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people's VOICE

Greetings to HEU

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Protests say "no new Iraq war" *see page 7*



After the 'Good Jobs Summit': which way forward for Canada's labour movement?

"Such a people's movement could be so strong that business and governments would ignore it or confront it at their peril. Elements of this movement can be seen in the Occupy actions of 2011, the Quebec student strike of 2012, Idle No More, and the Take Back campaign that galvanized the 2014 CLC convention. These groups need to develop a cohesive strategy to bring all the different people's organizations together to fight and win."

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Vancouver candidates

As the Vancouver civic election heads into the home stretch, People's Voice analyzes this highly unusual race and looks at candidates who deserve the support of progressive voters on November 15.

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Hong Kong protests

The Occupy Central protests in Hong Kong have ebbed and flowed in recent weeks. Where's the big money in this struggle?

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Murder in Mexico

There is a long history of brutal state violence against grassroots social justice activists in Mexico. Now, the disappearance of dozens of students has sparked a huge wave of anger in the country.

Greetings to Hospital Employees Union

Greetings to the 29th Biennial Convention of the Hospital Employees Union, from the BC Labour Bureau of the Communist Party

The Communist Party of Canada extends greetings to the Hospital Employees' Union at its 29th Biennial Convention, and on the occasion of the HEU's 70th anniversary. Your union has a proud historic record of defending the interests of workers in the health care sector, and fighting to achieve equality gains for women and other

groups. Our party stands in full solidarity with the HEU in its struggle against endless attacks on public services such as health care, and on health care unions and on their members, by big business and the governments that serve the corporate drive to privatize, contract out, and smash the union movement. We also support the HEU in opposing raids and divisions which only benefit the employers.

Similar anti-union attacks are taking place across the country and around the world. Just weeks ago, Nova Scotia's Liberal

government passed Bill 1, claiming it will cut costs by amalgamating health regions. We know from experience in British Columbia that such amalgamations inevitably lead to privatization, such as public private partnerships (P3s), and fragmenting the unity of the unions and their members. It also means less consultation and involvement of health care workers and the general public, and more attacks on trade union rights. Nova Scotia health sector workers have been legislated into four government-imposed bargaining units and

assigned to unions at the whim of the employer. This goes against the Charter of Rights and Freedoms which includes the freedom of association. This agenda sounds very familiar to HEU members!

The equivalent legislation in B.C., Bill 29, was eventually thrown out in part by the courts, but this unrelenting neoliberal offensive continues. A counter-offensive is needed. Without such a fightback, everything that working people, the union movement and others fought for (such as Doctor Norman Bethune and Tommy Douglas who were in the forefront to establish universal Medicare) will be destroyed. The union movement can't depend on the courts in this struggle, especially given the rightward drift of the NDP, the "party of labour" which fails to resist the corporate agenda. Labour must

have an independent political action strategy of its own, to challenge big business and its relentless drive for profits, and to defeat right wing governments propped up by the corporations. Nor can labour win this battle alone. A fighting alliance of all progressive and democratic forces, including the trade union movement, must be built to demand policies that put working people before private profits.

The HEU must be especially congratulated on achieving its last collective agreement in the facilities sector. Your union can truly take pride in preserving its integrity under very difficult circumstances, against a BC Liberal government which relentlessly targets hospital workers. Our Party wishes HEU delegates a successful 29th convention! ●



The 2004 strike by the Hospital Employees Union was one of the most militant labour challenges to the BC Liberal government's vicious anti-working class agenda during Gordon Campbell's first term in office. (PV file photo by K. Cariou)

Court challenge seeks to save door-to-door mail

Representatives from seniors' groups and organizations for people with disabilities joined the Canadian Union of Postal Workers on Oct. 16 to launch a major legal challenge to the attempt to end urban home mail delivery.

"In Canada, people should count, not just the bottom line," said Denis Lemelin, National President of the Canadian Union of Postal Workers.

The union announced that a challenge will be filed in the Federal Court of Canada under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, asking to stop the termination of

home mail delivery. The challenge will also argue that this decision is beyond Canada Post's authority and should be made by the Parliament of Canada which created Canada Post and defined its mandate.

Last December, Canada Post announced that it would make Canada the only G8 country without home mail delivery. CEO Deepak Chopra's statement that seniors would welcome the exercise of walking to collect their mail, as well as Canada Post's subsequent requirement of a medical note to retain home delivery, has caused

much consternation.

"This is one of the most important postal decisions made since Canada Post was created in 1981," said Paul Cavalluzzo, a constitutional lawyer who will argue the case on behalf of disabled and older Canadians.

While the Conservatives have attempted to distance themselves from Canada Post's decision, they are clearly backing the end of home delivery. Those filing the challenge say the Conservatives should be held accountable.

(www.cupw.ca) ●

Boyden appointed CPC Central Organizer

The Communist Party of Canada has announced the appointment of Johan Boyden as its new Central Organizer. Originally from BC, Boyden served as General Secretary of the Young Communist League for several years until May 2014. He started his new position at the Party's recent Central Committee meeting in Toronto, and is currently on an organizing tour across the country. We look forward to printing Boyden's reports from the field, such as the news on this page from Nova Scotia, where he has been meeting with Party members and other activists. ●

East Coast News

Updates about the labour and people's movements in the East Coast, from Johan Boyden.

NB Liberals win majority

The political map of the East Coast has changed slightly from one pro-big business party to another in New Brunswick. Brian Galant's Liberal party won a majority on Sept. 22, ousting the Alward Conservatives who campaigned on "yes" to hydraulic fracking. A big push by women's equality activists made access to abortion a major campaign issue, and Galant somewhat reluctantly came out echoing Justin Trudeau's position and calling for new laws. New Brunswick has some of the most restrictive laws restricting women's reproductive right to choose and control their own bodies. A previous Liberal government limited all abortions in the province to only those approved by two doctors in cases that are "medically necessary." Medicare coverage of private clinic abortions is prevented and this summer, the Morgentaler clinic in Fredericton shuttered its doors, citing the total lack of provincial funding as the main reason. In PEI there are also no public abortion services available to women. The issue was also picked up by the provincial NDP and Green Party. While the NDP remains without any seats in the Legislative Assembly, the Greens won their first seat in South Fredericton.

Writing resistance

Two Nova Scotian authors have been in the news recently, taking on topics of interest to the whole country. Writer and broadcaster Stephen Kimber won the 2014 Evelyn Richardson Award for Nonfiction for his book *What Lies Across the Water: The Real Story of the Cuban Five*. The judges called the book "a remarkable piece of investigative journalism". Kimber has unearthed a riveting story of why there is little hope of political reconciliation between Cuba and the United States - until there is justice for the Cuban Five." The book is published by Fernwood Press.

Residential school genocide

Journalist Chris Benjamin has also just published a book called *Indian Road School*, on the horrific residential school system, which calls out the Federal government's avoidance of the real issue: cultural genocide. The book weaves together multiple accounts that have come forward, including through the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, to tell the story of the Maliseet and Mi'kmaq children at Shubenacadie Indian Residential School which resembled a prison. Although Benjamin is not Aboriginal, he views this issue as important for all Nova Scotians and Canadians.

Among the voices which condemned the Shubenacadie school over the years was the Communist Party of Canada. In 1936 a CPC statement denounced the school's practice of whipping children with straps soaked in vinegar. The "workers and farmers of Canada should protest against the oppression of Indians; we must fight for equal rights for them; for the right to vote; for unemployment relief; for special governmental aid to the starving Indian farmers, hunters and fishermen. We should begin to fight for the right of the Indian people to control their own schools, assign their own teachers and have these schools in their own languages. The fight for Indian rights is part and parcel of the struggle for the RIGHT TO SELF DETERMINATION FOR THE INDIAN PEOPLES, which means the right for them to establish their own governments, the right to separate from Canada if they wish," the statement read.

Che event "a big success"



Members and friends of the Parti communiste du Quebec turned out in big numbers for the "Fete Octobre Che" held recently in Montreal. The gala event featured a delicious Cuban dinner and cultural program in honour of the heroic guerilla leader.

Down to the wire in Vancouver election

PV Vancouver Bureau

A highly unusual Vancouver civic election is entering the final stretch, with advance polls open from November 4 to 12 and voting day on Saturday, Nov. 15.

Unlike in 2008 and 2011, it appears that the centrist Vision Vancouver party may not be headed for easy majorities at City Hall, School Board and Park Board. On the other hand, none of Vision's challengers on the right and left seem to have seized the public's imagination. The final weeks of the campaign could end in a variety of scenarios, from outright Vision victories over fragmented opponents on the ballot, or a mix of winners from several parties.

As stated before in People's Voice, Vision is backed by an unusual combination. Some of the city's major developers are big financial contributors, but Vision also has the endorsement of the Labour Council and most civic unions, and the support of many environmental activists. The Non-Partisan Alliance (NPA), which has won most Vancouver elections since being formed in 1938 to keep the left out of City Hall, hopes to take advantage of Vision's

perceived arrogance and the unchecked pace of high rise developments. But the NPA is known for its close links to the Harper Tories and big energy and mining corporations, and for its anti-labour record, including a lengthy lockout of municipal employees during its 2005-08 term in City Hall.

