

**Greeks still
resisting...**
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The enemy is capitalism!

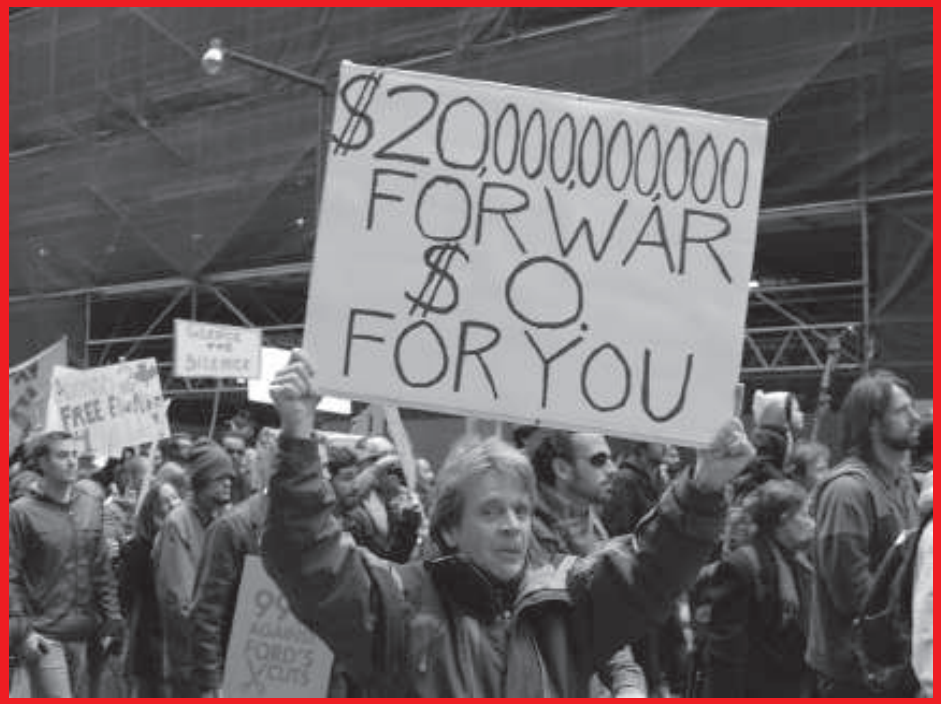


The expansion of Occupy Wall Street actions across North America is a welcome boost for the movement to check the power of transnational capital. The conscious decision to rise up together against corporate rule is a powerful and liberating act, with enormous potential. Tens of thousands have taken to the streets across Canada, proving that we will not meekly accept the Harper Tory/corporate agenda... This struggle is around the rights of the "99%" to assemble in public spaces, to organize forms of collective resistance, and to speak out for fundamental economic, social and political reforms. Our most urgent need is to strengthen broader unity in action, especially among working people, who form the vast majority of the "99%". While there are many important issues raised within the Occupy movement, unity can best be built around demands which undermine the power of our common enemy: big capital. The corporate drive for maximum profits is responsible for destroying our planet, and for the escalating attacks against workers, Aboriginal peoples, racialized communities, women, youth, seniors, and other sections of the people...

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People's Voice photos from Occupy Toronto, by Ed Bil

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David Suzuki recently told a crowd at Occupy Vancouver about the importance of voting in the upcoming civic election. What are some of the critical issues for the city on November 19?

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Is philosophy nothing more than the ramblings of academics? Or does it have a useful purpose in the struggle for social change?

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Music for Occupy

One of the highlights of the Occupy Wall Street movement has been the participation of activist musicians like Tom Morello, Pete Seeger, David Rovics and Faith Nolan.

Occupy Montreal: a personal story

By Johan Boyden

As I step onto the night bus, bundled up in a heavy winter coat and sweater, a passenger looks at me curiously. I'm dragging a little rolling suitcase, a small tent and foam mattress. Tonight my partner and I will sleep in the financial district, but not in a posh hotel.

Like many of the 26-and-counting occupations across the country, Occupy Montreal is in a downtown public space. Square Victoria encompasses about two city blocks, at a busy intersection on the edge of old Montreal. It is an ideal symbolic location. We've been coming down for a few days, but this is the first time to sleep.

The camp set up on October 15, with about forty tents under the trees. A few days later there were over a hundred.

"Now there are almost 300 tents," a woman at an information table tells me. Like a patchwork quilt, tents have sprung up over almost available place. Most are sheltered under large tarps, between the trees. Political signs and banners hang like decorations.

I roll my bundles into the square, looking up at La tour de la Bourse, the Stock exchange tower, once Canada's tallest building. Since then it's been occupied by students, bombed by Quebec nationalists, and heard the chants of countless labour rallies. Now we have it partly surrounded.

From tree-top level a statue of Queen Victoria looks back at me, silhouetted by street lights. Her pedestal is covered with signs, stickers and slogans in French and English. She is wearing a Guy Fawkes mask and flying the flag of the 1837 Patriote rebellion of Lower Canada. "Place du peuple" her new sign declares.

On the opposite site of the street is a tiny empty spot under the trees. This where I put my tent, not too far from where Rouky lives - a friendly fluffy dog.

"It's growing fast and attracting all sorts of people," explains a young man who is looking after Rouky. That includes homeless people who need "basic medical care, like injuries to their feet". He's volunteered with the Medics

because he has a First Aid certificate, and there are paramedics and nurses volunteering during the day. Sometimes Rouky carries medical supplies in dog packs and they move around the square, he tells me.

"I had no choice to come down here," he says. He agrees with the Occupy Wall Street effort. "It is time to spread global awareness about Canada. We have major issues in our government and Canadians care about politics." He is unemployed and has been down here since the beginning. He talks about democracy, the need to get back our voice, and the Harper Tories in government. "It's time for the people to rise up" he says.

It's dark as I put up my tent. An older man appears and helps. I can hear drums from one side of the camp, mixing with street traffic. Young people are still up, walking around debating and telling stories in different languages, having a drink or smoking. Suddenly there is a loud clattering noise - a group of women in high heels marching past, dressed up for a night out in the clubs. Later, I hear a heated argument. A man yells "No violence in the camp" several times. The debate quiets down.

All around are hand-made bilingual signs. They ask for no alcohol or drug use and to make the camp a safe space for women. There are also signs saying women-only tents can be made available.

A little before midnight, my partner arrives. She's just been interviewed by a campus radio station, and talked about the Charter of Youth Rights campaign. We have to be back to pick up our baby at ten tomorrow, she says.

There are some young families in the camp. A little girl is doing painting with her parents. Behind the future medic tent is a kid's play area. There are slides, small tables and plastic toys.

But it's getting colder, even under our warm blankets.

We're not the only people experiencing their first night. Amber is a student at McGill from the United States. A couple of her friends have been here all week. She's come down tonight because it is an experience.

"The whole 99 percent thing speaks to how bad income inequality is" and how the "one percent are totally disconnected," Amber says, adding that the situation is "not democratic because the one percent have far



bigger influence." She has been to student demos before, but this is her first time camping out for a political cause.

We shiver and try to sleep. Around 4:00 the car noise drops. So does the talking. At 4:30 I hear the automated brushes and spray of street cleaners passing. It is a bizarrely soothing sound. We fall asleep with the rest of the camp.

Despite the cold, Marie Kim, Louise and Genevieve tell me in the morning that they slept soundly. The three students at a Montreal CEJEP have been camping for almost a week. "I'm here because of the failure of the system" Marie Kim says, rubbing sleep out of her

eyes. Genevieve likes the sense of solidarity and community. "We're building what we want, like a micro-society," she tells me.

Louise thinks the camp is "a site of experimentation." She tells me that in the camp there is no ideology - either independentist (Quebec nationalist) or anarchist - and that they will answer with spontaneity, not a school of thinking.

As we wake up, the crisp morning light shines through the remaining leaves on the trees. We walk over to the kitchen station, which is becoming the center of life. Three people are making French toast. Reda calculates that he has made about fifty slices already this morning. The kitchen is a bit messy and damp. Another volunteer says they are getting donations from people's houses.

"I'm not here for anything" Reda tells me. "I'm here because of what I'm against." He talks about wars for money, hypocrisy and petroleum, Israel killing Palestinian children, rich countries exporting their deficits to poor countries. "Everything is connected" he says. "I'm against all of what is going on."

Reda has just finished a BA degree in Marketing. He is also part of the camp's "political and philosophical committee". Next to him is Caroline, making coffee. She is a CEJEP student living near Quebec City, where there is also an occupation. She has driven five hours to get here.

Before we leave, I talk with others around the camp. "It is quite inspiring to be part of this kind of mass action and gathering" says Nicola, another student who also just set up a tent. "It is not about countries or communities" says Olivier, a musician who works for a theatre company, "It is about all humanity."

Michael launches into a long story. "I've been on a political camping trip since I left Sault Ste. Marie in May," he says. "I've seen bears, goats, wolves." Mike is homeless. His shoes are split open. "My issue? My issue is everything."

Time to head home. We pass through the Centre de Commerce mondial de Montréal - World Trade Center Montreal. It's another world. The atrium is warm, clean and yet coldly silent and empty. Mannequins in fine clothes and jewels stare at us from glass cabinets. A frozen marble god quietly pours water into a classical fountain. Unexpectedly, we pass a grey block of smashed concrete, streaked with old paints. It is an authentic piece of the Berlin Wall, on display by the 1% like a Cold War trophy to scare us away from socialism.

I glance back. Clusters of tiny tents huddle at the feet of giant skyscrapers: Quebec and Canada's most powerful corporations.

Whatever you make of the protest, the outlook of the young participants is another crack in the social-economic system that these buildings represent, a system that will inevitably break under the weight of its class contradictions. Whatever direction this movement heads - and it faces difficult challenges - it is a seed, a kernel of resistance. It can grow, with broad support from the working people and stronger organization.

I start to hum the tune to an old labour anthem. "In our hands is placed a power greater than their horded gold, Greater than the might of armies, magnified a thousand-fold. We can bring to birth a new world from the ashes of the old. For the union makes us strong!"

Solidarity forever, occupy! •

Ontario election a setback for Tories

PV Ontario Bureau

Ontario's October 6th election resulted in a Liberal minority and a third term for Premier Dalton McGuinty. This was not a vote of confidence in the Liberals, but rather a major defeat for the Tories, who were rejected in northern and urban Ontario, despite polls which showed them in the lead last spring, and despite some gains in eastern and rural Ontario.

One reason for the Tories' failure to launch was their call to attack the poor, Aboriginal Peoples, women, labour and youth. Their platform included proposals for a two-strikes law, forced prison labour, new police powers, and making political action by trade unions illegal, as well as massive cuts to social spending, privatization of public assets, new corporate tax cuts, and more deregulation.

The platform reflects the ideas of the Ontario Landowners Association, an extreme, right-wing rural organization headed by MPP Randy Hillier, which secured nominations in several ridings and knocked off veteran incumbent Norm Stirling.

A large part of the defeat is being laid at the door of Toronto Mayor Rob Ford, whose cutting of city services and assets roused a huge public mobilization. The



Communist leader Liz Rowley being interviewed (Photo: Ed Bil)

"trifecta" of Ford, Harper and Hudak became a fearful example of what a Tory Ontario might actually look like.

The Tories began their campaign with a xenophobic attack on "foreign workers" which lost them seats in the GTA and other urban areas. They ended with a vicious attack on LGBT rights, draped in an attack on a sex education program considered by the TDSB two years ago. That sealed the deal with a complete Tory shut-out in Toronto.

Tory leader Tim Hudak was also ousted by social conservatives in his own party, who announced in July that he had signed a petition promising to de-list abortion as an insured health service if he formed a government.

All this was hammered home night after night in TV ads put together by the Liberal-friendly Working Families Coalition, an elections third party funded by the building trades, teacher unions, CAW, and some others in the public sector. It was an effective campaign.

The result was also a failure of the NDP, which tacked sharply to the right in an effort to win Liberal votes and ride the "orange crush" to government, or at least to opposition status, *ala* Jack Layton. The NDP gained only seven seats in urban and northern Ontario for a total of 17, far short of the Liberals' 53 seats and the Tories' 37. On key issues, the NDP was far short of

see ONTARIO, p. 11

CUPE blames cutbacks for hospital infection outbreaks

As outbreaks of infection continue to affect Ontario hospitals, the Canadian Union of Public Employees says many of the resulting deaths are completely preventable.

