannons in an attempt to prevent access to the square. Some 40 people were hospitalized and around 160 detained, according to the Progressive Lawyers Association.

Meanwhile, Cambodian protesters also clashed with police in Phnomh Penh, in defiance of a ban on demonstrations that has been in place since January. In Rostock, Germany, riot police had to forcibly remove sitting protesters, who were blocking the streets.

About 100,000 workers paraded on Moscow's iconic Red Square. The largest May Day demonstration in recent years in the Russian capital had a strong anti-fascist flavour, as participants condemned the recent wave of far right violence in Ukraine. May Day was a key date in the Soviet calendar, but in recent years, the annual demonstrations have been relegated to a city highway. Trade union leaders said about two million people had turned up for



Health care workers at the May Day rally in Havana.

May Day rallies across Russia.

Protesters were out in force in many European countries including France, Italy and Greece, marching against unemployment and austerity policies. In Greece, thousands rallied in the two main cities of Athens and Salonika against an austerity drive following a disastrous debt crisis that led to mass lay-offs.

In Italy's Turin, scuffles broke out between police and hundreds of protesters. Activists lobbed smoke bombs after police charged demonstrators in the northern industrial city, which has been badly hit by a painful two-year recession.

Thousands marched in France, with the biggest rallies in Paris and other major cities such as Bordeaux and Toulouse targeting the Socialist government's budget cuts to rein in the deficit.

Rallies also took place across Asia, including in Hong Kong, Jakarta, Kuala Lumpur, Singapore and Taipei.

In Indonesia, protestors carrying portraits of Che Guevara, Fidel Castro and the country's first president Sukarno, marched to the state palace in Jakarta. Some sang and danced as others carried a three-metre-long toy octopus wearing a red hat with the words "Capitalist Octopus, Sucking the Blood of Workers."

More than 1,000 protesters gathered in Hong Kong's landmark Victoria Park to walk towards the

government headquarters waving colourful flags and placards, while singing a Chinese version of "Do You Hear the People Sing?" from the musical Les Miserables, while calling for better working conditions and wages. Domestic helper rights groups, which made up a large portion of the rally, wore masks with a picture of Erwiana Sulistyarningsih, an Indonesian maid who was allegedly abused by her employer

The huge public response to the May Day rally in Kuala Lumpur prompted the government to warn that civil servants found participating in anti-GST protests would face stern action, including sacking. One government adviser insisted that university students involved in the rally should be punished, and religious leaders called on Muslims to support the GST. These warnings, however, were widely seen by critics as a

march to Wall Street.

"May Day is about all workers," said Vincent Alvarez, president of the New York City Central Labor Council, AFL-CIO. "The city's labor movement is a microcosm of our larger society, representing workers from all cultures and economic backgrounds, who are standing up for the issues that affect all of us. The fight for better wages isn't just for low-wage workers, just like the fight for a path to citizenship doesn't only concern immigrant workers. On May Day and every day, we must band together for justice for all working men and women."

Thousands of people arrived in downtown Los Angeles to support immigrant rights. Themed "Keeping families together," the march emphasized the goal of ending deportations that split parents from their children. Other issues brought forward included increasing the federal minimum wage and immigrant worker rights.

"It's the day that we remind the American public and the government that there's a great debt to our community," said Angelica Salas, executive director of Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights of Los Angeles. "We work hard in every single industry, yet we don't have the recognition or the respect that we deserve."

May Day marches took place in a number of Canadian cities, including along Vancouver's Commercial Drive, where hundreds took part in the annual event sponsored by the Vancouver and District Labour Council.

Thousands took the streets of Toronto to celebrate May Day and to fight poverty and capitalism. The 9th annual "May Day of Action" was Coordinated by a coalition of community groups including No One Is Illegal - Toronto, May 1st Movement and Ontario Coalition Against Poverty.

In Venezuela, a familiar sea of red shirts, large banners and a revolutionary sing-along soundtrack marked International Workers Day in Merida City, part of Caracas. The celebratory atmosphere was due in part to the April 30 announcement by President Nicolas Maduro a 30% increase in the national minimum wage. The higher turnout came as local activists reacted to the lifting of three months of blockades, violent attacks and assassinations by anti-government groups representing the interests of the wealthy class. ●

The largest May Day demonstration in recent years in Moscow had a strong anti-fascist flavour, as participants condemned the wave of far right violence in Ukraine.

for months, while shouting: "We are workers, we are not slaves".

Malaysian workers celebrated the first of May in the streets of Kuala Lumpur, reminding employers and the government of the need for better pay and working benefits. Tens of thousands flocked to a massive protest around Dataran Merdeka, the original planned venue, which was cordoned off. They were rallying against the Goods and Services Tax (GST) which will be implemented in April 2015. Malaysians are worried that the GST will be an added burden, particularly for the working class and the poor, who are already reeling from an inflationary onslaught.

mere bullying tactic.

More than 10,000 workers marched to the labour ministry in Taiwan's capital Taipei demanding wage hikes and a ban on companies hiring cheap temporary or part-time workers.

In Singapore, a rally of around 400 protestors chanting slogans calling for the long-ruling People's Action Party to step down.

In South Korea, around 5,000 workers rallied outside Seoul railway station, but the traditional May Day trade union gathering was overshadowed by the ferry disaster that claimed the lives of hundreds of people, many of them schoolchildren. The workers marched to City Hall to pay their respects to the victims of the April 16 tragedy at a temporary memorial.

May Day events were generally smaller in North America, but took place in dozens of cities across the U.S. and Canada.

Thousands joined New York City's leading labour unions, and immigrant and community organizations for a massive rally in lower Manhattan. Sponsored by the Labor Rights, Immigrant Rights, and Jobs for All Coalition, the rally demanded an increase in the minimum wage; fair contracts for city employees; putting a halt to unjust deportations and enacting national immigration reform and the New York State DREAM Act; and building all construction projects with union labor and preserving the state's "scaffolding law," while also calling for universal pre-kindergarten and raising taxes on Wall Street and the richest 1%. The rally began with speeches and live music at City Hall Park and culminated with

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