These circumstances should have been favourable for Vancouver's traditional party of the left. COPE hopes to make a comeback by issuing a series of progressive policy statements, and several of its 19 candidates are well respected community activists.

But the sectarian politics of its core leadership in recent years have alienated some former supporters. Only three COPE candidates were endorsed by the Labour Council, and civic unions are contributing only a fraction of their previous donations to the organization which they helped to found in 1968. In a campaign where many working class voters fear a resurgence by the NPA, COPE needs to reach far beyond a few neighbourhoods where the left remains fairly strong, but lacks the resources for an expensive city-wide campaign.

The arcane mathematics of

Vancouver's at-large electoral system could also affect COPE's chances. Vision has strategically nominated fewer than full slates for council, school board and park board races. But in each case COPE is running more than the number of open spaces. Voters who support a mix of Vision and COPE candidates to block the

candidates can bring worse results.

While the Greens are riding a wave of popularity, their image took a hit when several candidates disclosed holding shares in mining, fossil fuel and other corporations. On one level, this is not surprising, since the leadership of the Vancouver Greens tend to be from higher income sectors. Nor has

Clark's teacher-bashing. It appears that Bouey and Giesbrecht could move from the "dark horse" category into real contenders, especially if they can pick up the two extra votes from those who back Vision's seven candidates, and from COPE supporters who remember Bouey's two terms as a COPE trustee.

In this complicated situation, People's Voice does not have a full list of recommendations for our Vancouver readers. At City Council, a stronger left presence would help shift debates in a progressive direction. Electing R.J. Aquino from One City would be a big victory. Among the COPE candidates, Sid Chow Tan and Audrey Seigl are proven community activists with broad support, and Gayle Gavin was endorsed by the Labour Council. We'll have more to say about the race for Mayor in our next issue.

At School Board, the Vision majority chaired by Patti Bacchus has been a powerful voice for public education, and they expanded the VSB's inclusion policy over bitter objections from fundamentalist bigots. The entire Vision caucus deserve re-election, but the Board would be greatly strengthened with Public Education Project candidates Jane Bouey and Gwen Giesbrecht at the table. (COPE has paid little attention to school issues since 2011.)

Vision's record at Park Board has been mixed at best. We urge readers to support COPE's Anita Romaniuk, Imtiaz Popat, and Cease Wyss in this vote, along with Green Party gadfly Stuart MacKinnon. ●



NPA will have to divide their votes, at COPE's expense.

The main beneficiaries of any "anti-slate" trend could be smaller parties backed by voters who want to elect candidates more closely attuned to community voices. In the Council race, R.J. Aquino of the new One City party has strong labour support, backing from the growing Filipino community and other immigrants, and the important organizing skills of many former COPE and Vision supporters.

The Greens may expand on their gains in 2011, when Adriane Carr was elected to Council, just 93 votes ahead of COPE incumbent Ellen Woodsworth. Carr's narrow win was in part due to some COPE supporters declining to vote for that party's entire slate - a classic proof that sometimes nominating more

Carr been notable as a defender of working class interests during her three years on Council.

In the School Board race, Public Education Project candidates Jane Bouey and Gwen Giesbrecht have the advantages of wide name recognition, strong support from trade unions and education activists, and reputations as determined fighters against the Liberal government's underfunding of schools. During her two previous terms on the Board, Bouey was a powerful voice for Aboriginal education, low-income families, and students with special needs. She drafted the VSB's ground-breaking LGBTQ inclusion policy in 2002, and helped lead the public fight earlier this year to expand that policy.

The "Public Education" theme has struck a chord, especially in the wake of Premier Christy

Quebec municipal unions fight pension attack

Hit by over 100 arrests and suspensions, and fighting a majority Liberal government, Québec municipal workers met in Montreal on October 16 to consider further protest actions to defend their pensions. The Montreal Gazette reports that over 1,000 members of a 65,000-member strong coalition representing municipal workers across Québec turned out at a planning rally at the Palais des congrès, before marching to a demonstration at the Fairmount Queen Elizabeth Hotel downtown where provincial ministers were speaking.

"Our message today is we are not broken and we will never break," said Marc Ranger, president of the Coalition syndicale pour la libre négociation. "Our people are more united and mobilized than ever. The government has not succeeded in breaking our solidarity."

Ranger said members discussed potential pressure tactics, and that no legal measures would be ruled out. He said roughly 80 per cent of members indicated they were in favour of strikes.

"We will make sure (pressure tactics) are carried out in the right way but of course it will be disruptive," Ranger said. "You don't make an omelette without breaking eggs. ... It's a marathon, and we have confidence we will win because we have a just cause, and the population at the end will support us."

Members voted to financially support the legal battles of workers fighting suspensions and firings in connection with an angry protest at Montreal's city hall on Aug. 18. Four Montreal police officers have been charged with disciplinary breaches for failing to stop the protest, which involved minor vandalism such as tossing papers into the air. So far, 57 municipal workers, including 52 firefighters, face criminal charges relating to the protest.

Six firefighters have been fired, and another 58 municipal employees suspended without pay for up to six months. The president of the firefighters' union, Ronald Martin, has been suspended without pay for six months. Suspended or fired employees will receive union help with their legal fees, but no remuneration for lost salary. If they win their legal battles, their salaries will be reimbursed by the city.

The Liberal government will likely pass its pension plan law before the end of the year. Bill 3 calls for an equal sharing of payments into municipal pension plans, which the government says are \$3.9-billion in debt, and a 50-50 split of the costs of refinancing plans that are running a deficit.

Union leaders argue Bill 3 enforces blanket regulations on 170 municipal pension plans that should be negotiated on a case-by-case basis to ensure fairness. More than 50 collective agreements that included concessions on pension plan issues had already been resolved in the last three years. The government's strategy has been condemned as an attack on the overall remuneration for municipal workers, many of whom accepted lower pay increases in collective agreements, in return for improved pensions.

The Quebec government's austerity policies continue to generate strong opposition. The next major protest rally is planned for October 31, starting 11 am at McGill College Ave. and Sherbrooke (near Metro McGill). ●



Vancouver candidates to support on Nov. 15: from left, R.J. Aquino (One City) for City Council; Gwen Giesbrecht and Jane Bouey (Public Education Project) for School Trustee; Patti Bacchus (Vision) and her party's caucus for School Trustee; Sid Chow Tan (COPE) for City Council, along with several other COPE candidates.

Workers United strikes in Guelph against two-tier systems

People's Voice Guelph Bureau

Nowadays, the vast majority of workers across Canada are witnessing the erosion of long-fought human rights, including vacations, pensions and overtime, in addition to decreased health and safety conditions at workplaces. Time after time, workers have been forced to make concessions, in spite of these prosperous times for companies. High profits have not been translated into labour investment and facility improvements; instead, the profits are increasingly transferred to overseas corporations.

This seems to be the case for Tokyo-based Nippon Sheet Glass. For the year ending March 31 2014, the company showed profits of 606 billion yen, or over \$6.2 billion (Annual Report 2014, page 3). The Guelph division of NGF

Canada makes rubber-coated glass cords for racing car tires, and was bought by NSG in 1995 from the Owens Corning group. After several years of concessions around wages and benefits, workers at the Guelph factory decided to defend what they had.

The workforce of the Guelph NGF factory is determined to stop the implementation of a two-tier system on new employees. On Sept. 30, the 26 members of Workers United Local 2641 began strike action, after multiple failed attempts at contract negotiations with NGF Canada.

Over the last year, several attacks have been made on contract language, after a new manager took over the operations in Guelph. These consisted of changes to employee pension plans, reduced vacation time for new employees, changing criteria for overtime pay,

and forcing workers to sign a five-year contract. The workers reject the creation of a two-tier system, which would negatively affect the salaries and benefits of new employees.

Fortunately, "Workers United is presenting a united opposition to the company's attempts", as Dave Deml, a 33-year employee said. Susan Taylor, president of WU 2641, Barry Fowley, B.J. Cardy, and other members are engaged in building solidarity across the city and Ontario.

Hassan Yussuff, president of the Canadian Labour Congress, joined the picket line to support the strikers in their just demands. These endorsements constitute a good push for the fight by WU 2641 workers to improve their contract and get a much fairer deal, for them and their families, and the new workers to come. ●

EDITORIALS

The plague of imperialism

With each passing day, the death toll from the Ebola virus rises, and the responsibility of the imperialist system becomes more obvious. Over a trillion dollars are wasted each year on militarism and war-making, the bulk of this by the US and its NATO allies. Yet when an epidemic strikes one of the poorest regions of the world, these "great powers" find it nearly impossible to help avert disaster.

Ebola does not have to be a death sentence. As the World Health Organization admits, seven in ten of those affected die because of the lack of proper healthcare facilities. And why are clinics and hospitals woefully lacking in Guinea, Sierra Leone, and Liberia? Because Africa has been plundered by the Western powers, from the days of the hugely profitable slave trade, to the present day when high public debts keep African states and their economies enslaved to the IMF, the World Bank and the big corporations.