Medical experts are blaming hospital overcrowding (resulting from cuts to patient beds) for infection outbreaks - particularly outbreaks of antibiotic-resistant superbugs. Yet the Ontario government plans to cut another 5,000 acute care beds province-wide, even though hospital bed occupancy is at record levels of over 97 per cent.

CUPE points to studies showing that healthcare-associated infections kill between 8,000 and 12,000 Canadians a year, of which 40 per cent are in Ontario.

"Many of these deaths are preventable. Ontario should follow the lead of countries where hospital acquired infections have been significantly reduced by pro-active measures," says Sharon Richer, the Vice-President of CUPE's Ontario Council of Hospital Unions.

The union continues its efforts to shed some light on this urgent health issue, by taking a mobile hospital room display on the road for media conferences in Ontario. Using the mobile exhibit hospital, health care workers demonstrate the effective and thorough cleaning practices required to kill antibiotic-resistant bacteria.

Issues clear in Vancouver civic campaign

PV Vancouver Bureau

With municipal elections set for Nov. 19 across British Columbia, attention is starting to focus on local politics. Labour councils and union locals have endorsed candidates in many areas, hoping to help strengthen the progressive forces on city councils and school boards.

Civic elections in B.C. are often an electoral form of shadow-boxing, leaving voters to guess the underlying views of candidates who are unofficially linked to major provincial parties. But in Vancouver, civic parties offer some clearer choices.

On the right, the so-called Non-Partisan Association, backed by forestry, mining and development companies, and by the provincial Liberals and federal Tories, has tried to spark a "Rob Ford"-style campaign. The NPA mayoralty candidate, councillor Suzanne Anton, has lashed out at bicycle lanes and urban agriculture initiatives to claim that Mayor Gregor Robertson and his Vision majority at City Hall are "out of touch." More recently, Anton has threatened to shut down the Occupy Vancouver camp at the Art Gallery.

Unfortunately for the NPA, this bluster has failed to bring gains in the polls, and its crop of candidates are seen as lightweight. But with tons of corporate money and media support, the NPA could still squeak back into office.

Vision remains the most popular party in the polls, and the left-labour Coalition of Progressive Electors also has a strong following. However, the real test will be the ability of Vision and COPE to encourage their supporters to back

each others' candidates in the voting booth.

The two parties agreed again this year to field a united slate to defeat the NPA. Unlike in 2008, when Vision was still an opposition force, this campaign follows a term in office for Robertson and his centrist party. Those three years



saw close cooperation at the School Board level by a Vision-COPE majority united against provincial education underfunding.

But at city council, some important differences emerged, with COPE taking a stance against the tax shift from businesses to homeowners, and in favour of stronger protections for civil liberties.

In the eyes of most COPE supporters, despite these real differences, the electoral alliance with Vision is the only way to block the NPA. That is also the view of the Vancouver and District Labour Council, and unions such as CUPE and the Teachers, which have endorsed both parties in this campaign.

A joint slate card will go out soon, urging Vancouver voters to support all the COPE and Vision candidates. But each party is also presenting distinct sets of policies.

As in past campaigns, COPE is

pushing hard on working class issues such as improved public transit and affordable housing.

COPE's platform calls for creating a transit system that encourages drivers to get out of their cars by addressing the speed, cost, and capacity of buses. The escalation of fares has taken a one-

coordination for buses.

While the Mayor is attempting to hold off right-wing demands to remove the Occupy Vancouver tent city, COPE candidates have openly backed the non-violent action against systemic inequality and discrimination, corporate greed, and economic disparity.

"COPE stands in solidarity with the people of Vancouver, and the world, in the struggle for peace, genuine equality, economic security and the protection of the environment," said COPE City Councillor Ellen Woodsworth. "In Vancouver we are calling for affordable housing and an end to homelessness, for accessible public transit, and a sustainable ecology. The ninety-nine percent can count on COPE."

"COPE's goal is to create a Vancouver for everyone," said COPE school trustee Jane Bouey. "That means creating a Vancouver for students, workers, and the unemployed, the homeless, artists, families, seniors and small business owners. That means creating a Vancouver for the 99 percent."

In the wake of the recent Supreme Court ruling in favour of the Insite safe injection facility, COPE is calling for more access to treatment, mental health assistance, and safe injection for people struggling with addiction. While

the NPA doesn't dare oppose the popular Insite facility, its links with the Harper Tories could indicate a lack of future support if Anton became mayor. COPE and Vision both have long track records in full support of expanding this vital public health initiative.

Weather forecasts predict a cold winter ahead, with the City's homeless shelters remaining at capacity. Vision and COPE have announced their commitment to secure funding for a 24/7 women's shelter in the Downtown Eastside, a priority for groups which work with vulnerable women.

"Many women from the Downtown Eastside have gone missing or are staying in violent relationships. We have heard from several community groups that homeless women often do not feel safe in the shelters that also allow men, and choose to stay outside instead," says Woodsworth. "That's not acceptable, and you can count on COPE and Vision to make a 24/7 women's shelter a priority."

Such a shelter is recommended in the City's Affordable Housing and Homelessness plan, backed by all members of council except Suzanne Anton. As well, she was the only council member to vote against ongoing city support for emergency homeless shelters. ●

Liberal MLAs criticize CLBC

By Kimball Cariou

In the latest revolt against the anti-family policies of BC Premier Christy Clark, some of her own backbenchers are now speaking out.

On Oct. 17, former cabinet minister Randy Hawes slammed the province's treatment of adults with developmental disabilities. Hawes, the MLA for Abbotsford-Mission, called for a "top-to-bottom" review of Community Living B.C. and suggested his own government has misled the public about problems with the agency. Established by Clark in 2004 during her tenure as Social Development Minister under Gordon Campbell, CLBC has been sharply criticized for closing down dozens of group homes and failing to consult with families.

Speaking in the Legislature, Hawes said, "In this house, we heard the previous minister and we also heard the previous CEO of CLBC say, 'No one gets moved without it being their choice, without them agreeing.'" But we know that that hasn't been what's been happening."

Hawes said the government needs to give hope and provide services immediately to adults with developmental disabilities and their families.

"In the over 10 years that I've been in this legislature," he said, "there's no issue that's caused me more loss of sleep or more concern for those most vulnerable people. We need to act now."

Hawes raised typical cases from his own constituency: a single mother forced to give up her job because there were no services for her daughter, an elderly man who was denied extra respite care to look after his disabled son and ailing wife, and a family whose son



Protest at the office of Social Development Minister Harry Bloy, who was dumped by the Premier a few days later. (PV photo: K. Cariou)

became violent after being forced to move from a group home into an unsuitable "home-share" arrangement.

Another BC Liberal MLA, Gordon Hogg, agreed with Hawes. Hogg was the minister responsible for community living in 2001 when Gordon Campbell's government promised to improve services for people with developmental disabilities. Many of those commitments have been abandoned as CLBC faces massive budget shortfalls.

The next Liberal to speak out was John van Dongen (Abbotsford South). The government's rift over the issue was further exposed in the Legislature by NDP leader Adrian Dix, who spoke about the debates over CLBC at an Oct. 18 Liberal caucus meeting.

Just a few days later, a fresh

CLBC scandal emerged, with the news that top bureaucrats at the agency have awarded themselves some \$300,000 in executive performance bonuses in recent years. Coming at a time when the provincial government routinely claims "poverty," this revelation has sparked wider public anger.

But so far, Social Development Minister Stephanie Cadieux, who oversees CLBC, has rejected an outside review, claiming she is studying the situation personally. Cadieux recently became the fourth minister in less than a year, replacing incompetent Clark loyalist Harry Bloy. Meanwhile, the Premier welcomed the recent departure of Rick Mowles, CEO of CLBC, who was clearly pushed out in an attempt to quell the storm.

Advocates for the developmentally disabled welcomed the stance by the Liberal MLAs, who are putting their political careers on the line. Dawn Steele of Moms on the Move called it "an extraordinary act of courage."

Steele's group supports the recommendations of the BC Community Living Action Group (CLAG), which include:

- * immediately inject \$70 million to address the unfunded backlog of service needs from the past two years;
- * order a moratorium on CLBC's service redesign process, group home closures and service cuts;
- * order an external review of CLBC to investigate the very serious and systemic concerns;
- * establish an independent advocate to provide independent monitoring, oversight, advocacy and public reporting on behalf of adults with developmental disabilities;
- * support choice in service options and the meaningful inclusion of families and self-advocates. ●

NIAGARA NEWS BULLETIN

People's Voice Niagara Bureau

* An 82-year old woman visiting her husband in the Greater Niagara General Hospital was **told to call an ambulance when she broke her hip** near the entrance. Ontario appointed a supervisor to take over the Niagara Health System (NHS) just before the provincial election to improve its management, and earlier cases resulted in one death. Because of emergency room cuts in other hospitals (to be moved further away in favour of a P3 public-private-partnership i.e. for profit hospital) patients suffering from an in-hospital heart attack are told to call 911.

* Six weeks after the NHS declared a hospital-acquired infection outbreak over, **another outbreak has been declared** with three patients testing positive. The earlier outbreak saw 36 deaths. During the provincial election, St. Catharines Communist candidate Saleh Waziruddin predicted more would die unless beds, staff, and services are restored to pre-cuts levels.

* The Regional Municipality of Niagara is considering **privatizing its eight long-term care homes**, where health care money would be diverted to private profits combined with possible cuts. At least one councillor pointed out that public homes are more accountable in reporting.

* A **Welland food bank** says it is getting above daily average pleas from both the "working poor" and "newly poor", and many don't even apply because of the stigma of charity.

* **Port Colborne residents suing Vale Inco** for contamination of their lands are going to the Supreme Court of Canada after the Ontario appeals court reversed a \$36 million judgment. The Ministry of Environment ordered Inco to re-mediate 25 properties because of high nickel levels, but the court ruled for the company because they didn't violate any regulations while polluting the land.

* The **Council of Canadians** has warned about the Niagara Falls Water Board across the border in New York offering to treat **polluted water from hydrofracking** (using high pressure water to release underground natural gas). The group says companies don't report what's in the water, and Canadians across the river, as well as US residents, will pay with their health for the pollution. The International Joint Commission found fracking chemicals in the Great Lakes recently; Canada spends even less than the US on protecting one of the world's largest fresh water supplies. ●

EDITORIALS

Warships nothing to celebrate

In a world where billions live in poverty, a trillion dollars every year are poured into military programs. From this perspective, the announcement of some \$35 billion in federal shipbuilding contracts is nothing to celebrate, even for workers who will get job guarantees for the foreseeable future.

First the appalling waste of nearly \$30 billion on F-35 fighter-bombers, and now these warships. The Harper Tories continue to put the pedal to the metal for war spending, which will hit \$500 billion over the next twenty years. Federal funding for health care, women's equality, childcare, social housing, environmental research and other vital programs is relentlessly slashed, but when no expense is spared to buy bigger and better guns for the troops.

Over three-quarters of this new spending is for military vessels to be built in the Maritimes. These ships will be heavily armed with weapons ranging from missiles to torpedoes to machine guns. Their purpose is to make the world safer for transnational corporations, not for human beings. The west coast shipbuilding contracts are to build naval supply vessels, icebreakers, etc., rather than warships. But these vessels will also be weaponized, and will perform a vital function as part of a much larger, deadlier Canadian war machine at the service of the U.S. and the other big NATO powers.

The Canadian Peace Alliance has launched an important new campaign against military spending. This campaign can begin to make it clear that Canadians want funding for civilian needs, not for war-making. Unfortunately, this is a message that the new Official Opposition also needs to hear, since the NDP shares the blame for this obscene waste of taxpayers dollars. This is the shameful legacy of Jack Layton, who postured as a peace activist while backing the warship expansion plans of the Harper Tories. Sad, but true.

The Afghan prisoner scandal

Ten years into the NATO occupation of Afghanistan (with Canada's participation from the beginning) a new report documents widespread torture in the Karzai regime's jails. The revelations come on the heels of a decision by NATO to suspend transfers of prisoners into Afghan custody.