As the World Federation of Trade Unions points out, Ebola spreads in conditions of poverty, malnutrition, the lack of basic health care, and limited access to free public education. Courageous medical personnel are risking their own lives without proper safety measures such as gloves and masks, while the pharmaceutical transnationals profit from suffering.

Our world is infected by a virus: the drive by big capital for maximum profits, whether through the sale of weapons or expensive drugs. The cure is the power of the working class, which can overthrow the private profit system and win a future based on peace, equality, democracy, social justice, and an end to all forms of exploitation and oppression. We can see a glimpse of this world in the 50,000 Cuban doctors and medical personnel who work in 66 countries around the world, including 4,000 in 32 African countries. This practical solidarity shows that socialism is the future!

"No pasaran" in Ukraine!

In a frightening scene that few could have imagined, thousands of fascist thugs rioted outside the Parliament in Kiev recently, demanding full veterans recognition and benefits for the scum who sold out their own people by joining Hitler's armies during the Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union. This nightmare follows the February coup against the democratically elected government of Ukraine, carried out with the eager assistance of the fascist groups and the backing of imperialist powers including Canada. Since then, the right-wing government of Ukraine has sold out the country's sovereignty to the European Union, and its military has conducted a brutal war on the people in the eastern regions, who naturally fear for their future under the thumb of their new invaders.

Every day, fascists in Ukraine, commit atrocities such as defacing monuments to the victims of the Nazi occupation. Meanwhile, the Harper Tories, who howl every time somebody compares Israel's occupation of Palestine to apartheid, refuse to criticize the anti-Jewish thugs rampaging across Ukraine. Think about this for a moment: over 45,000 Canadians gave their lives in the heroic battles to liberate Europe from Hitler fascism, but today, our Prime Minister aligns himself with those who want to reverse the victory of 1945, won through the blood and sacrifice of Canadians, Soviets, and the peoples of all the allied powers and the resistance movements.

Remember the words of Pastor Martin Niemoller: "First the Nazis came for the Communists, but I was not a Communist, so I did not speak out. Then they came for the Social Democrats and the trade unionists, and the Jews, but I did not speak out. Then they came for me, and there was nobody left to speak for me." Today, we must speak out against the fascist atrocities in Ukraine - and against their apologists in Ottawa. No Pasaran! Fascism shall not pass!

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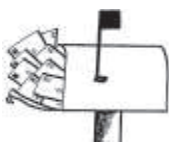
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LETTERS

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706 Clark Drive, Vancouver, BC, V5L 3J1 or
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Letters to the Editor

Mental health in schools

The CBC reported on October 7th 2014 that there may be a need for a "national strategy" to address the mental health needs of children in schools. This clarion call comes amidst daily reports of PTSD and suicide in the military, the systemic abuse of aboriginal women, mass shootings, beheadings, and bombing. Luckily drones do not develop mental illness.

But is this apparent mental health crisis something new? Not really. In fact, in the 1950s the Canadian government, in cooperation with the Provinces and the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA), developed and tested a national mental health strategy. It was called the Forest Hill Village Project and it also targeted children in schools.

Massive federal-provincial funding enabled the CMHA in cooperation with the U of T to bring teachers from across Canada to Toronto to train as mental health liaison officers. They returned to their schools ready to mentor other teachers in group psychotherapy techniques, and to identify and assist children with mental health issues.

Who was behind it? The leader was John R. Seeley, a Home Child

who emerged into the national limelight as a brilliant young sociologist with the U of T Department of Psychiatry; his colleague Martin Fischer, consulting psychiatrist at Browndale, a group home made famous in Allan King's award-winning documentary, Warrendale; Aldwyn Stokes, founder of the Clarke Institute of Psychiatry, now the Center for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH); and Lila Frances Coates, a pediatric psychiatrist.

What did these mental health pioneers achieve? Stokes went so far as to claim that the benefits of Seeley's formula for free discussion in the classroom, the core therapeutic technique of the project, was "something proven". Then, why has their work been forgotten? The same reasons that present calls for action are in danger of resulting in nothing more than another passing public relations initiative. We might count amongst them the narcissism of the experts; public fear and stigmatization; media romanticization; the impenetrability of massive corporate hierarchies; and the self-deception of elites who

prefer tax-deductible charitable donations to meaningful political change that may upset the markets.

Indeed, it is no coincidence that they have again raised the mental health banner at a time of war. It is now a century since the Great War when the mental health movement began in response to "shell shock". Seeley's work was aimed at pacifying a population traumatized by the Cold War. Today, as our anxieties intensify in the face of higher expectations in the workplace and terror in the streets, the authorities again sense a threat to public order. But therapy is not thought control. The healing process may in fact require far-reaching social change. So, what is to be done? If we are to make progress on this intractable problem, we must pursue mental health programs in schools in a sustained, self-reflective and scientific manner; not as a short-term panacea designed to satisfy the interests of the elite. They are already well taken-care of, but the people are suffering.

Dr. Paul Bentley (Ed.D.)

A cutline correction

Re. the picture on page 3 of the Oct 16-31 edition of People's Voice. The man fourth from the left is not our uncle Duane Pritchett, but rather our dad, Craig Pritchett, eldest son of Harold Pritchett, the first President of the IWA.

I wish I could locate the family photo of Craig in uniform, riding in a chicken coop with the chickens on the back of a flatbed truck, protesting lack of affordable housing in post WW II Vancouver. Craig became the founding president and leader of the Canadian Area ILWU. He and our mom Bunty (Eileen) raised us in the Veterans Project that was built in Renfrew Heights of East Vancouver as a result of the protests depicted in your photo.

Lynn and David Pritchett

(Editor's note: We took the names below that picture from a cutline in the January 4, 1946 edition of the People's Advocate, one of the forerunners of People's Voice. The original photo shows six WW2 veterans who were members of the Labor Progressive Party, as the Communist Party was known in that period. The pages of People's Advocate carried many reports and photos of the struggles for social housing in the post-war years.)

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Shady action behind Hong Kong protests

By **Kenny Coyle, Morning Star**

It seems Hong Kong's umbrella revolution has started to fold up.

Protest numbers have dwindled dramatically, rival factions within the eternally fractious anti-government camp have already started mutual recriminations and public patience with the student and Occupy Central demonstrations has worn thin.

As if on cue, mainstream opposition politicians, who remained strangely silent during the protests' upsurge, have now come forward urging restraint and dialogue at precisely the point at which the movement appears to have exhausted itself.

Likewise the Hong Kong Student Federation leaders, who had earlier demanded what was effectively direct talks with Beijing, now seem open to dialogue with the local government.

Remaining protesters have been berated by irate commuters, traders and workers in the affected areas, especially those directly employed by the government or low-paid casual subcontractors who cannot afford the luxury of lost work days.

Occasional violent clashes, which the opposition swiftly claimed were orchestrated by triad gangs working for the government, have been used to revive the Western media narrative of brave and peaceful demonstrators standing up to tyranny and intimidation.

Hong Kong chief executive CY Leung appears to have been vindicated in the short term at least that the eroding tolerance for continued disruption by the "silent majority" has tipped the scales in his favour and isolated the radicals.

Despite scaremongering, epitomised by the seemingly obligatory BBC references to the "Tiananmen Square massacre," there was never really any prospect of direct intervention by the central government in Beijing, nor by the

People's Liberation Army forces garrisoned in the former British colony.

After an ill-judged use of pepper spray and tear gas, police enforced a softly-softly approach toward protesters. This was done to such an extent that protesters later criticised the police for not having enough officers on duty to protect them.

Had it not been for this clumsy defensive use of force when protesters charged police lines and tried to break into government buildings, it's likely the protests would have fizzled out much earlier.

However, key issues have not been resolved. Hong Kong's government and indeed the central government in Beijing will need to reassess a number of their policies within the territory, which reverted to China in 1997.

While the immediate trigger for these protests was a dispute about electoral reform, behind this lurk several other factors - a multilayered crisis of post-colonial identity, especially among the young, and a yawning gap between rich and poor to name the most obvious. These are the determining internal factors but there are external ones too.

Since the 1997 return to Chinese sovereignty, there has been the hope that Hong Kong's status as a Special Administrative Region could be manipulated by outside powers, principally the US, to complicate the territory's relationship with Beijing and serve the wider purpose of obstructing China's "peaceful rise."

China's concerns that the protests are being manipulated by outside forces have been presented in the Western media as yet another paranoid delusion from an insecure totalitarian state.

Yet as Wikileaks documents have shown, the US consulate in Hong Kong devotes enormous time and energy to monitoring Hong Kong's political life. There's money too, of course.

To take one example, the National Democratic Institute, the US Democratic Party-controlled wing of the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), allocated \$460,000 (US dollars) in 2012 alone to programmes directed at student activism on the contentious issue of the chief executive election.

Since 1997, the NED has funnelled millions of dollars into the territory to support supposedly independent human rights groups and trade unions affiliated with the opposition.

The latter funds are channelled through the Solidarity Center, NED's labour wing run by the AFL-CIO, and go to "democratic unions" - that is opposition ones. This is in addition to funds earmarked for general China projects that also include the mainland.

Money plays a big part in Hong Kong politics and the local pro-Beijing forces are no strangers to donations from the city's wealthy elite.

However, it is the internationalisation of the Hong Kong political scene that concerns Beijing. It fears that foreign forces seek to interfere in what it considers China's sovereign affairs to polarise Hong Kong society and become a source of internal instability and international finger wagging.

The regular international tours by Hong Kong Democratic Party founder Martin Lee and former Chris Patten deputy Anson Chan to the United States and Britain have been followed up by pleas from the pair to the US and British governments to intervene - actions the Chinese government sees as at best unpatriotic and at worse verging on treachery.



A visual representation of the National Endowment for Democracy's corporate-financier ties found across their Board of Directors.

Just some months ago, startling revelations appeared in the Hong Kong media about the largesse of Hong Kong millionaire Jimmy Lai, owner of Hong Kong's main anti-Beijing newspaper Apple Daily and who has substantial interests in Taiwan.

Hackers had copied some 900 emails and documents from the computer systems of one of Lai's senior executives.

As the daily *Hong Kong Standard* reported on July 22: "Leaked documents showed Lai has donated more than \$40 million to the pan-democratic camp and legislators since 2012, of which \$9.5 million was made to four political parties in April 2012. Lai also gave the Democratic Party \$10 million in two payments. The Civic Party also got an additional \$6 million during the period.

"Alliance for True Democracy convener Joseph Cheng Yue-shek and Occupy Central organiser Reverend Chu Yiu-ming received \$300,000 in June 2013 and \$400,000 in April 2013 and April 2014, respectively.

"Former chief secretary Anson Chan Fang On-sang got \$3.5

million - more than twice the \$1.3 million she received from Lai between 2007 and 2009. Cardinal Joseph Zen Ze-kun received \$6 million and Democratic Party founder Martin Lee Chu-ming got \$300,000."

Perhaps more surprising were donations to League of Social Democrats lawmaker "Long Hair" Leung Kwok-hung \$1 million and donations to the Hong Kong Labour Party's Lee Cheuk-yan.

Long Hair is a charismatic semi-Trotskyist known for sporting a seemingly endless collection of Che Guevara T-shirts. Lee is the General Secretary of the Hong Kong Confederation of Trade Unions (HKCTU), the major partner of the Solidarity Center in the territory, which issued the rather hollow call for a general strike on October 1, the first day of a two-day holiday.

Millionaire Lai's dodgy connections don't end there.

The payments were made by Lai's US financial aide Mark Simon, former head of the Hong Kong branch of US Republicans Abroad. Simon is the son of a career CIA agent and is himself a former US naval intelligence officer.

For the sum of \$75,000, Lai also hired Paul Wolfowitz as a special adviser in 2013 on his business projects in Burma. Wolfowitz has served on the board of the NED and is the author of the Wolfowitz doctrine, whose core idea was how to prevent the rise of any rival power to the US in a post-Soviet world. He was also the scandal-prone head of the World Bank and served in the US Defence Department in the administrations of George H.W. Bush and George W. Bush.

Wolfowitz visited Hong Kong on May 27 this year and held a five-hour meeting with Lai onboard his yacht.

Not surprisingly, China suspects that these tangled links are far from coincidental. It would be utterly foolish to imagine that the protests are simply manufactured or orchestrated by outside forces - there are too many genuine grievances for that.

However, in the era of Barack Obama's "pivot to Asia," it would be the height of naivete to imagine that Washington does not shape and manipulate these crises as they have in so many other parts of the world. ●

First steps for Left and Communist unity in Bengal

By **B. Prasant, PV correspondent in India**

Following an initiative at the all-India level, the first important step has been taken in Bengal for a Left and Communist consolidation on the slogan of unity of action. At a mid-October meeting, 17 Left and Communist parties have resolved to struggle against communalism and terrorism of every kind, taking the mass of the people of Bengal with them at every level. Biman Basu, a senior leader of the Communist Party of India (Marxist), and chair of the state's Left Front, chaired the meeting and also briefed the media.

The imminent danger before the nation is the hydra-headed menace of majoritarian communalism and fundamentalism. As the peril grows, the unity and integration of the country is at stake, and movements must be launched to safeguard these touchstones.

The Left and Communist parties firmly oppose all kinds of fundamentalism, communalism, and terrorism - religious or

otherwise. Movements will be built based on decisions to be taken at a November 1 convention in Kolkata, which will discuss a draft resolution prepared for the occasion.

The parties understood that most madrasahs do not harbour terrorism and/or communalism. They are schools and educational institutions and in Bengal, many Hindu majority community students attend madrasahs and come out with high degrees and diplomas. But giving madrasahs a general stamp of approval would have to be protested against, taking the people along.

At the same time, it must never be forgotten the RSS-core BJP has fomented majoritarian communalism and fundamentalism. The work of the BJP, in Bengal and elsewhere in the country, Biman Basu pointed out, was filled with dangerous portents, harming the common people in particular, and directly and adversely affecting their lives and livelihoods. This must be exposed and protested, through movements the details of which shall be worked out.

Biman Basu recalled how not long ago "Swami" Asimanand confessed to his role the Mecca



On May 18, 2007, fundamentalist Hindu extremists bombed the Mecca Masjid, a 400-year old mosque in Hyderabad, capital of the Indian state of Andhra Pradesh. A dozen people were killed by the blast, while more than 10,000 people were inside the building for Friday prayers.

Masjid and Samjhaota Express bombings - was this not terrorism? Was not the arrested person a self-proclaimed propagator of majoritarian communalism? These are important pointers in context of the development of majoritarian fundamentalism and communalism. In this connection, Biman Basu pointed out that the Trinamul Congress was engaged in playing what could be termed soft communalism.

Campaign movements must be launched against communalism, fundamentalism and terrorism of whatever character and origin. The Left and the Communist forces have always been fighting for communal harmony and against communal discord. The Communist Party has been engaged in this struggle from its embryonic stage in the mid-1920s. The Left and Communist consolidation shall forge ahead, founded firmly on issue-based unity of action through pro-people struggles and movements. The first all-important step has been initiated in Bengal. ●

Unifor Good Jobs Summit: Tripartism on Display

By Stuart Ryan, Ottawa

Unifor, formed by the merger of the Canadian Auto Workers and the Communication, Energy and Paperworkers Union, has highlighted three themes since its inception: a) it is time to take the offensive in its labour relations with employers; b) being a union for everyone with its new ways of organizing in non-traditional sectors, with models like Community Chapters; and c) reaching out to communities to create good, secure and well-paying unionized jobs.

National President Jerry Dias has highlighted the need to address the crisis of unemployment and the growth of precarious, temporary or contract jobs. Since neither government or business was doing so, the Good Jobs Summit was held October 3-5 in Toronto. Dias invited several partners to help Unifor organize the event: the Canadian Federation of Students; the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (Ontario); Ryerson University and its



Unifor President Jerry Dias (in white) with the union's banner at the 2014 Labour Day parade in Toronto. (PV photo: Ed Bil)

Wynne, McCormick, Yussuff, and Allan, as well as Van Jones, a CNN commentator and former "Green Job Strategy" advisor to Barack Obama.

Each spoke about the problems in the North American economy: the elimination of full-time jobs in

\$1 billion a year on its own staff and infrastructure, including reopening old facilities in Winnipeg, rather than outsourcing maintenance and other work.

Jerry Dias cried out against the export of raw resources such as timber and oil, while sawmills and refineries close in Canada. Pipelines should be built only if they meet environmental standards and the concerns of Aboriginal nations, and only to supply Canadian refineries.

The 1,000 Summit participants took part in eight workshops. Four outlined the issues: Green Jobs in the new economy; new methods of organizing; Innovative modes for creating good jobs; increasing minimum wages and living wages. Four workshops explored what is to be done for targeted populations: the poor facing unemployment or precarious labour; students entering the labour force; people in rural and regional economies; unemployed youth and those over 40 losing their good jobs.

Several common themes emerged. Governments must estab-

All saw the need for governments to serve Canadians rather than the needs of business. Saying the weekend could not be the end of the dialogue, Dias called for regional job summits throughout the country to meet the needs of the different economies.

Will it happen?

All this sounds wonderful, but will it work? Not if Stephen Harper and the neo-liberal capitalist austerity agenda have their say. Not if Kathleen Wynne's declaration at the Summit that "adversarial labour relations are obsolete" is followed.

CLC President Hassan Yussuff warned that the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement with the European Union must be stopped, because CETA is all about preventing government initiative to protect promote local procurement and local production. Corporations can sue governments if they claim their "rights" to maximize profits are violated. All the proposals of the

centrism" approach to economic development, declaring that "adversarial labour relations are now obsolete". Her 2014-15 budget imposed wage freezes in the public sector for the next four years.

Only one participant asked: why not increase corporate taxes (which in Ontario are the lowest in North America), since the strategy of low corporate taxes and cuts to government spending have meant that only 20% of jobs created in the last two years were full-time. That question was left unanswered, while Justin Trudeau was allowed to state that his priorities were education and infrastructure.