The disturbing conclusion of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) is no surprise: "a compelling pattern and practice of systematic torture and ill-treatment" in facilities where Canada handed over prisoners. In some cases, children in custody were tortured and abused. UNAMA concludes that almost half of the 273 conflict-related detainees interviewed who had been held by the National Directorate of Security (NDS) experienced torture, as defined under international law, and one-third of the 117 detainees held by the Afghan National Police (ANP) experienced treatment that constituted torture or other forms of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment. The NDS and the ANP are integral parts of the Karzai government, infamous for its close connections with warlords, religious extremists, and drug kingpins. Those are also Canada's allies in this shameful war of occupation.

Stephen Harper has repeatedly stated that Canada's involvement in Afghanistan was aimed at protecting "freedom, respect for human rights and the primacy of the rule of law." But these developments prove that handing prisoners over to Afghan officials was a violation of international law. Even though Canada's armed forces are no longer directly involved in detaining or transferring prisoners, this scandal demands a full accounting, an open public inquiry into Canada's approach to the handling of battlefield prisoners. Anything less will be an admission that in future deployments, the Canadian Armed Forces will be free to turn over prisoners to suffer torture and death. But perhaps this is what Mr. Harper really means when he speaks of "fundamental Canadian values."

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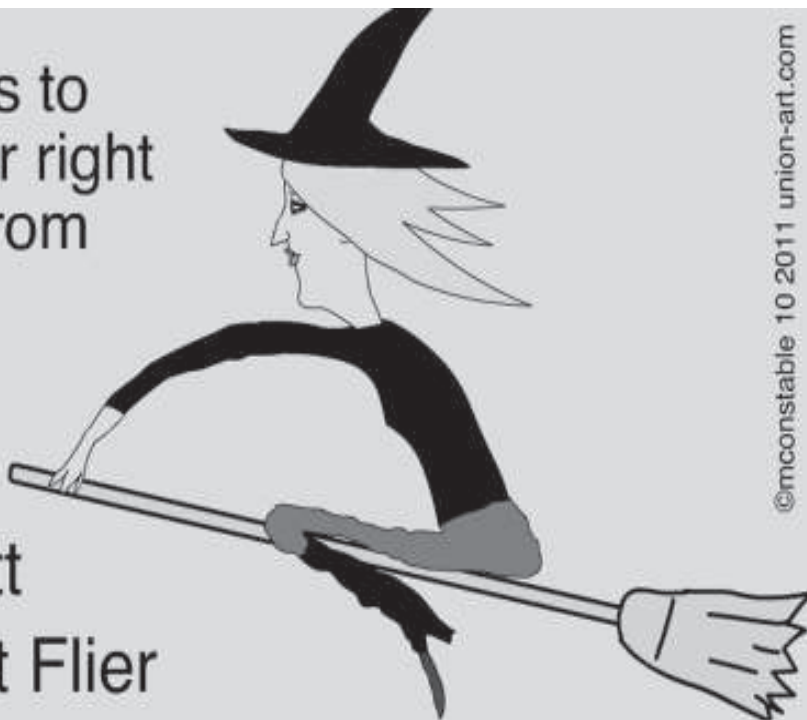
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to strike from
the sky

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SPEAKING FRANKLY

CETA bad for Hamilton - and every municipality

Special to PV

Council of Canadians trade campaigner Stuart Trew has published an analysis of the potential impact of the Canada-European Union Trade Agreement on Hamilton. Trew argues that CETA would be sharply negative, despite promises by governments, economists and the media that free trade is automatically good for a "trading nation" such as Canada.

Trew points out that "those who've witnessed first hand the decline of Hamilton's manufacturing base know that free trade doesn't produce jobs. It moves them around. More precisely, it helps employers move jobs other places they can produce things cheaply and on their terms."

CETA will strip cities like Hamilton of any tools to create new jobs, promote sustainable development and enhance public services: "For the first time, CETA will make apply trade and investment-related disciplines to municipal governments, Crown corporations, universities, hospitals and school boards - the so-called MUSH sector."

In a nutshell, he argues, CETA would forbid municipalities from applying offsets, or conditions designed to extract local development benefits, on tenders for goods, services and construction over certain thresholds.

CETA would ban "Buy Canadian" policies, depriving cities of an effective job-creating tool: "Toronto, for example, buys subway cars from a plant in Sudbury because it creates enormous spinoff economic activity and jobs across the GTA. Our city may one day like to make a similar policy for its light rail vehicles. It wouldn't be able to if the city were bound by CETA."

The potential to use procurement policies to achieve social goals would vanish. These include employment or training goals, but also sustainable or green development strategies, buy local food programs, and so on.

Supporters of CETA claim that cities like Hamilton would instead benefit from a greater choice of contractors at a lower price. But European firms already bid on and win Canadian contracts, and vice versa. What the EU is seeking in CETA is a legal guarantee that if one of its firms puts in the lowest bid, that firm will win the contract. Municipal decisions to the contrary could be challenged before trade tribunals with the authority to halt projects, hand out

finances and potentially overturn contracts.

But "taxpayer value" is more than the bottom line cost. In the United States, Trew notes, "many states and municipalities go with an in-state option on contracts even if it costs 10 percent more than the lowest bidder, as long as the local company meets all the other technical requirements." Such a situation could arise in Hamilton, where the city might want the steel in a local construction project to be sourced from Ontario mills.

"It's easier still to imagine buy local food policies at all public facilities, including hospitals," writes Trew. "But of course if the contracts run over the threshold for goods or services, good luck trying to force catering and other food service firms from abiding by reasonable local content quotas. Under CETA, there is no obligation for corporations to do so, and even legal procedures they can invoke if anyone tries."

As for the "benefits" of CETA, Trew says these must be "enormous" to justify depriving municipalities of important powers. The federal government claims that CETA will add \$12 billion, or 0.77 per cent of GDP to the Canadian economy, phased in overtime, based on numbers crunched by European economists prior to the financial meltdown of 2008.

But since then, an official sustainability impact assessment of CETA done for the European Commission has predicted gains to Canada of between one quarter and one half of that value. "That drops the value of CETA to Canada to between \$3 and \$6 billion - not much at all, and possibly still too high" according to economist Jim Stanford, who predicts net job losses from CETA.

Another reason to oppose CETA is water. The investment rights protected in the deal would extend to private water firms if the Ontario government agrees to commit drinking water and sanitation in its offer to the EU.

Trew gives the example of a contract awarded by Hamilton to Philips Utilities Management Corporation for water and wastewater treatment. "The community faced ten years of environmental disasters and financial upheaval," he writes. "The workforce was cut in half within eighteen months, millions of litres of raw sewage spilled into the Hamilton Harbour, homes were flooded and major additional costs were incurred. Numerous

charges over years were laid by the Ontario Ministry of the Environment against the contractor for not meeting effluent standards. The private water contract changed corporate hands four times. In 2004, City Council ended its experiment with privatization and brought operation of its water and wastewater systems back in-house. Had CETA been in place at the time, Hamilton could have faced an investment dispute by the private water firm - even if that firm was based in the United States and not the EU."

Yet another issue to consider is the drug reforms demanded by the EU in the intellectual property chapter, which would increase the cost of public employee drug plans by almost \$3 billion per year across Canada. According to business groups close to the negotiations, the EU will not sign a deal without these reforms.

"Free trade" has little to do with trade, Trew says. "These agreements were always about a specific type of economic governance that purposely undermines democracy and empowers already powerful multinational firms. The goal of free trade is export-oriented growth with as few barriers to capital and investment flows as possible. There are no jobs in CETA. There are only reduced options for communities like Hamilton."

The same will be true for other municipalities. It's time to kill this deal, before it strangles local governments across Canada.

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Marxist Theory

Who needs philosophy, anyway?

By Johan Boyden, general secretary of the Young Communist League of Canada

Philosophy... Do youth and student activists, and progressive-minded young people in general, need a philosophical approach to their struggles in the movement?

Put the question a more practical and concrete way. Can we understand exploitation, oppression and class, the conflict of "the 99 and 1 percent," without knowing what is a contradiction?

Marxist philosophy seeks to understand the world as it really is, and to change it. There are two interrelated elements involved - the need to understand the world as it really is (materialism), and the need to understand this material world as one of interconnected change and development, of universal conflict and contradiction between what is old and dying, and what is new and struggling to be born. It's an approach Marxists call dialectical.

When I was a student activist, before I joined the Young Communist League, I thought of philosophy as something abstract, complex, and difficult. And of course, philosophy can be all of this.

Capitalism pushes to make learning and education elitist and inaccessible for the majority of people. To make liberation just that step harder. Plus, the subject matter is difficult. Many philosophers, often living off the dime of the ancient lord, have reflected needs and principles of the powerful. To be sure, not all of them. But today, most academic philosophers side with the boss. Their philosophy seems remote from our real life.

On the other hand, whether it is particularly well understood or not, ideas like "people are basically evil", "the more things change, the more they stay the same", "God rewards", or "life sucks and then you die" are all philosophical.

Widely held philosophical world outlooks have existed for time immemorial in what is now Canada, going back to Aboriginal peoples (the ideas of the Six Nations about democracy influenced Ben Franklin and the American revolutionaries, as well as the first Marxists like Engels).

I would say everybody, young and old, has a philosophy whether they are aware of it or not.

So we can distinguish between two kinds of philosophy: The different philosophies people have (ways of looking at the world and understanding it in general terms), and abstract philosophy conceived by professional philosophers, many of whom served the boss.

Can you blame youth activists for having nothing but contempt for such philosophy, so elitist, so

complex, an off-ramp from struggle into arm-chair debate?

Nowadays being a young person in Canada is sort of like a quest. It is a rough-and-tumble scramble for life, experiences, knowledge, and figuring out who you are. For millions of youth in Canada, at some point many of their hopes and aspirations are frustrated or crushed. Isn't training the young to fit into society (what sociologists call "socialization") partly about squeezing out their hope and "dreams" of justice and a better future?

It's natural that a great many youth reject this dominant ideology, condemn the obvious immorality of corporate power and even capitalism, and gravitate to the side of the people's struggle and working class politics.

A commendable sense of impatience propels the youth movement. Change must be now. Action must be concrete. Tactics should be direct. Commonslogans bravely announce total, radical opposition - anti-racism, anti-G20, anti-capitalism.

Tactics are primary. We've got to do something! Action speaks louder than words! (Never mind that words can also be action - sexist slurs, for example). But after a while, most youth involved in struggle recognize a collection of specific tactics aren't enough. A broader strategy is needed, which requires more general analysis and theory, and with that - philosophical assumptions.

Dialectical materialist philosophy, when practically applied to the concrete study of conditions, is a guide to theory which, in turn, is a guide to action. It does not provide answers, but helps us ask the right questions, find what causes to look for, and grasp the particular links.

Strictly speaking, purely spontaneous action that doesn't involve any form of thinking is not possible. Regardless of whether it is at the front of our mind or not, all theory is rooted in philosophy, some overall view of the world.

You don't need to look far on the internet to find eclectic philosophers, young and old. Many dislike science and prefer more of a hodgepodge of critical ideas. Many have little practical activity. Some use Marxist jargon. Others would say "into the hot frying pan of struggle, pour in the philosophical oil of common sense or science, mix-in three cups of different radical, critical theory of society (from the smorgasbord of ideas about oppression), add a spoonful of scepticism for seasoning and pragmatism, according to taste."

Aren't these good enough recipes?

Truthfully, no. And this debate is not insignificant. Just like bad cooking can lead to food

poisoning, politics and action based on false or inadequate philosophy can only lead to defeat and despair. Even if people hit on a correct policy, unless the philosophical basis of our policy is also correct, we will make serious mistakes in carrying it through.

Most youth activists rely on a kind of gut feeling for that philosophical basis. "Common-sense," however, is notorious for being deceptive. Is it common-sense that water is composed of two highly flammable gases? Common-sense used to say the earth was flat.

Neither is science alone adequate. Scientific knowledge and methodology changed radically from Galileo to Curie to Hawkins. And while science can understand reality, since reality is infinite, the knowledge learned from experiment is never complete.

Sceptical youth activists may be drawn to rejecting anything that presents itself as truth, but whatever thinking we do operates on the basis of general conclusions. While we can seek to wish-away philosophy, the problems posed will remain.