NDP MPs promoted their platform of a \$15 minimum wage and a national child-care strategy, but no one asked why the NDP's sharp turn to the centre led to defeats in the Ontario, BC and Nova Scotia elections.

No one was allowed to ask why Canadian Pacific could benefit from the federal back-to-work legislation in the spring of 2012, that imposed a collective agreement on its workers represented by the Teamsters. Only Olivia Chow was allowed to ask a leading question to David Miller.

Some participants believed that voter revulsion against the mean-spirited pro-business agenda will lead to a minority government in the 2015 election. Don't count on it.

The Harper Conservatives' goal is to permanently shift the economic and political structures of Canadian society, to promote Canada's role as a partner in the capitalist global structure and to support expansionist wars. To date, neither the Liberals nor the NDP have a response, as they compete to capture the "centre" of the political spectrum.

What should be done

The labour movement should adopt a strategy to bring the people together first, to develop and promote an agenda based on the needs of the working class, Aboriginal people, youth, women, and the disabled. Public services such as healthcare, education, and door-to-door postal service should be at the forefront of this people's agenda, along with a policy of full employment, and a shorter work week with full benefits and no loss of pay.

Such a people's movement could be so strong that business and governments would ignore it or confront it at their peril. Elements of this movement can be seen in the Occupy actions of 2011, the Quebec student strike of 2012, Idle No More, and the Take Back campaign that galvanized the 2014 CLC convention. These groups need to develop a cohesive strategy to bring all the different people's organizations together to fight and win.

It is time to be bold. Another Canada is possible. There is too much at stake not to take this way forward.

(Stuart Ryan is a member of Unifor 567 and a participant at the Good Jobs Summit.) ●



For further coverage, visit www.goodjobssummit.ca

Institutes, the Sam Gindin Centre for Social Justice and Democracy, and the Centre for Labour-Management Relations.

The goal was to bring together representatives of social justice groups (the Metro Vancouver Alliance); students, (Jessica McCormick, National President of CFS); labour leaders (Jerry Dias, PSAC President Robyn Benson, Canadian Labour Congress President Hassan Yussuff); business leaders (GE Canada President Elyse Allan, James Irving of Irving Limited, and Peter Edwards of Canadian Pacific); and politicians (Ontario Premier Kathleen Wynne, federal Liberal Leader Justin Trudeau, NDP MP Peggy Nash, former Toronto Mayor David Miller and Mayoralty candidate Olivia Chow), in order "to start a dialogue about creating good jobs in Canada."

The choice of participants reflected a philosophy of tripartism. Labour and community groups, businesses that "respect the labour movement" and governments willing to engage with labour, would commence a "national roundtable" dialogue on developing a strategy to create good, full-time and environmentally sustainable jobs.

The featured speakers included

the manufacturing sectors, and the replacement since the Great Recession of 2008-2009 with temporary, contract and part-time jobs; outsourcing, privatizing social services, etc. The United Way study of precarious employment in Hamilton and the Greater Toronto Area points out the problem of precarious employment and the lack of access to social services for these workers. The CFS outlined the ramifications of graduating with huge student loan debts, which delays full participation in the labour market.

Examples of solutions to the crisis were presented. In Newfoundland, student mobilizations led to the freezing of tuition rates at Memorial University, and the replacement of student loans with education grants. Kathleen Wynne and Olivia Chow promoted Community Engagement Agreements that forced contractors building Light Rail Transit in the GTA or dealing with municipal governments to hire people from marginalized communities.

Former Toronto Mayor David Miller highlighted his decision to buy subway cars built in Thunder Bay, rather than take the lowest bidder from China. Peter Edwards claimed that Canadian Pacific had turned itself around by investing

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lish real employment standards, with real enforcement. Better labour laws are needed to facilitate unionization. Creating jobs must include equity for marginalized groups such as the poor, First Nations people, and those with disabilities, who need access to education, childcare and other social services so that they can maintain their jobs and family lives.

Participants demanded a national employment strategy, and a green and sustainable economy, focused on creating jobs. Unions could play their part by sharing best practices for organizing and bargaining hard for the creation of jobs that provide salaries and benefits, and are also fulfilling for workers.

Good Jobs Summit would be ignored if the Conservatives are re-elected and CETA is implemented. This leads to the question of what to do in the next election.

Unifor is following the practice of one of its predecessors, the CAW, in promoting strategic voting. The theory is to put resources into supporting NDP incumbents, or candidates who have a chance to win. In ridings where that is not possible, Unifor says to vote for the candidate with the best chance to defeat the Conservative. In English Canada, that means in effect the Liberal Party. Hence the invitations to Trudeau and Wynne.

The Premier outlined her "activist

Canada out of NATO:

For an independent foreign policy of peace

Statement by the Central Committee, Communist Party of Canada

For all of its 65 years of existence, NATO has been an aggressive, imperialist alliance. It is the largest military organization in the world, committed to the doctrines of first strike and preemptive strike. NATO interventions regularly include the use of toxic weapons containing depleted uranium or white phosphorus, and the alliance has repeatedly stated that nuclear weapons are a fundamental part of its military arsenal and strategy.

NATO is also an illegal alliance under international law. Article 52 of the United Nations Charter permits regional military organizations, but only if their activities are "consistent with the Purposes and Principles of the United Nations." The most important principle of the UN is the prohibition of the use of force. Since NATO's membership has always been beyond any commonly identifiable region, and since its primary activity has always involved the use of military force, its foundation contravenes international law.

Firmly dominated by US-imperialism, NATO is also a pillar of the European Union's military strategy. Since the end of the Cold War, NATO has aggressively expanded both its membership and its theatre of operations. Currently, there are 28 NATO member states across North America and Europe, another 22 countries in the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council

(EAPC), and a further 19 countries engaged with NATO through programs such as the Mediterranean Dialogue, the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative and the Partners Across the Globe Initiative. This expansion reveals NATO's fundamental character as the key military tool of Western imperialism.

NATO membership carries profound military, political and economic consequences for individual states and their peoples. By compelling its members to adopt, support and enact its mutual clause, NATO draws them into wars of aggression in the pursuit of imperialist expansion. Through the alliance's nuclear weapons sharing policy, NATO countries become de facto nuclear weapons states, active participants in the development, testing, proliferation and use of weapons of mass destruction. Through NATO, officially nuclear-free countries

such as Canada become components in imperialism's multilateral nuclear strike force, usually without the consent or even knowledge of their people.

As the global economic crisis has continued and deepened, Western imperialism has also seen its global might increasingly challenged from emerging economic powers such as the BRICS countries and, more profoundly, from the peoples of the world. Partly in response to these developments imperialism has become increasingly aggressive, using new and old pretexts and instruments for the purposes of intimidation, provocation, aggression and war. As part of this, NATO's eastward expansion has been intensified, with the immediate purpose of encircling and isolating Russia. NATO's aggressive efforts to integrate countries such as Georgia and Romania, as well as its

accelerated construction of missile defense installations in Eastern Europe, have poisoned the region with a political backdrop of intimidation and provocation that is aimed at Russia in particular. This drive for the expansion of imperialism's military apparatus has occurred alongside a similar drive to expand its economic institutions, in the form of the EU. This two-pronged expansion culminated in the criminal interference and intervention in the internal affairs of Ukraine, through the spring and summer of 2014.

Imperialism's aggression against the sovereignty of Ukraine included recruiting, training and arming fascist and neo-Nazi organizations, and using those organizations to terrorize and murder the Ukrainian people. The crisis has now developed into a war that has cost nearly 3000 lives, displaced many thousands more, and destroyed social and economic infrastructure. It has also facilitated Ukraine's economic and political dependence upon Western imperialism, placed openly fascist groups in government, provoked a new Cold War, and sparked a new global arms race.

The recently concluded NATO Summit in Wales confirmed that NATO will develop a multinational rapid response force, that it will construct new bases and deployments in Eastern Europe near the Russian border, and that it will pressure its member states to significantly increase their own military spending. Furthermore, the NATO Summit was the key forum in which the United States

pressed its military allies to commit to multinational military operation in Iraq. These initiatives are clearly in the service of imperialism, but they will clearly be paid for by the working classes of those member states.

While Canada has been a member of NATO since its founding, under the Harper Conservative government it has emerged as an aggressor state. Harper both supports NATO aggression globally and facilitates NATO-friendly policies to guide Canada's economic, social and political development. NATO's priorities have become so deeply entrenched in Canada that there is near unanimity among the political parties in Parliament that Canada's foreign policy should reflect NATO interests. The priorities and needs of the vast majority of the people of Canada are ignored, marginalized and, in some cases, crushed by force.

In this 65th anniversary of NATO's founding, and the 100th anniversary of the beginning of the First World War, the Communist Party of Canada reiterates its longstanding demand for an independent Canadian foreign policy based on peace, international cooperation and solidarity. As a necessary first step in developing such a policy, we call for Canada's immediate and unilateral withdrawal from NATO.

Furthermore, the Communist Party encourages all labour, peace and progressive organizations to work toward Canada's withdrawal from NATO and for the dissolution of that military alliance. ●



Peace movements urge new anti-war protests

PV Vancouver Bureau

On the heels of a Parliamentary vote approving Canada's participation in the US-led bombing of Iraq and Syria, anti-war groups are calling for protest actions.