In this sense, constructing a theory is like constructing a house; not only must the walls be sound, but also the foundations. For people who want to change the world, that means a philosophy with a revolutionary class outlook, or dialectical materialism.

This article draws on and expands ideas from Philosophy and Class Struggle (South Africa, 1987) by Dialego. •



Philosophy is an essential element of the struggle to understand and ultimately change the society we live in.

Canadian Peace Alliance campaign for "Peace and Prosperity, not War and Austerity"

By Saleh Waziruddin, co-convenor of Niagara Coalition for Peace, and a member of the Canadian Peace Congress executive council

The Canadian Peace Alliance held its bi-annual convention Oct. 14-16 in Toronto, with over 23 member groups participating from across Canada, stretching from Halifax to Vancouver and up to Yellowknife. Formed in 1985, the CPA is the umbrella group for anti-war movements. About 60 people participated, including observers from non-member organizations.

At the convention, the Alliance launched a signature campaign, on the theme of "Peace and Prosperity not War and Austerity," to agitate for shifting public money from militarism and war into public services, jobs, and the environment. Postcards can be signed on-line at www.acp-cpa.ca/en/PeaceandProsperity.html.

The convention kicked off with a discussion panel including a video address by Afghan MP Malalai Joya, who declared that Barack Obama is even worse than George Bush, as well as speeches by Judith LeBlanc of the U.S. network Peace Action, Suraia Sahar of Afghans for Peace, and CPA co-chair Derrick O'Keefe of Vancouver StopWar.

Several resolutions were passed, including support for the campaign to let US War Resisters stay in Canada, helping students counter military recruitment, and participating in elections by encouraging peace candidates and clear anti-war positions. A resolution proposed by the Canadian Peace Congress was adopted, committing the CPA to annual cross-Canada Days of Action against the war in Afghanistan.

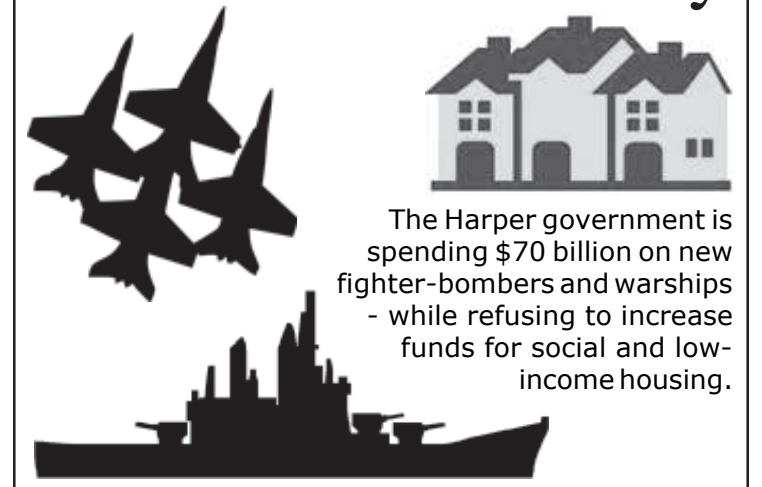
The convention elected a steering committee that includes new member organizations

represented by young leaders, such as Afghans for Peace, Afghan Canadian Student Association, National Council of Canadian Tamils, and Alternatives North in the Northwest Territories.

The delegates and observers marched to St. James Park to join in Occupy Toronto, and attended workshops addressing topics such as Canada's role in Afghanistan, war and the environment, First Nations sovereignty, and wars in Africa, Palestine, Haiti, Libya, Sri Lanka, and Kashmir.

For more information, visit the CPA website, www.acp-cpa.ca. •

Peace and Prosperity, not War and Austerity



The Harper government is spending \$70 billion on new fighter-bombers and warships - while refusing to increase funds for social and low-income housing.

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The Occupy movement: a powerful and liberating action

The expansion of Occupy Wall Street actions across North America is a welcome boost for the movement to check the power of transnational capital. The conscious decision to rise up together against corporate rule is a powerful and liberating act, with enormous potential. Tens of thousands took to the streets of cities and towns across Canada on the October 15 weekend, proving that we will not meekly accept the Harper Tory/corporate agenda.

As the Communist Party said when the Tories won a majority in Parliament with less than 40% of the popular vote, the crucial fightback by working people over the next four years will take place in our streets, workplaces and communities. Today, this struggle is around the rights of the "99%" to assemble in public spaces, to organize forms of collective resistance, and to speak out for fundamental economic, social and political reforms.

Our most urgent need at this moment is to strengthen broader unity in action, especially among working people, who form the vast majority of the "99%". While there are many important issues raised within the Occupy movement, unity can best be built around demands which undermine the power of our common enemy: big capital. The corporate drive for maximum profits is responsible for destroying our planet, and for the escalating attacks against workers, Aboriginal peoples, racialized communities, women, youth, seniors, and other sections of the people. Ultimately, stronger collective resistance against this deadly enemy can open the door to a process of genuine democratic social change, leading towards a socialist future.

One of the outstanding strengths of the Occupy movement is its breathtaking diversity. From its beginnings on Wall Street, the movement has attracted a stunning range of participants, including many who are taking action for the first time. This movement is a sharp challenge

to the claim that "there is no alternative" to the policies of big capital and its governments and parties. The growing participation of organized labour and other progressive groups shows that within this diversity, there is strong support for a "people's alternative", based on the needs of working people and the environment, not the greed of the corporations.

The positive response to the involvement of trade unions and other progressive forces

A message from the Central Executive Committee, Communist Party of Canada

emphasizes the need for labour and its allies to help build the Occupy movement. Such a strategy can help block and even defeat the attacks by the Harper Tories and the corporate bosses - especially their assault on decades of hard-won social and collective bargaining gains. Recognizing this basic truth, many union locals, labour councils and provincial federations have mobilized for the Occupy events.

It's true that such tactics call for a careful approach to avoid accusations of "labour domination." On the other hand, holding back from coalition-building, or offering only lukewarm support, could leave the organized sections of the working class at the mercy of the right-wing attack. Failure to seize the opportunity presented by the Occupy protests would be an historic blunder; we urge all affiliates and Labour Councils to encourage the leaderships of the Canadian Labour Congress and the CSN (Confédération des syndicats nationaux, or CNTU) in Québec to prioritize all-out labour support of this struggle.

This is not to minimise the challenges facing the attempt to build a powerful, broad campaign

for change. Initial enthusiasm for mass action has sometimes been dulled by lengthy debates over how to create perfect democratic structures. The welcome process of open, inclusive debate has occasionally meant that speakers' lists are dominated by individuals with the loudest voices, rather than those who speak for large numbers of workers, Aboriginal peoples, racialized communities, women, students, seniors, farmers, homeless people, and other targets of the capitalist agenda.

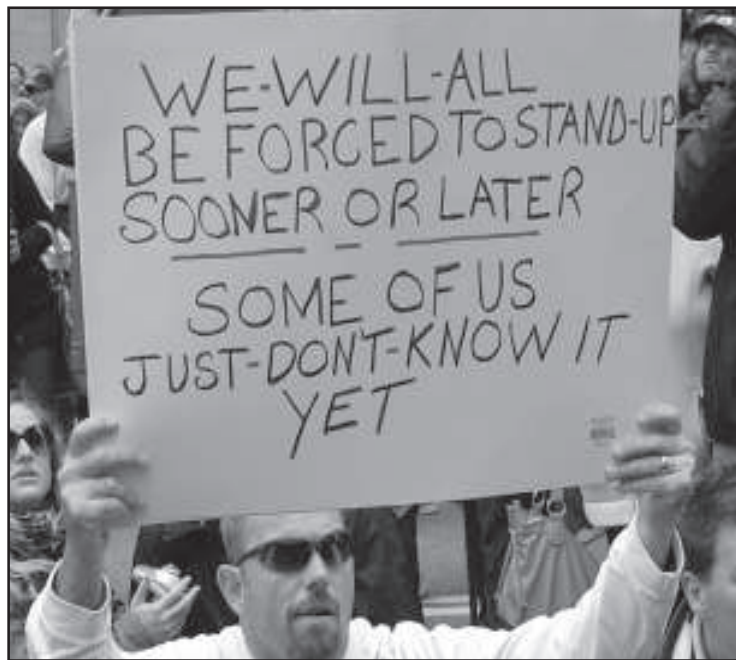
But these difficulties should not become an excuse by progressives and labour activists to dismiss or ignore the Occupy movement. We must all join the debates and present our views and ideas, which are based on the experience of many campaigns to defend labour rights, democracy, equality, and social justice.

In this spirit, members of the Communist Party of Canada have been active from the start of the Occupy actions across this country. We will continue to help organize broader and more powerful unity of the 99%, around demands which hit back at the power of the 1%, the transnational corporations.

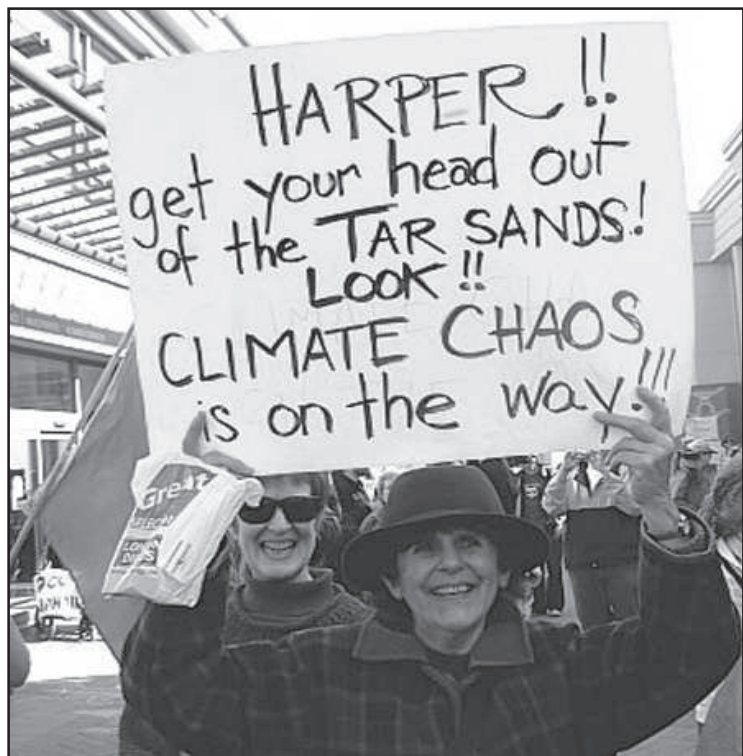
Here are some of the immediate demands which our Party has proposed:

- * Nationalize the banks and insurance companies!
- * Double the corporate tax rate, especially for the largest transnationals, oil companies, etc.
- * Good jobs, liveable wages and benefits for all!
- * End attacks on workers' rights!
- * Stop privatizations and cutbacks to public services!
- * Make education (including post-secondary), healthcare and childcare accessible and affordable!
- * Build social housing, and significantly raise the minimum wage and welfare rates!
- * Cut military spending by 75%!
- * Fight climate change, not wars for energy resources!

Our aim is a socialist Canada, one in which the productive wealth of society is collectively owned and democratically controlled, not by the 1% of the rich and powerful corporate interests, but by the working people. We welcome your comments and feedback around these proposals. Contact us for more information. ●



Scenes from Occupy actions in Vancouver, Toronto, and Nanaimo...



Greek austerity protesters defy attacks

PV Vancouver Bureau

Tens of thousands of Greeks rallied central Athens' Syntagma Square on October 20, backing up the second day of one of the biggest general strikes in the country's recent history. The protest actions were part of a strategy to block adoption of the latest "austerity" package demanded by the IMF and big European powers.

The Syntagma Square demonstration by trade unionists and Greek Communists attempted to set up a cordon to block members of Parliament from entering to vote. But riot police moved in to break up the action, allowing MPs to enter. Later in the day, violent "anarchist" thugs attacked the peaceful protesters in front of the Parliament, throwing petrol bombs, stones, paint and clubs in an attempt to break the remaining cordon. At least 10 people were treated by medics, many for facial injuries, and one trade unionist was killed.