As this issue went to press, affiliates of the Canadian Peace Alliance and the Quebec-based Collectif Ehec a la guerre were mobilizing for rallies on the Oct. 25-26 weekend, in Ottawa, Montreal, Toronto, Edmonton, Vancouver and other cities.

These protests coincide with the 12th anniversary of the October 2002 mobilizations in Canada and the US to oppose the preparation of the US invasion and the war of occupation in Iraq that would last from 2003 to 2011. Those early protests drew thousands, building towards much larger demonstrations leading up to the March 2003 invasion of Iraq. Protests of over 100,000 in Quebec were credited with forcing the Chretien Liberal government of the day to decline a formal military role in the invasion, although some Canadian Armed Forces personnel were involved as part of U.S. forces in the region.

In early October, the opposition parties in Parliament voted against Canadian participation in the bombing campaign against Islamic

State forces. Opinion polling and street actions by anti-war groups give diverging interpretations of public views on the war, but millions of Canadians are deeply ambivalent. Memories are still fresh about the U.S. lies to justify the 2003 war, and the humanitarian disaster which continues in Iraq to this day. Most Canadians are still not convinced that this country's role in the occupation of Afghanistan, which killed many thousands of Afghans and 158 Canadians, was worth the cost in blood and money.

The lack of enthusiasm for yet another war in the region is clearly a factor in the decision by the NDP and Liberal caucuses to vote against Harper's six-month military action. Anti-war groups hope that this may give time to begin building larger protests.

The call-out from the Canadian Peace Alliance and Ehec a la guerre states:

"We invite the people of Quebec and Canada to protest:

"Against a new illegal war that contributes to dismantling the existing world order and that threatens world peace and security while pretending to defend them;

"Against the security and humanitarian pretexts invoked by the new coalition: the protection of Iraq's population has nothing to

do with the real motives of this war, which will cause them more suffering and further deteriorate their living conditions;

"Against a Canadian foreign policy centred on intensifying conflicts and war;

"Against the hijacking of huge amounts of public resources to make war, promote the military industry, glorify the army and Canada's military past, while for many years austerity measures have cut education, healthcare, public services, the promotion of women's rights, the protection of

the environment, international cooperation, etc.

"Together, let's take to the streets to demand:

"The immediate end of Canadian participation in this new aggression coalition which has been set up for the strategic interests of the US empire and its allies;

"A freeze on all major procurement projects of the

Canadian military;

"The organization of a broad public debate on Canadian foreign policy, the role of the army, the military industry and the arms trade;

"That the Canadian government immediately cease deportation proceedings against U.S. Iraq war resisters and create, once and for all, a provision that would allow them to remain in Canada." ●

Details of local anti-war actions can be found here:
www.canadianpeace.org
www.ehecalaguerre.org



January 18, 2003: Thousands take to the streets of Toronto. (Photo: Ed Bil)



GLOBAL CLASS STRUGGLE

Swaziland bans trade unions

Swaziland's government has announced that, pending legal reforms, all trade union and employer federations should stop operating immediately. Federations were called upon to submit reports of their operations, including audited financial statements, to the Commissioner of Labour. This decision affects not only TUCOSWA (Trade Union Congress of Swaziland) and the Amalgamated Trade Unions of Swaziland (ATUSWA), but also the Federation of Swaziland Employers and Chamber of Commerce, and the Federation of the Swazi Business Community. Tripartite bodies such as the Wages Council, Labour Advisory Board, and others will stop functioning as a result.

Article 5 of ILO Convention No. 87 on Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organize recognizes the right of workers' organizations to establish or to join federations and confederations of their own choosing. An ILO fact finding mission visited the country in January 2014, and recommended the registration of worker and employer federations by end of April. The Swazi government has ignored the recommendations, and the calls by the trade union movement to respect international conventions which it has ratified.

Euro unions vs. CETA and TTIP

Tens of thousands of European citizens took to the streets in dozens of cities on October 11 to show their rejection of the proposed trade deals between the European Union and Canada (CETA) and the EU and the US (TTIP). In Austria, the national center OGB was an early endorser of the Action Day and their members filled the streets of Vienna and other cities. Opposition is growing on both sides of the Atlantic. In September, the UK national center TUC adopted a resolution at its congress calling unions to "adopt a clear position of outright opposition to TTIP, and the other trade agreements currently being negotiated."

Aqaba Port arrests in Jordan

The ITF (International Transport Workers' Federation) has contacted the government of Jordan over the Oct. 14 arrests of around 150 trade unionists at the Aqaba Container Terminals facility run by APM Terminals. The port workers had begun a strike the previous day, which the police action was designed to break. Strikebreakers are reportedly being brought in from outside the country. The arrested workers, who included several union leaders, were later released.

The ITF's Arab World office has raised the matter with Jordan's government, and ITF general secretary Steve Cotton has written to its Prime Minister, stating: "I am writing to you once again with

regard to the current dispute at the Aqaba Container Terminal (ACT) operated by the global company APM Terminals, which has led to our affiliate the General Union of Port Workers taking strike action. This followed the stalemate in negotiations over the renewal of the collective bargaining agreement. These negotiations have been ongoing for months - the agreement should have been renewed in June.

"I am shocked to learn that a country such as Jordan, with such a robust democratic tradition has allowed interference by the police forces in a labour dispute... The



ITF will continue to call for answers from the government and APMT at how the police came to be involved in an industrial dispute, and for urgent measures to resolve the dispute."

Bosses welcome Modi's policies

India's trade unions have condemned the shift to a system of self-certification by industries, replacing mandatory inspections. Prime Minister Modi is "going for drastic changes which will ultimately benefit the employers to carry out hire-and-fire and harm working people. This is being done to give a free hand to the corporates. This will depress wage levels and create a situation for low-paid apprentices in place of permanent labour and even contractual workers," said Gurudas Dasgupta, general secretary of the All India Trade Union Congress (AITUC).

The government is proposing to move to a system of self-certification and inspections based on computer-drawn lots. AIRTUC and other labour federations say that all complaints by unions and individual workers must be investigated rather than left to randomisation. They also condemn changes to help industry keep apprentices at low wages rather than recognising them as workers even after training. The so-called reforms will push poorer students into lower-paid vocational training streams.

All of the country's central trade union federations, including Bhartiya Mazdoor Sangh, which is affiliated with the governing BJP, have announced a country-wide protest on December 5 and a dharna (peaceful sit-in) in Delhi the same day.

Industry bodies claim that the changes will increase transparency for both employers and workers, at a time when industrial corridors and construction projects are

expanding. The government intends to "liberalise" the Apprentice Act by proposing that industrial units must hire 80 percent of apprentices training at each unit, instead of the longstanding requirement to hire all of these apprentices.

New law helps Chilean workers

Workers have the right to negotiate labor conditions with the parent company rather than the local subsidiary for which they work, under a ruling issued by a court in the city of Caldera. The principal union representing its workers argued that Hipermercados Tottus SA, a unit of the Falabella retail group, and its local subsidiary, are in fact a single company.

The Sept. 29 ruling follows the promulgation of the "MultiRUT" Law No. 20,760 by President Michelle Bachelet in July 2014. The name of the law refers to the practice among large companies of establishing legal entities for each division with individual tax IDs or Rol Unitaria Tributaria (RUT), requiring employees to negotiate on a site-by-site basis.

The court held that the two companies constitute a single employer under the Labor Code and are jointly responsible to fulfill labor and safety requirements and individual or collective agreements. The MultiRUT legislation creates the legal entity of "employer," which differs from an individual company "by coordinating and directing those who work there, under different models of subordination and dependence."

Companies which breach the law can face fines of up to 1.28 million pesos (\$21,800). Approval of the law represented a long-held desire of Chile's labour movement to increase its negotiating power against large companies.

The Labour Authority has created a special unit to deal with sensitive and high-impact investigations, including application of the MultiRUT law. The unit has so far received 83 requests from the courts to undertake investigations and issued 29 reports. Investigations to date have been concentrated in construction and real estate (20.3 percent), retail (15.7 percent) and telecommunications and transport (15.3 percent).

Impunity in Balibo Five murders

Thirty-nine years after five Australian journalists were murdered in East Timor, there has still not been a full investigation into their deaths. The International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) has joined its Australian affiliate, the Media, Entertainment & Arts Alliance (MEAA), in expressing strong concern that the Australian Federal Police have yet to ask Indonesian authorities to help prosecute the people responsible for the murder of the "Balibo Five" - Brian Peters, Malcolm Rennie, Tony Stewart, Gary Cunningham and Greg Shackleton.

In 2009, the AFP announced that it would conduct a war crimes investigation into the deaths. This came after a coroner's inquest found that Brian Peters (and the other journalists) "died at Balibo in Timor Leste on 16 October 1975 from wounds sustained when he was shot and/or stabbed deliberately, and not in the heat of battle, by members of the Indonesian Special Forces, including Christoforus da Silva and Captain Yunus Yosfiah on the orders of Captain Yosfiah, to prevent him from revealing that Indonesian Special Forces had participated in the attack on Balibo. There is strong circumstantial evidence that those orders emanated from the Head of the Indonesian Special Forces, Major-General Benny Murdani."

In 2014, it was revealed that the AFP had not sought any cooperation from Indonesia's government or police.

MEAA federal secretary Christopher Warren said, "The AFP has spent five years investigating the incident. And still there is no result. And still the AFP has not worked with the Indonesian authorities to pursue the killers and bring them, finally, to justice. Quite literally, those responsible for killing our journalist colleagues are getting away with murder."

Impunity continues to be an issue globally, says the IFJ, and a message must be sent that such crimes will be punished. The IFJ represents more than 600,000 journalists in 131 countries.

Anti-terror laws hit unions

The Anti-Terrorism Act (ATA) adopted by Pakistan in 1997 has

completely failed its purpose, according to human rights activist Dr. Farzana Bari. The conviction rate of accused terrorists in the Anti-Terrorism Courts (ATCs) established under the ATA is extremely low, she says, and many are set free due to a lack of evidence. But the state has been using ATCs to politically victimise human rights and labour activists.

Most recently Baba Jan, a former Vice President of the Awami Workers Party, and eleven other activists from Gilgit-Baltistan were given life sentences by an ATC on September 25. Their crime was raising their voices for the rights of displaced people. Baba Jan was leading the movement for victims of the Attabad Lake disaster caused by floods in 2010. The victims of this disaster were demanding the compensation that the government promised. However, the government has responded with violence and arrests. Two protesters were killed by the police, and compensation for flood victims is still being awaited.

Similarly in Faisalabad, thirteen loom workers were given life sentences because they were fighting for a minimum wage. Twenty activists of the Anjuman-e-Mazareen fighting for land rights in Okara were convicted on criminal charges by an ATC. Trade union leader Ghulam Dastgir Mehboob, who was leading an anti-privatisation campaign, was imprisoned and his case has been pending in the ATC since 2012. Over sixty trade union leaders of the Pakistan Telecommunication company faced charges of terrorism in 2009 after protesting. Although the case was dismissed, the union leadership was again arrested in 2010 under similar charges.

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

Join the Communist Party of Canada



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

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Anger in Mexico at attacks on teacher students

By Emile Schepers, *People's World*

Mexicans reacted with anger and indignation to the disappearance and possible murder of 43 young students of a teachers' college near Iguala, in the Southern State of Guerrero, on September 26. Meanwhile, relatives of the students waited to hear whether 28 dismembered and burned bodies found in a mass grave just outside Iguala are indeed those of their loved ones.

The students, from a teacher training college, the Ayotzinapa Rural Normal School, had gone to nearby Iguala, a city of about 110,000 people, to raise funds for a campaign of resistance to "educational reform" plans of Mexican President Enrique Peña Nieto which they fear will degrade and eventually eliminate teacher training programs like theirs. When they were getting ready to leave, three buses which they had obtained for the ride home were attacked by what appears to have been a coordinated force of hit men from a regional gang and local police from Iguala.

Two of the students, and several bystanders, were killed outright and the remaining 43 disappeared. Two have surfaced alive, but many fear all the rest were murdered. It cannot be assumed that the 28 bodies in the mass grave are theirs, firstly because they were burned beyond recognition, secondly because nobody trusts the local people in charge, and thirdly

because since former President Felipe Calderon, at US behest, declared "war" against drug cartels in 2006, up to 100,000 have been kidnapped and/or murdered and there are many, many mass graves.

In Guerrero, there is a long history of protest and revolutionary uprisings in which teachers have often played a part. Since the system of training schools in the countryside was originally set up by President Lazaro Cardenas del Rio in the 1920s (the Rural Normal Schools, Escuelas Normales Rurales), they have been seen as a threat by some, because they have turned out teachers who come from the Indigenous and poor communities and are committed to educating those communities, including using bilingual education methods with non-Spanish speaking native communities.

Many of these teachers belong to a militant branch of the Mexican teachers union which is not subservient to the "corporate" model of labour unions so rife in Mexico, in which the government and the ruling Revolutionary Institutional Party (PRI) basically appoint and control the union leadership. They have been carrying out protests in Mexico City and elsewhere against government "educational reforms".

The state of Guerrero, with about 3,500,000 inhabitants, is named for Mexico's second president, Vicente Guerrero, who was an African-Mexican of very advanced views for his day. It



Part of a poster which was circulated online and posted in Guerrero, showing the photos and names of 57 missing students. Currently the number of missing students is 43.

contains an ethnic and linguistic mixture including more than 20 Indigenous language communities and also the main concentration of African-Mexican people in the country. It has a violently dramatic history, reaching up to our own times. Much of the conflict has been between poor peasant communities against big landowners and local political bosses backed by national and international power centres. Even today, the Human Development Index in Guerrero is the third lowest of Mexico's 31 states.

In the 1960s, a teacher, Genaro

Vazquez Rojas, organised peasants and workers. Police suppressed peaceful dissent, so Vazquez and friends ended up as guerrillas in the mountains. Vazquez was captured and died in 1972. Another teacher trained at one of President Cardenas' Normal Schools, Lucio Cabanas, was involved in unionisation efforts but fled to the mountains to join Genaro Vazquez when a strike he led was violently suppressed. In 1974, Cabanas was killed. Out of these efforts arose the People's Revolutionary Army which has continued in arms in the mountains

of Guerrero and neighbouring regions, sporadically clashing with security forces.

Political assassinations carried out at the behest of the powerful still are common, as in the case of several organisers affiliated with the Communist Party of Mexico a little over a year ago.

So the idea that local landowners, businesspeople, and political bosses would find militant, organised students in teacher training schools threatening is not so strange. Nor is it strange that the national government would try to put an end to the normal school institution - it is a significant focus of resistance against neo-liberal policies.

But the anger let loose in all of Mexico by the kidnapping and probable murder of the students in Iguala has politicians scrambling. The municipal president of Iguala, Jose Luis Abarca, has fled, and the nominally leftist Revolutionary Democratic Party (PRD) to which he belongs is in the process of kicking him out. The attorney general of Guerrero has denounced the incident and declared that the whole municipal and police structure of Iguala is riddled with criminals. The governor of Guerrero, Angel Aguirre Rivero, is a former member of President Pena Nieto's Revolutionary Institutional Party (PRI) who jumped to the PRD in order to get their support for his election; he has denounced the incident in Iguala but many are calling for his removal. ●

BJP misdeeds speak louder than words

By Baldev Padam

The long wait of Hindutva (Hindu Nationalist) elements to assume political power ended last May when BJP leader Narendra Modi won a majority in India's Lower House. With a few smaller parties, the BJP formed the National Democratic Alliance government in Delhi. The NDA is a coalition in name only; the BJP rules the roost. Its electoral tactic to alienate India's minorities from the Hindu majority to pocket the latter's votes succeeded over the ruins of the country's pluralism and communal harmony.

The BJP election manifesto nowhere mentioned the creation of a Hindu Nation. But its promises of a "uniform civil code" and abrogation of Article 370 of India's Constitution pointed in that direction. In order to recognize the diverse practices followed by Hindu and Muslim communities, like marriage, separate laws were enacted long ago. The BJP government now wants a "uniform civil code", which would mean gross interference in their personal laws, complain leaders of the India's Muslim community.

Similarly, Article 370 gave a degree of legislative autonomy to Kashmir, India's only Muslim majority province. Soon after assuming power, some of the BJP's over-enthusiastic but raw ministers announced plans to remove this Article, inviting much criticism, including from Omar Abdullah, the Chief Minister of Jammu &

Kashmir.

Tampering with such provisions would legitimize the apprehensions of minority communities about the BJP's intentions to turn India into a Hindu-dominated state. Those



In an unprecedented move, RSS leader Mohan Bhagwant was given one hour by the national broadcaster to address the country.

anxieties weren't baseless; turning egalitarian India into a Hindu Nation was the goal of the RSS (Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh) movement, the BJP's mentor. But this was easier said than done.

Two prong strategy

The country's constitution christened India a secular, socialist and democratic republic. A large section of Indians, Hindus included, always detested the division of communities and neighbourhoods on grounds of

religion, particularly after suffering the pangs of partition in 1947. To surmount such hurdles, the BJP has adopted a two point program of action.

First is to try to amend the Constitution by deleting the word

"secular". But the BJP lacks a majority in the Rajya Sabha (Upper House), and is unable to muster the requisite number of provinces to change the constitution. So PM Modi has given a clarion call to the people of provinces where assembly elections are going on, to give the BJP a majority to implement its plans. In hot pursuit of one party rule, the BJP has discarded alliances, even with their decades-old Hindutva ally Shiv Sena in Maharashtra, and in Haryana severed ties with their partner HJC (Haryana Janhit Congress).

The second course is to ignite Hindu religious passions, a strategy that succeeded for BJP President Amit Shah in May. Hundreds of communal riots erupted in Uttar Pradesh state alone after Modi assumed power, and Gujarat again witnessed riots while the PM was in the USA to woo investments. Modi's tweet, "If anyone touches my Muslim brother or sister, I won't be sitting idle," looked hollow. Actions speak louder than words for BJP!