In yet another attempt to frighten the Greek people into silence, Finance Minister Evangelos Venizelos issued an impassioned appeal to MPs, claiming that failure to approve the measures would be disastrous.

"If the law is not approved, including every single article it contains, particularly those to Greece's creditors and regardless of political necessity, there is no need for me to go to the euro group meeting on Friday or the prime minister to Sunday's summit," he said.

In the end, the package was narrowly adopted, despite defections by one or two MPs from the governing PASOK (Socialist) party. The measures include dismissal of 30,000 public employees, further reducing pay rates, and suspending collective bargaining agreements.

Before the final votes, The general secretary of the civil servants' union ADEDY, Ilias Iliopoulos, warned: "It looks as if MPs are set to vote in favour of the new austerity law, but they have no popular consent. Our European friends must know that our prime minister will go to the EU summit naked, because the promises he will make have no backing in his country and cannot be enforced."

The main organized force behind resistance to the austerity measures has been the All-Workers Militant Front (PAME), a broad labour movement led by the Greek Communist Party (KKE).

Responding to the attack unleashed against the enormous rally and strikes organized by PAME, the Greek Communists condemned the attempts by the bourgeois media to distort the facts.

A statement from the KKE notes, "on October 19-20 hundreds of thousands of workers participated in the big strike mobilisation, in which the class-oriented trade unions of PAME played the leading role, together with other forces of the social alliance (MAS, PASEVE, PASY, OGE). The success of the first day of the strike and the massive demonstration in the central square of Athens, outside Parliament, where PAME was predominant, sent a strong message to the government, the



At the rally in Syntagma Square, in front of Parliament

EU, and big capital: No sacrifice for the plutocracy! The workers are not responsible for the capitalist crisis!"

Faked "incidents", the game of "hide and seek" with the riot police, the damage to shops and buildings by small provocateur groups, could not extinguish the message of the huge popular demonstration, says the KKE.

But some international media reported false claims of an attempt



by the demonstrators to occupy the parliament, which had no relation to reality.

On the second day, the ruling sought to suppress the strong political message of the workers. PAME had announced the encirclement of the Parliament as the anti-worker measures were to be discussed and voted on, article by article with a roll call vote, at the request of the KKE deputies. In a planned way, organized groups armed with Molotov cocktails, stones, and other weapons, including the teargas and stun grenades used by the police, attempted to disperse the rally in Syntagma, especially the part where PAME was concentrated. The assault took place on the edges of the demonstration, injuring 80 PAME demonstrators and killing Dimitris Kotzaridis, a construction worker and PAME member. But the attacks failed to disperse the rally.

Affected by the suffocating atmosphere caused by the use of smoke bombs and fire extinguishers by the provocateurs,

Kotzaridis became dizzy and collapsed. His comrades carried out first aid procedures and moved him out of the Square, but he died of respiratory failure, said Ilias Sioras, cardiologist and member of the union of workers at the Evangelismos hospital. The final findings will be announced after a coroners' investigation.

As the KKE says, "certain international bourgeois media sought to present the aforementioned incidents as a conflict between two ideological-political currents inside the people's movement. This approach has nothing to do with reality since in Greece it is well-known that these groups which appear under the cover of the black hood are organized and staffed by the forces of the bourgeois system and include everything from organized hooligans of football teams, to hired thugs from night clubs, members of neo-Nazi organizations and forces of security services. There is a lot of evidence from the recent past that show the relations of these groups with the mechanisms of the system. They are murderous groups which serve the bourgeois system and have no relation with the people's



PAME contingent holds a minute of silence after the tragic death of Dimitris Kotzaridis (above)

movement. They are unleashed by the system itself in order to organize provocations (like the burning of the bank on 5/5/2010 where three employees died) and provide a pretext to the security forces so as to use the equipment they possess in order to disperse the mass people's demonstrations.

"Even more dangerous and dirty is the slander that PAME protected the parliament from the protesters, an allegation reproduced by bourgeois and opportunist mass media - domestic and international ones. This dirty allegation seeks to portray PAME as a support of the bourgeois system and the KKE as a 'systemic force', as a party of the bourgeois system. It emanates from those forces which praise the 'spontaneous' movement and present it in opposition to the organized class-oriented workers' movement. It is they who misleadingly identify the revolution and the people's uprising with the burning of rubbish bins and the breaking of shop windows and not with the organized political struggle of the workers' movement which has roots in the factories, in workplaces, in people's neighbourhoods...

"The KKE and PAME do not need any 'credentials' for their militancy which the bourgeois media hand over to the hooded

provocateurs, to the anarcho-fascist groups. Our history and activity has the appreciation of hundred of thousands of working people who take part in the people's demonstrations, of millions of workers who appreciate the consistent, unwavering struggle of our party, the firmness of its goals for the overthrow of the capitalist barbarity and the militancy of its members and cadre in the places where they work and live.

"This slander that PAME allegedly 'protected the bourgeois parliament from the rebels' has nothing to do with reality and moreover it seeks to conceal the truth, namely the fact that PAME managed, thanks to its strong vigilance, to defend the demonstration and prevent the plans for its dissolution.

"As we say in Greece 'lies have short legs.' On Oct. 21, hundreds of cadre and members of the KKE, numerous forces of the class-oriented movement visited many workplaces informing the working people and preparing new mobilizations. This mass political work among the people which will continue on a daily basis constitutes a decisive response to every kind of anarcho-fascist, to the police informers, to the bourgeois state, to the government and the parties of capital, the opportunist formations." ●

Greek unions call more strikes

From the Morning Star (UK), October 21, 2011

Greek trade unions warned of further strikes after parliament approved new harsh cutbacks amid mass protests that left one man dead and about 200 injured. Civil servants' union ADEDY secretary-general Ilias Iliopoulos said that the new law "will not be implemented," and accused the governing Socialists of ignoring popular dissent.

Greece's main private-sector union GSEE was also planning new strikes. "We plan long-running opposition to ensure that the crippling cutbacks imposed by our loan shark predators are not enforced," said GSEE board member Stathis Anestis.

In a disturbing development, three Communist Party offices were firebombed in Thessaloniki early on Oct. 21. It is not yet clear who carried out the attacks.

More than 150,000 people took to the streets of Athens on Oct. 19-20 during a two-day general strike against the cutbacks. The new measures include further pension and state salary reductions, civil service staff cuts and a reduction in the tax-free threshold.

Ferry sailors, municipal workers and nurses were on still on strike Oct. 21, as Greek MPs passed the deeply resented new austerity Bill, caving in to the demands of international creditors.

The austerity measures won 154-144 in the 300-member parliament despite dissent from a prominent Socialist MP who voted against a key article of the Bill.

A 53-year-old construction worker died of heart failure after attending the mass rally, while 74 protesters and 32 police officers were hospitalised with injuries. Several dozen more injured protesters received first aid from volunteer medics who set up a makeshift treatment site on Athens' main Syntagma Square.

Former labour minister Louka Katseli voted against one article that scaled back collective bargaining rights for workers. Although she voted in favour of the overall Bill, Prime Minister George Papandreou expelled her from the party's parliamentary group, whittling down his parliamentary majority to a bare three seats - down from 10 seats two years ago.

Passing the entire Bill was "a matter of national responsibility for the critical negotiations that lay ahead in the next few days," claimed Papandreou in a statement announcing Ms Katseli's expulsion. "The government exhausted every possible effort to incorporate proposals made by members of parliament."

Greece now heads into a series of negotiations in Brussels, but fury at the government echoed across Athens.

"That it was voted on is one thing. Its implementation is another. The people will tear it apart, they will dismiss it in practice," pensioner Kleantith Kizilis said at the protest.

"Papandreou doesn't know what is going on. For me, it's the worst government of all time," said protester Haralambos Tahoulas. ●



GLOBAL CLASS STRUGGLE

Factories occupied by Uruguayan metalworkers

A national metalworkers' strike began on Oct. 10 in Uruguay to demand a new collective agreement. Metalworkers have occupied 40 factories and intend to continue until their demands are met.

The National Metalworkers' Union (UNTMRA) is seeking an inflation plus 3.5% pay rise every six months, reduction of the working week from 48 to 44 hours without loss of pay, an end to employer misuse of attendance bonuses, a new job classification structure, and two hours pay for union meetings.

The previous agreement expired on June 30, 2010. A decree awarded a 1.5% pay rise in January 2011 but the union says this not the same as a collective agreement.

"We are not only fighting for a pay rise and a better quality-of-life for workers. We also want to promote development of the economy and the workforce", said a union spokesperson, adding that the employers' organisation has refused to dialogue. "However, it has increased repression of the workforce, temporarily placing some workers on unemployment pay, threatening to dismiss others and generally acting in a provocative way in order to change the focus of the dispute away from our list of demands".

Portugal facing general strike

Portugal's biggest unions said on Oct. 19 they will stage a general strike against austerity measures as the government tries to meet budget goals imposed as part of a 78 billion euro (\$107 bln) bailout.

The CGTP umbrella union called the Nov. 24 general strike after the centre-right government announced a 2012 draft budget which includes the elimination of civil servants' year-end and holiday bonuses for two years, and extending the working day by 30 minutes. Deep spending cuts in key areas such as health care, and across-the-board tax hikes, promise to send Portugal into its deepest recession in decades next year with an economic contraction of 2.8%. Unemployment is currently at 12.1%, and the government expects it to hit 13.5% next year.

"At this moment the impoverishment of the country, the scale of the recession and unemployment and the injustices we are seeing justifies this strike," Manuel Carvalho da Silva, CGTP head, told journalists. "We have to fight without hesitation and do what is necessary."

Portugal's other main union, the UGT, is set to join the industrial action. About 40,000 people marched on Oct. 15 as part of protests galvanised by the Occupy Wall Street movement.

"Portugal is being governed right now through a kind of state of occupation," said Carvalho da Silva. "We are running grave risks when we have a government that does not understand the interests

of the Portuguese but only the contents of the memorandum with the troika."

Teachers strike in Buenos Aires

For the second time in less than a month, teachers in Buenos Aires schools went on strike Oct. 20 and 21, closing classrooms for 350,000 students. As they did during a one-day strike in early October, teachers marched on City Hall to hold a massive protest rally.



Public education unions are protesting the municipal government's move to replace the present system of Teachers Qualifications and Disciplinary Boards, by an official classification office which restricts the participation of teachers and school representatives.

The city's Education minister, Esteban Bullrich, threatened that "missed classes will be rescheduled and both strike days deducted from teachers payments". But UTE-CTERA Teachers Union leader Carlos Oroz said the strike had the support of "98 percent of teachers", and that the classification plan was based on undemocratic aims.

Municipal legislators will resume consideration on the change when they reconvene on November 10.

NUM protestors call to revoke Xstrata licence

South Africa's National Union of Mine Workers (NUM) rallied Oct. 21 in Johannesburg to protest mining company Xstrata's withdrawal of its proposed employee share ownership plan. The protestors demanded the Department of Mining Resources revoke Xstrata's licence, claiming the withdrawal broke the mining charter. The demonstration was part of a strike action by 3500 NUM members in Rustenburg, Limpopo and Mpumalanga.

"We cannot allow foreigners to change our country's mining standards," said David Theminkosi, a protestor.

Negotiations between Xstrata and NUM broke down when the company rejected the union's demand for equal allocation of employees shares. Xstrata wants a three tiered scheme, which NUM members call racist.

"The higher (share) categories are white people, the lower categories are black (people), that's why they don't want equal shares,"

said protestor Walter Mshabi.

Headquartered in Switzerland, Xstrata has operations in 19 countries. It is a major producer of coal, copper, nickel, primary vanadium and zinc, and the world's largest producer of ferrochrome. Xstrata reported profits of \$4.95 billion in the 2010 fiscal year.

Nigerian oil workers fear for safety

Following an Oct. 17 attack on an oil services vessel at the Qua Iboe Oil Field operated by Mobil Producing Nigeria (MPN), workers are fearful for their safety. The attack, which came 17 days after an earlier one, led to the abduction of the captain in the vessel, MV Wilbert, with 20 men on board.

Speaking to the press, the workers called for an overhaul of security in all oil installations. They said that the frequency of the attacks had exposed them to danger and increased the operational cost in the oil industry. Expatriates who work in the oil fields, for example, now require heavy insurance to guarantee their safety.

Meanwhile, the oil companies deny responsibility for their Nigerian workforce, claiming that the workers are sub-contractors. Nigerians who had previously preferred offshore jobs for the extra benefits, are now asking to work onshore.

The oil workers union, Petroleum and Natural Gas Senior Staff Association, has already held a three-day warning strike to protest insecurity in the oil fields.

Copper miners strike at Freeport Indonesia

Miners at Freeport Indonesia offered to end a month-long industrial action and blockades at the world's second-biggest copper mine if the firm scraps sanctions against striking workers and considers a five-fold pay hike, the union said on Oct. 20. The strike over pay and conditions, which started in mid-September at the remote Grasberg mine, has caused significant supply disruption for Freeport McMoRan Copper & Gold Inc. and has helped support global copper prices.

Workers at the Grasberg mine currently earn \$1.50 to \$3 per hour, far below the levels of other copper miners around the world. Their initial pay demands were scaled back when the company boosted production by using "contractors" and other scabs. But an attack has damaged some company facilities, and the scab workforce is facing a lack of food and fuel because of strike blockades, so the union is making a fresh push for a deal. The workers want management to remove the threat of sanctions on the strikers, pay wages for the time they have been on strike and to consider a pay rise of \$7.50 per hour. Indonesian members of parliament have been attempting to help resolve the dispute, so far without success.

Freeport, among the world's largest producers of copper, gold and molybdenum, reported net

profits of \$4.33 billion in 2010, for an average of \$146,000 for each of its 29,700 employees.

Japan may raise pension age to 70

The Japanese government is considering a controversial move to raise the age of eligibility to begin receiving pensions. The country's welfare ministry has proposed that workers enrolled in the employee pension program ("kousei-nenkin") begin receiving benefits as late as ages 68 to 70 instead of the current 60. Other countries have also moved to delay the pension age, including Germany, which will raise the age in stages from 65 to 67 beginning in 2012.

"Society is aging at an extremely fast pace," said Keiichi Fukuyama, executive director at the government-affiliated Research Institute for Policies on Pension and Aging. "In order not to crash the pension framework, delaying the age for receiving pension benefits is inevitable."

Fukuyama argued that older workers should support the social security system instead of becoming its beneficiaries, since "elders are not that old - they are still very energetic."

Japan's public pension system, once called an "arrangement that will last 100 years", is divided in two parts. The "kokumin-nenkin" national program provides benefits to all citizens. The other part of the system is for employees, known as "kousei-nenkin."

To encourage workers to remain in the workforce, the ministry is proposing to allow employees making up to 330,000 yen (about \$4300 Can.) to receive the full pension payment, rather than reducing payouts for those making

over 280,000 yen per month as happens currently.

Aviation workers stage "Occupy" protest

Aviation workers who were sacked following the outsourcing of their jobs have launched a Wall Street-inspired protest in the Philippines.

The workers, represented by the Philippine Airlines Employees' Association (PALEA) declared on October 15 that their protest camp at Manila international airport, set up after their dismissal from Philippine Airlines, was part of the "Occupy" movement.

"More than 1,000 PALEA members and supporters have occupied this part of the airport area since 28 September and today we proclaim it to be part of the Occupy Wall Street movement. Similar to Occupy Wall Street, which has fought eviction by the New York city government and police, we will not surrender this occupation despite continuing threats of demolition," said PALEA President Gerry Rivera.

Echoing the Occupy movement's call, Rivera said: "The workers and the poor are 99 percent of Filipinos, so why is P-Noy [the president of the Philippines] acceding to the greed of Lucio Tan [the owner of Philippine Airlines] who is just part of the one per cent?"

A day earlier, international solidarity actions for PALEA kicked off with a picket by Japanese railway workers at the Philippine embassy in Tokyo. On October 27, US unions and the Filipino-American community plan to picket the Philippine consulate in San Francisco.

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

Send me information on the Communist Party of Canada



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

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Koreans protest FTA with United States

By Sean Burton

South Korea's long awaited free trade deal with the United States appears closer to reality, as the US Congress ratified the arrangement on Oct. 12, during an official visit to Washington by President Lee Myung-bak. First proposed by previous president Roh Moo-hyun, the FTA has met considerable resistance in South Korea, among both opposition parties and the general population.

Proponents of the agreement argue that previous FTAs with Chile and the EU have been successful for South Korean businesses, and that some American senators have called the

current FTA biased toward Korean automakers. Even the main opposition Democratic Party says it would support a free trade agreement if parts of it are renegotiated.

Naturally, certain sectors of business would do well with a free trade pact in effect. But these are large industries and firms which already have enormous power. Free trade agreements are by nature designed to benefit these masters of monopoly capitalism in the countries concerned, and certainly so for the senior economic partner



in the arrangement. That benefit comes at the expense of working people on both sides, a fact which

is not lost on the many people who regularly protest FTAs. In recent weeks, thousands of South Koreans have taken to the streets to challenge the ratification.

In the first week of October, over 6000 farmers gathered in Seoul to demand respect for their livelihood, citing concerns that future markets will be saturated with cheaper products. Similar gatherings have taken place intermittently, expressing the very real concern of undermining local jobs.

Anti-FTA Korean-Americans also protested President Lee in Washington for trying to speed up the ratification process, and for supporting the building of another US military base on the Korean island of Jeju. The protest also condemned the Lee government's violations of civil liberties, in particular its use of the National Security Law to silence certain opponents, its influence over the media, and its overall undemocratic handling of a number of major issues.

That includes the construction of the new U.S. base, which has been pushed through by military pressure despite appeals from the Jeju provincial government. Hundreds of people have been arrested or questioned by local police for involvement in anti-base protests. The Washington demonstration was shut down by the US Secret Service and forced to relocate away from the White House, on the grounds that it was a "security threat".

President Lee and his Grand National Party seem poised to railroad the ratification of the FTA through the South Korean national assembly by the end of October. According to the *Hankyoreh* daily, opposition to the FTA is the glue that holds the opposition parties together at present. Given that the GNP has almost 60% of the seats, the opposition will ultimately have little choice in the matter. There have been some threats of physically blocking GNP access to the assembly, but that will only delay the inevitable.

It remains to be seen whether anything quite like the "occupy" movement will take off here, but it will undoubtedly take more than that to break the power of imperialism's cronies in this country. ●

Iran regime moves to shore up dictatorship

By T. Sam

It didn't take long before rumours regarding the Iranian governing system were confirmed by the "Supreme Religious Leader," Ayatollah Ali Khomeini. On October 17, in a speech in Kermanshah province, Khomeini announced that the leaders of the regime plan constitutional changes, including ending the presidential system. The next election is scheduled to be held in April or May of 2013.

There has always been an extreme religious section within the regime who oppose the presidential system. According to the Iranian constitution, most power is vested in the "Supreme Religious Leader" elected by the so-called "Majles-e-Khobregan" (Assembly of Experts), a group of high ranking clergy.

By comparison, the president is only second rank in power. However, the president has responsibilities, which makes this position important within the governing system. But any time the "Supreme Leader" desires, he can overrule the president, even the Assembly, by a "State Order."

From the early days of the revolution in February 1979, there were strong anti-democratic sections within the ruling circles. Both because of their religious beliefs and also their reactionary nature, they did all in their power to hinder the democratization of the revolution, especially of the governance process. Afraid to oppose the presidential system directly, they emptied the system of its real nature by imposing the non-elected position of the "Supreme Religious Leader".

In recent years, after ousting more democratic and oppositional sections from the ruling circles, these forces are now able to show their real intentions. In general, according to the leaders of these circles, especially ultra-conservative Ayatollah Mesbah Yazdi, the presidential system is anti-Islamic and must be completely eliminated. Yazdi was once confronted with the question that if this system is anti-Islamic, why didn't Ayatollah Khomeini, the leader of the revolution, oppose it? He replied: Ayatollah Khomeini at the time was forced to agree with

the presidential system.

Of course, this is not the only reason why Khomeini has decided to do away with the presidency. Until 1997, when Mohammad Khatami won by a wide margin against the candidate of the "Supreme Leader", the conservatives felt confident that their favourite would be elected. Since then, every presidential election has turned into a nightmare for the regime. Only through fraud can they have any hope of victory. In the May 2009 election, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad won by vote rigging.

Now, after all the devastating policies implemented by the regime, even its most ardent protagonists know they have no chance of victory. But completely eliminating presidential elections - even fraudulent ones - would cost the regime a powerful means to raise the morale of its followers, and further reduce their numbers.

It is more likely that the leaders would not totally eliminate the president's position, but instead transfer his responsibilities to a prime minister elected by the Majles. In this case they can hold an election every four years to boost the low spirits of their followers, and at the same time to make sure "their" prime minister

does whatever they want.

The formation of the "Committee to Observe the Action of the Members of the Assembly" is another sign that the regime is on the fast track to close all the pores in its dictatorial system. According to this law, all members of the Assembly are under the watchful eyes of this "Committee". Any actions or words which do not coincide with the line of the "Supreme Leader" could have serious consequences, including losing their status as members of the Assembly. Every candidate who runs for the Assembly must be ratified by a 12-member Guardian Council, half of whom are clergy assigned by the "Supreme Leader."

The intensification of suppression in Iran is both due to the fact that the ruling circles have no belief in democracy, and also because their bad record in governance has left them with little social base. The devastating economic policies of the Ahmadinejad years have generated such anger that any opening and leniency could only be used by the people to intensify their struggle. Every effort of the regime further alienates it from the people. This is where other pores open up. The final winners will be the democratic aspirations of the people. ●

Hundreds condemn Bush in Surrey



On Oct. 20, 300 protesters in Surrey, BC, called for the arrest of ex-President George W. Bush for war crimes. Bush was invited by Surrey Mayor Dianne Watts to speak at a regional economic development summit. The rally was organized by the Stop War coalition, Fraser Valley Peace Council, Lawyers Against War, Amnesty International, and other groups. Above, Peace Council president Shahzad Khan speaks to media. (Photo: S. Hammond)

Guatemalan president apologises for 1954 CIA-backed coup

PV Vancouver Bureau

Guatemala's President, Alvaro Colom, has issued an official apology to the family of the former president Jacobo Arbenz, 57 years after a violent CIA-backed coup removed him from power. Carried out to protect U.S. corporate interests such as the United Fruit Company, the coup was a critical episode in the radicalisation of popular opinion across Latin America. The wave of anger against "Yanqui" domination was directly connected to events such as the Cuban Revolution led by Fidel Castro and Che Guevara, and the 1970 victory of the Popular Unity coalition in Chile.

Colom apologised under a settlement worked out with the Arbenz family by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights. He said that the coup was a "crime [against] the Guatemalan society committed by the CIA and Guatemalans with bad intentions".

Speaking during an Oct. 20 ceremony, in the presence of Jacobo Arbenz Vilanova, the only surviving son of the former president, Colom said: "As head of state, as constitutional president of the republic and as the military's commander in chief, I hereby wish to request the forgiveness of the Arbenz Vilanova family for this great crime. It was above all a crime against him, his wife, his family, but also a historic crime for Guatemala. This day changed Guatemala and we still haven't recovered."

Among the new measures announced by Colom's government is the redrafting of

school textbooks to add a retelling of Arbenz's legacy to the country and the renaming of a national highway in his honour.

Arbenz was only the second freely elected president in Guatemala. His promise to redistribute land to impoverished indigenous communities sparked opposition from the massive U.S. agribusiness sector. Falsely accused of being a communist, Arbenz was overthrown on June 27, 1954, by Colonel Carlos Castillo Armas.

The coup helped trigger a 36-year civil war, marked by decades



Jacobo Arbenz, deposed in a CIA-backed coup in 1954

of military rule and right-wing violence. The army and paramilitary death squads killed an estimated 200,000 people, carrying out hundreds of massacres against indigenous communities, the guerrilla resistance movement, and other opponents.

Castillo, the coup leader, was shot to death by a palace guard on July 26, 1957, while still in power. Arbenz died in exile in Mexico in 1971. His remains were not repatriated until 1995. ●



Oliver Stone's search for the real Fidel

Looking for Fidel, directed by Oliver Stone, Cinema Libre Studio, 60 minutes. DVD review by Tim Pelzer.

In *Looking for Fidel*, award winning director Oliver Stone interviews Fidel Castro on a wide range of issues. While the discussion took place in 2003 before Castro stepped down as President for health reasons, the documentary is still informative and thought provoking.

Castro garnered global respect as a principal founder of the first socialist state in the Caribbean, 90 miles off the shore of Miami. However, his detractors view him as an authoritarian leader who tolerated no dissent.

Stone begins by grilling Castro on the treatment of dissidents. In 2003, the Cuban government arrested, tried and imprisoned 75 anti-government activists. Castro indicates that he does not have any problems with criticism of the Cuban government, which does not have a policy of harassing its critics. But these activists are "mercenaries," not prisoners of conscience, financially supported by groups such as the US Agency for International Development, to work for "regime change." This is confirmed by independent organizations such as the US-based Council on Hemispheric Affairs.

The film includes interviews with anti-government activists in Havana, two of whom confirm Castro's allegation of being paid US agents. One freely admits that he is living on a \$50,000 grant from the New York Parkinson Foundation, an enormous amount in Cuba where salaries average \$20-30 US per month. The wife of one imprisoned activist says she lives on money sent every month

by a Miami based newspaper sponsored by the US government.

Castro shows pictures of these dissidents meeting with James Carson, US mission chief in Havana, who remarks that he was supplying them with electronic equipment and money. Stone includes news clips of US-sponsored terrorist attacks against the island.

Stone takes Castro to task for the execution of three hijackers who kidnapped a ferry in Havana harbour in 2003, and threatened passengers at knife point if the captain of the vessel did not take them to US shores. Castro says the executions were an extreme measure to discourage a wave of kidnappings. Residency is granted to any Cuban citizen who reaches the US by any means, including kidnapping planes and boats.

The Cuban leader even takes Stone to a prison to meet a group of eight men awaiting trial after being caught plotting to kidnap a plane to Miami. One remarks that the US grants few visas to Cubans wanting to legally immigrate to the US.

Stone asks Castro why he did not step down after being President for 43 years, and let younger leaders take over. Fidel answers calmly

that he sees himself more as a spiritual leader, and that unlike US Presidents, the country's constitution strictly limits his powers. Castro is not President of the country, but rather President of the Council of Ministers. He does not even have the power to appoint Cabinet Ministers, Ambassadors or friends to key posts. He believes he can assist his country because of the experience and knowledge he has gained over many years. Castro never angers at Stone's probing questions.

The documentary ends with Castro taking Stone around Havana in his car, discussing among other things several of the CIA's assassination attempts. One that nearly got him was when a US-paid mercenary at the Havana Libre Hotel nearly dropped cyanide into a chocolate milk shake Castro had ordered. The man lost his nerve at the last moment, and the half frozen pill disintegrated in his hand.

Looking for Fidel provides much-needed balance to the demonization of the former Cuban president by the mainstream corporate media. Stone's documentary is a fascinating watch. ●



Fidel Castro with filmmaker Oliver Stone.

Declaration of the 3rd International Festival of Poetry of Resistance (IFPOR)

The 3rd IFPOR in honour of oppressed people everywhere was held in Toronto, October 14-16, 2011. The gathering adopted the following declaration.

We, the participants from many countries of the world in the 3rd IFPOR, are part of the worldwide demonstrations of the outraged who reject global corporatism/militarism and pledge to continue the struggle to totally dismantle these corporate/military interests.

Re: Bolivarian Alternative for the Peoples of Latin America (ALBA)

We recognize the importance of the establishment of ALBA in seeking social, economic and political integration in order to vanquish poverty in its regions. We agree that ALBA provides an alternative vision of international trade, implementing mutual aid based on solidarity, and not exploitation as practised by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.

Re: Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC)

We salute the birth of this new



organization of unity in Caracas, December 3, 2011, and the Continental Meeting of Social Movements Quebec in the South accompanying it.

Re: Palestine

We stand for the self-determination of peoples and condemn the U.S. government for its use of force against countries such as Libya. We are concerned about setting up a lasting peace between Palestine and Israel by supporting the establishment of the independent state of Palestine alongside that of Israel, within the

borders of June, 1967. We unite with progressive forces within Israel for this end.

In the following three cases we echo the calls of Amnesty International and other human rights groups:

Re: Mumia Abu-Jamal

We call for his removal from death row immediately, his release from prison and support acknowledgement of December 10th as International Day of Solidarity with Mumia Abu Jamal.

Re: Leonard Peltier

We add our voices to those calling for the freedom of Leonard Peltier.

Re: The Cuban Five

We request the intervention of President Obama in the case of the Cuban Five to free these non-violent anti-terrorist fighters from their unjust imprisonment and return them to their country of Cuba. In particular, we reject the requirement that Rene Gonzalez, one of the Five, serve his probationary period of three years in the USA where his life is threatened by the very Cuban-American terrorists he exposed.

DATED in Toronto this 16th day of October 2011. ●



MUSIC NOTES

By Wally Brooker

Musicians and occupiers

From the famous and the semi-famous to the unknown and home-made, musicians everywhere are supporting the occupations of financial districts in hundreds of cities around the world. Newly-minted citizen-drummers beat on plastic buckets and water cooler bottles. Grassroots percussion collectives inspired by Brazilian street samba bands take root in unexpected places. The 1970's chant from revolutionary Chilean composer Sergio Ortega's *El Pueblo Unido* echoes in every language through the world's financial districts. Rebel singers like David Rovics, Tom Morello and Faith Nolan criss-cross North America, building resistance and peoples' unity. This is not an overnight phenomenon. It's been growing within the culture of the left for more than a decade. It's been gaining momentum in the past year, and recent weeks have only confirmed that peoples' culture, including music of all styles and national origins, is an essential ingredient in the recipe for revolution. For a new song that captures the current upsurge visit YouTube and look for David Rovics' *Occupy Wall Street*.

Raffi calls for "systemic change"

Raffi Cavoukian, one of the world's most popular children's entertainers, has offered a ringing endorsement of the occupy movement spreading around the globe, calling for "systemic change for the children who are inheriting a very perilous future." Interviewed at his home on Saltspring Island, BC, Raffi called for an economy that "serves people, not merely corporate interests," wryly adding "it takes a stretch of the imagination not to get what these demonstrations are all about." The Armenian-Canadian singer is an outstanding advocate for environmental justice and children's rights. His recent song *Cool It* is a call for action on global warming, and his ethic of "child honouring" includes a child's right to live free from commercial exploitation. Raffi was born in Cairo in 1948 and immigrated to Canada ten years later. For more info: www.raffinews.com/.

Hank Williams Jr's bigoted remarks

Country music star and Tea Party supporter Hank Williams Jr., has been making a spectacle of himself. Appearing on a Fox News program on Oct. 3, the 62 year-old singer compared the first African-American President of the U.S. to Adolph Hitler and suggested that the commander-in-chief is "the enemy." This was too much for the Disney-owned ESPN sports channel, which for two decades has carried his 1989 hit *All My Rowdy Friends* as the theme song for its Monday night NFL football show. The song was quickly dropped from the program. Williams' bizarre non-apology accused media of having a double standard for supposedly not adequately protecting the Tea Party movement from charges that it is racist. All this comes from a man whose utterly reactionary song about the Civil War, *If the South Would Have Won*, is displayed on his webpage. Hank Williams Jr. was brought up as the privileged son of a legendary country music star, but he poses as a defender of American workers. It's an act that's wearing thin.

AFM fights orchestra "bankruptcies"

Orchestra musicians are under attack by managements using a new "weapon du jour," writes American Federation of Musicians President Ray Hair in the September issue of *International Musician*. Brother Hair refers to the wave of orchestra bankruptcy filings (in Philadelphia, Louisville, Syracuse and Albuquerque) in the wake of the bitter six-month Detroit Symphony Orchestra strike. The goal of the bankruptcies, writes the AFM leader, is to allow orchestra employers to "shift the responsibility for the musicians' retirement program from the company to the players." AFM bankruptcy counsel Jennifer Garner writes: "What we are witnessing is a coordinated attack on organized labor leveraged by the Bankruptcy Code." On Oct. 5, Hair marched with members of AFM Local 802 (New York) in the Occupy Wall Street Labor-Community March. For more info: www.afm.org/.

Francey & Keelaghan in Our Times

Halifax-based journalist Melissa Keith has published a fascinating profile of David Francey and James Keelaghan, two of Canada's finest working-class singer-songwriters, in the independent labour magazine *Our Times*. Both musicians are powerful writers with an ability to evoke the daily life and struggles of Canadian workers. Scottish-born Francey, a 57 year-old carpenter, is a two-time Juno winner. If you're new to him check out *Torn Screen Door*, a moving song about a foreclosed and abandoned farm. Keelaghan, a 52 year-old native of Calgary, is also a Juno recipient. A good beginning might be his important labour history song *Hillcrest Mine*. Both songs can be found on YouTube. *Our Times*, which carries a lot of working-class cultural content these days, will celebrate its 30th anniversary on Dec. 3 with a bash at Toronto's Steelworkers Hall. For information visit www.ourtimes.ca/ or visit their Facebook page. ●

Ontario election setback for Tories...

continued from p. 2

what was required.

The BC referendum on the HST sent a clear message that repeal of the HST would have widespread support. But Big Business supports the HST, and the NDP told media they would not repeal. Likewise on skyrocketing auto insurance rates, the best they could offer was to bring "stakeholders" together to discuss options. In other words, to talk to the insurance companies. On jobs, they proposed to appoint a watchdog on plant closures; a voice without teeth. And still the memory of Bob Rae lingers, despite NDP leader Andrea Horwath's rejoinders to "move on".

The Green Party's 8% vote in the 2007 election collapsed to just 3%, the result of right wing economic and social policies, and the fact that electoral reform was virtually a non-issue in this campaign, while environmental issues like wind farms were adroitly handled by the government. Former Green Party leader and Davenport candidate Frank De Jong helped sink his party when he said the Harris government had it right on education policy. In fact, the Harris Tories declared war on public education during two terms from 1995 to 2003.

In fact the Liberals won by default, by being the least-worst of the top two, by fear of the Tories, by memories of Mike Harris and Bob Rae, by the NDP's tepid policies, by a Green party that's closer to the Tories than any other party, by voters' unwillingness to elect the same government federally and provincially, by an undemocratic voting system. But voters did put the Liberals on a short leash, and McGuinty must listen to public opinion or face the consequences.

The Communist Party's vote remained low, but its nine candidates found voters attentive to their message. For the first time in many years Communist lawn signs graced neighbourhoods in Brampton and Hamilton, the result of door to door canvassing and discussions of the Communist platform. Repeal of the HST was a key message, along with doubling the corporate tax rate, job creation, affordable housing, child care, health care, and tuition relief for students. The idea that corporations should get off the gravy train met with widespread support.

"People are listening with a new ear" said CPC (Ontario) leader Liz Rowley. "Living standards and social conditions are rapidly deteriorating and working people are becoming desperate. The

parties in Queen's Park have no fundamental change, no solutions to offer. We do. And people are starting to recognize the significance of our policies and the need for really fundamental change. That's what's new, and likely the reason why we face an unprecedented blackout in the television and radio media."

The party demonstrated outside both TV Ontario and CBC during the campaign, forcing TVO to finally interview Rowley on the party's platform and policies.

The lowest voter turn-out in Ontario history was recorded, at 49%, despite changes allowing almost unlimited opportunities to vote throughout the campaign.

It's not that voters are disinterested in politics. Working people - and youth in the first place - are very interested and active, but are also fed up with electoral politics that promise progressive change but don't deliver. The anti-capitalist, anti-corporate message of the Occupy movement reflects this.

On the verge of a new and deeper recession, perhaps a depression; and with right-wing governments all around, including the newly elected Liberal minority, hard times are about to get even harder.

The Liberals are likely to rely on the Tories to support program cuts and privatizations in the next budget, and for the attacks on the public sector unions and on free collective bargaining that will follow. On the main economic questions, Liberal and Tory policies are not significantly different. Their differences are on law and order issues and on social questions, where the Liberals are likely to rely on the NDP for support. An election is unlikely for at least a couple of years.

The decisive question now is the extra-parliamentary struggle, with effective labour and progressive leadership at the core, to exert sufficient pressure on Queen's Park to divert the corporate agenda. The issues of good jobs, rising wages and living standards, strong social programs, affordable housing, quality public health care and education, accessible post secondary education, a guaranteed annual income, public ownership and civil and democratic rights continue to be at the centre of the struggles ahead. This is a struggle to curb corporate power and to bring about real, progressive and fundamental change.

This will no doubt be at the heart of this month's OFL Convention. ●

CLC supports aims of Occupy Canada

In an Oct. 14 statement, the Canadian Labour Congress said it "supports the aims of thousands of citizens, many of them younger people, involved in the Occupy Canada protests. They are gathering in Canadian centres from coast to coast to bring attention to how corporate greed is shattering the dreams and aspirations of far too many Canadians. These peaceful protests began in the United States and are spilling over into Canada, as citizens demand real change that will benefit ordinary people and challenge the entitlements of the pampered corporate few.

"It was the greed of big banks and financial corporations that triggered the economic and financial crises of 2008-09 which cost tens of thousands of Canadians their jobs and their pensions. Rather than demanding accountability from Bay Street, the Conservative government has rewarded companies with generous corporate tax breaks. Those companies claimed they would use the money handed over to them to create jobs, but instead they are sitting on mountains of cash and refusing to invest in job creation.

"Corporate Canada continues to oppose public investments that would support job creation and quality public services. They oppose improvements to the Employment Insurance program that would help workers who have been affected by the economic turmoil. They oppose enhancements to the Canada Pension Plan which would guarantee that people can retire in dignity after a lifetime of work. For years, Canadians have had to work ever harder to maintain their living standards. They have experienced an erosion in their wages, their pensions, and their hopes for the future. All the while, corporate CEOs and other rich Canadians have become even richer.

"The Occupy Canada movement conveys a real frustration along with a determination to work for change. We understand these protests and support their aims because we have also been fighting corporate greed and its fallout for a long time. We are in solidarity with these peaceful and timely expressions of commitment by our fellow citizens." ●

Revolution from the South

2012 People's Voice Calendar

honouring the centennials of the ANC and the Communist Party of Chile

Now available, \$5 plus \$2 shipping, from People's Voice, 706 Clark Drive, Vancouver, BC, V5L 3J1 For info on bulk orders, call 604-254-9836 or email pvoice@telus.net



What's Left

Vancouver, BC

COPE Election Office, now open at 585 E. Broadway. To volunteer for the campaign, drop in or call 604-255-0400.

Left Film Night, screening of "Will the Real Terrorist Please Stand Up," 7 pm, Sun., Oct. 30, Centre for Socialist Education, 706 Clark Dr. Admission by donation, call 604-255-2041 for details.

Solidarity with Palestine, join Canadian Boat to Gaza with banners, signs, and CBG kayak for walk around Granville Island, Sun., Oct. 30, 1 pm, meet at entrance under the bridge. For info, 604-366-4225.

Revolution Banquet: From the Russian Revolution to Occupy Wall Street, international buffet, Latin American music, guest speaker CPC leader Miguel Figueroa. Sat., Nov. 12, doors open 6 pm, Peretz Centre, 6184 Ash St. Ausp. Centre for Socialist Education, tickets \$20. For details, call Sam at 604-254-9836.

Winnipeg, MB

Cuba for Haiti, Tue., Nov. 1, 7 pm, 91 Albert St., with guest Dr. Jorge Balseiro about Cuba's medical team in Haiti. Info: Manitoba Cuba Solidarity Cte. 783-9380

Toronto, ON

Michael Parenti forum, hear the author of *The Face of Imperialism*, Tue., Nov. 1, 7 pm. CHANGED LOCATION: MacLeod Auditorium, 1 King's College Circle, (west of Queen's Park), admission \$10, ausp. People's Voice.

Celebrate the Communist Party's 90th Anniversary, Sat., Nov. 26, dinner and cultural evening, tickets and info at CPC office, 426-469-2446. See next issue for further details.

Guelph, ON

Michael Parenti Forum, Wed. Nov. 2, 5:30 pm, McKinnon Arts Bldg., University of Guelph.

Hamilton, ON

Michael Parenti Forum, Thur., Nov. 3, 7 pm, McMaster U. Info. Tech Bldg (ITB), Room AB102, 1280 Main St. West.

St. Catharines

Cuba and Haiti, Wed., Nov. 2, 7 pm, forum with Cuban Dr. Jorge Balseiro on his experiences providing medical aid in Haiti. Brock Univ (500 Glenridge Ave.) Thistle Hall, Room 241, hosted by Canadian Cuban Friendship Assoc. of Niagara.

Montreal, QC

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

SOMEWHERE Over The Rainbow Another world IS possible, BUT HOW DO WE GET THERE?



Friday, November 11 The Wise Hall
Saturday, November 12 Langara College

World Peace Forum Teach-in 2011
www.peaceforumteachin.org

People's Voice deadlines

November 16-30 issue: Thursday, Nov. 3

December 1-31 issue: Thursday, Nov. 17

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

Cuba's Medical Mission in Haiti: Canada-wide speaking tour

A member of Cuba's medical internationalist mission to Haiti is on a speaking tour to more than a dozen cities in Canada. The tour is organized by the Canadian Network on Cuba (CNC) and la Table de concertation de solidarité Québec-Cuba.

Dr. Jorge Tomas Balseiro Estevez has extensive experience in Cuba's medical internationalist missions across the globe. From 1988-89, he worked as Director of the Cuban Civilian Hospital in the Republic of Angola. In 2004-2006 he worked as a clinical psychiatrist in the Georgetown Public Hospital in Guyana. In 2008, as a member of

the Henry Reeve Brigade in Haiti, he was director of the Hospital de Campana de Leogane. In the aftermath of the earthquake that struck Haiti in January 2010, Dr. Balseiro worked extensively with Cuban technical and medical personnel giving emergency aid.

Upcoming events include Vancouver (Fri., Oct. 28, 7 pm, Maritime Labour Centre, 1880 Triumph St.), Victoria (Sat., Oct. 29, 7 pm, BCGEU Hall, 2994 Douglas), Winnipeg (Tue., Nov. 1, 7 pm, Mondragon Cafe, 91 Albert St.), Windsor (Fri., Nov. 4, 7 pm, Katzman Lounge - University of Windsor).. ●

Occupy Vancouver challenges corporate domination

By Kimball Cariou,
organizer of the Vancouver
East Club, Communist
Party of Canada

The Occupy Wall Street movement hit British Columbia like a Pacific storm, as occupations sprang up in cities large and small across the province. By late October, there was no sign that the movement here was going away anytime soon.

The largest Occupy action has been in Vancouver, where thousands gathered at the Art Gallery on October 15, a week after hundreds met for the first "General Assembly" in this city.

But the turnout was equally impressive in much smaller cities - a thousand in Victoria, and hundreds in places like Kamloops and Nanaimo, where dozens of Occupy supporters remain camped out two weeks later.

I have been at the Art Gallery nearly every day since the occupation began, taking in the

occasional General Assembly, marching with others in the streets, handing out literature and buttons, and engaging in wide-ranging political debates with everyone from the campers to tourists.

This is the season when the first blasts of winter arrive in this clear-cut rain forest, now a huge metropolitan area built on unceded Indigenous territories. The weather since Oct. 15 has mostly been sunny, but even the rainy days haven't dampened the spirits of those living in nearly 100 tents outside the Gallery. The occupation site is well-organized, with tents for medical aid, hot food, workshops, even a small library. The Steelworkers union is just one of the labour groups offering solidarity, by paying to pump out several port-a-potties every day.

Not surprisingly, the politics of Occupy Vancouver are highly eclectic. Among the campers and the speakers are veteran socialists, teenagers enjoying their first kick at the system, homeless people,

and others focused on one miraculous solution to the ills of capitalist society.

It's true there is not one specific demand raised by Occupy Vancouver. But it's equally true that this action unites people in opposition to the devastating human and ecological impact of global capitalism. Despite its flaws - like attempts to stifle decision-making by raising constant "blocks" against consensus - this action is one of hundreds across the continent searching for new ways to challenge corporate domination.

The opening day march by Occupy Vancouver through the downtown corporate towers was exhilarating. Well over 5,000 people paraded down Hornby and Howe, past the Vancouver Stock Exchange and other symbols of the system, chanting and waving at the crowds on the sidewalks.

A series of other events have followed, large and small.

For several days, Occupy Vancouver participants joined noon-hour rallies held by Aboriginal groups angry at the government's refusal to provide funding for equal representation at the nearby Missing Women's Inquiry. The rallies were at the intersection of Georgia and Granville, with police blocking traffic, to the sounds of drums and prayer songs. Relatives and friends of murdered women spoke



PV photo by Ed Bil

eloquently about the disastrous failure of racist cops and politicians to pay attention to the disappearance of dozens of their sisters, mothers, and daughters.

There was big excitement on the fifth day of Occupy Vancouver, with the news that Tom Morello - the member of Rage Against the Machine who does solo tours as the Nightwatchman - would appear that evening. Morello turned up as promised, giving a powerful rap about the Occupy movement's success in identifying the real enemy.

The next day, Occupy activists joined StopWar (Vancouver's broad-based anti-war coalition), the Fraser Valley Peace Council, Lawyers Against War and other groups for a trip to Surrey, where Mayor Dianne Watts was hosting ex-president George W. Bush at a regional economic forum. The rally against Bush and Watts was one of the largest anti-war actions held in Surrey in the last decade.

October 22 was another big day. The featured speaker was environmentalist David Suzuki, who drew about a thousand people to that afternoon's General Assembly. Since Suzuki's foundation attracts sizable corporate donations, it took some time for the GA to reach a consensus allowing him to speak. (He's a member of the 1%, some argued, not the 99%.) Suzuki gave a passionate appeal for political action on all levels, from voting to joining the Occupy movement. He hammered home the point that

without massive popular action, politicians and governments will inevitably yield to the power of big money.

That theme flowed nicely to the action of the day, as hundreds of people held a "run on the banks." Going to branches of the biggest Canadian banks, participants held sit-ins and played music while others closed their accounts. The greed of financial institutions was seen by all, as every bank charged a sizable fee for shutting down these accounts.

Communists have been busy at several of these events, carrying Party banners and flags, passing out copies of People's Voice and Rebel Youth, and selling "Occupy Capitalism" buttons. Every time, people take photos of our banners and get into deep conversations about the problems with capitalism, and the potential solutions. Many are impressed with the demands raised by the Communist Party, which go far beyond the policies of any other party.

Where will this struggle end? At this point, it's hard to say. The danger does exist that Occupy Vancouver and similar groups could spend more time and energy debating minor or divisive issues than focussing on the corporate enemy. But already, this movement has brought huge numbers of people together for discussions on the future of our country, and our planet. This is an important step forward on a long and difficult road to liberation. ●

Wealthiest get richer from economic crisis

It appears that the world's wealthiest people - often known as the 1% - are getting more prosperous by the day, while most of the 99% keep sinking deeper into debt and poverty.

That's the message gleaned from the annual world wealth report by Merrill Lynch and Capgemini, which reports that the wealth of HNWI's ("High Net Worth Individuals" - those who have more than \$1 million in free cash) reached \$42.7 trillion in 2010, nearly 10% higher than in 2009. That figure broke the old record of \$40.7 trillion reached in 2007, even as austerity budgets were implemented by governments around the world.

"The globe's richest have now recouped the losses they suffered after the 2008 banking crisis. They are richer than ever, and there are more of them - nearly 11 million - than before the recession struck," says the report.

The report also measures a category of "ultra-high net worth individuals" - those with at least \$30 million available to invest or spend. The number of individuals in this super-rich bracket climbed 10% to a total of 103,000, and the total value of their investments jumped by 11.5% to \$15 trillion. Even among the rich, the richest get richer quicker. The super-rich represent less than 1% of the world's HNWI's, but possess 36% of HNWI's total wealth.

Over 80% of the world's wealthiest people are aged over 45, and almost three-quarters are male. Over half (53%) of HNWI's are concentrated in the US, Japan and Germany. But the ranks of the rich are swelling fastest in the Asia-Pacific region, which surpassed Europe for the first time. ●



Sign from Occupy Nanaimo

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