Modi's US Visit

Controversies follow Narendra Modi wherever he goes, and his recent US visit was no different. The media in America and back home interpreted his sojourn differently. Indian media, both print and electronic, said that Modi's charisma drew hundreds of fans to New York's Madison Square to accord him a rock star reception. His first address at the UN and his rendezvous with President Obama were highlighted.

But international newspapers gave lackluster coverage. The *New York Times* reminded readers that a US court has issued a summons to Modi in connection with the 2002 Gujarat riots. Other US media also reminded about the awkward juxtaposition of Modi's reception and his record of human rights violations at home. The Japanese media just ignored Modi's US stopover.

Amnesty International USA had

pressed for raising human rights issues, but U.S. officials made it clear that Modi had immunity as a head of government while on American soil. Such controversies, however, blunted the sheen of his U.S. stopover.

The purpose of Modi's visit was to boost bilateral trade and court investment. However, he returned home empty handed. His tempting talk of a "Red Carpet" reception instead of red-tape, or simplification of foreign investment regulations or a favourable tax regime, didn't cut much ice with American investors, who offered nothing in return. They are aware that the Indian Parliament always stood in the way of American investments, and their earlier proposals were resisted by opposition parties, the BJP included. US industrialists want a suitable law in line with Modi's assurances to be first passed by Parliament. That means Modi has a six-month window, which could be stretched to the next budget, to show results. So far it's much ado about nothing.

Sway of RSS over Government

The story of BJP rule until now is only of slogans and more slogans. The PM's promise of Achche Din (Good Times) is fast losing its shine. The nation is worried at what lies in store from

see BJP misdeeds, page 11

Ebola deaths facilitated by imperialism

Statement by the World Federation of Trade Unions Secretariat

The Ebola epidemic that has struck mainly in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea of West Africa and threatens the entire world has killed thousands of people and caused panic to millions of others.

As high level officials of the World Health Organization confess, the epidemic has severely expanded and 70% of the people affected die because of the lack of proper healthcare facilities.

This epidemic brings in the forefront in the most tragic way the chronic and deep wounds in the African Continent by the colonialism, by the continuous plundering of the wealth-producing resources and by the high public debts that keep African states and their economies enslaved to the IMF, the World Bank and monopolies cartels.

Crucial problems that in extraordinary conditions such as the one today can create an explosive atmosphere are: The poverty, the malnutrition, the lack of basic healthcare infrastructure and social welfare, the limited access to a system of Public and Free Education capable to eradicate illiteracy and the effect of prejudices and superstitions, the slums that continue to exist being a disgrace for humanity and a danger to public health, the militarization and the state violence that are the answer of the panicked state mechanism.

The World Federation of Trade Unions expresses its indignation at the current situation in the existing healthcare facilities, which result in medical personnel offering risking their own lives without any safety measures (gloves, masks). As a result, deaths amongst medical personnel have risen to extreme levels.

The WFTU and its members worldwide have in the past, with two International Action Days, denounced the role of the Pharmaceutical Multinational Companies which profit from the people's suffering.

State budget cuts in the funding of public institutions in the field of research, pharmaceutical production and healthcare in the USA and the European Union are aggravating the problems while working in favour of the

privatization of those fields, the expansion of the control of the monopolies over the industry and against the satisfaction of the people's needs.

As long as the research, the production and the healthcare are ruled by the laws of the monopoly competition and the profit, the people will be suffering from diseases that should have long been extinct or adequately controlled.

Furthermore, in complete contrast to the imperialist policy of the USA and Britain which in the midst of the crisis have ceased the opportunity to send new troops in Africa, the WFTU congratulates the heroic decision of the Cuban Government and the Cuban people to show in the most humanitarian way their solidarity to the people of Africa by sending in Liberia and Guinea a large group of doctors and medical personnel to assist in the efforts for relief of the Ebola patients. More than 50,000 Cuban doctors and medical personnel working in 66 countries around the world and specifically 4,000 in 32 African countries, are offering high level Health services as a form of practical solidarity.

We congratulate our affiliate the CTC Cuba and its members in the Health Sector who heroically prove their international solidarity.

The WFTU, representing 90 million workers in 126 countries

reaffirms its consistent position that preventive healthcare on a framework of a public, free and adequate healthcare system is the best solution in all Health issues.

The WFTU struggles for:

- The creation of contemporary, adequate and fully equipped institutions of healthcare in all countries that will be part of a broad Public, Free and centrally designed healthcare system to offer to all the population proper healthcare services at all stages of their lives. The sufficient number of medical personnel, the satisfaction of the labour rights and the proper conditions of hygiene and safety are important factors.

- The formation of public institutions of research, production and distribution of free or cheap pharmaceutical supplies, medicine and vaccination to all the people.

- The eradication of illiteracy by securing the access for all people to a public and free Education.

- For state policy that will solve the housing problems in many countries.

- The elimination of poverty and hunger. The African Continent is rich in natural resources and agricultural capabilities. Putting those in the control and the service of the people would offer greatly in the rapid improvement of living standards and elimination of diseases and poverty.



Health workers in Guinea removing their protective gear.

UK health workers hold mass walkout

Joana Ramiro and Conrad Landin, Morning Star

Half a million heroic NHS staff walked out of hospitals on October 13 in the first mass health-sector strike since Thatcher, as senior Tories admitted their NHS

market reforms had been a "huge mistake."

Hospitals reported that most non-urgent operations and clinics had been cancelled and bosses drafted in soldiers to drive ambulances, which Unison branded "provocative and unnecessary."

The four-hour walkout follows a bitter pay dispute with Tory Health Secretary Jeremy Hunt, who rejected even the measly 1 per cent pay rise recommended by the NHS pay review body.

At Homerton Hospital in east London, midwives told the Morning Star they were "insulted" by the pay offer. They were joined on the picket lines by local mums they had supported through childbirth. Passing drivers honked their horns in solidarity with the striking workers.

Speaking from a picket line at Guy's Hospital in central London, Unison general secretary Dave Prentis said: "Today was the first time in 32 years that our members in the NHS have taken action over pay. They sent a clear message to the government that they deserve fair pay and the government cannot take advantage of their good will any longer." ●



MUSIC NOTES

By Wally Brooker

A Tribe Called Red cancels Rights Fest gig

Acclaimed First Nations electronic band A Tribe Called Red drew attention to the unacknowledged genocide of Aboriginal peoples when it withdrew from a scheduled Sept. 20 performance at Rights Fest, the program of music, dance, and art, accompanying the opening of the Canadian Museum for Human Rights in Winnipeg. In a statement, the Juno Award winning band said that it was cancelling because of "the museum's misrepresentation and downplay of the genocide that was experienced by Indigenous people in Canada by refusing to name it genocide". The museum issued a response that called on the band to tour the museum so that they could see "the full breadth of exhibit content dedicated to Indigenous perspectives and issues". Several other Aboriginal artists performed at Rights Fest, but declared their full support of the band's position. Singer-songwriter Buffy Sainte-Marie, in an interview prior to her concert, said the museum's directors still do not understand what the United Nations recognized in 1948: the forcible transfer of native children to residential schools is genocide. For more info: <http://atribecalledred.com/>.

Halifax baristas sing a union song


An upbeat music video has been released to promote the drive to organize coffeehouse servers in Halifax. "Hey Baristas!" features a catchy doo-wop tune set in a coffee shop. Although reinforced by a few actor/musicians, the performers are mostly servers. They sing about their precarious and low-paid working conditions, and call for baristas to unite and join the union. Last year Halifax baristas at the Just Us! Coffeehouse, members of SEIU Local 2, negotiated a first contract. The agreement increased the number of full-time positions and added benefits, job security, better scheduling, and a cost-of-living clause. Now, workers at the Coburg Coffee House have applied for certification, and there have been organizing drives at several Second Cup outlets. Increasingly, baristas see their jobs as more permanent than temporary, and they're seeking the respect and security in the workplace that only a union can provide. Kudos to all involved in the video, including co-producer Margaret Anne McHugh, co-producer/composer/musician Mike Chandler, camera operator/photography director/editor Deedee Slye, director/writer Kevin Russell, and a cast of performers too numerous to list. Look for Hey Baristas! on YouTube.

Inuit singer Tanya Tagaq wins Polaris

Inuit throat singer Tanya Tagaq not only won the prestigious 2014 Polaris Prize on Sept. 22 for her album Animism, but she stole the show with a stunning performance. Inuit throat singing is usually performed by two women, but Tagaq, who grew up in Cambridge Bay, Nunavut, has taken it to the world over the past decade, collaborating along the way with artists like the Kronos Quartet and Icelandic singer Bjork. At the Polaris Awards she was joined by a talented group of musicians, including electric violinist Jesse Zubot, drummer Jean Martin, DJ Michael Reed, and the all-woman 24-voice Element Choir. The names of the 1200 Aboriginal women, murdered or missing since 1980, scrolled on the screen behind the singer, projecting a powerful political message. Introducing her at the ceremony, Vancouver musician and novelist Geoff Berner declared "there is no artist working today more emphatically herself, more incomparable than Tagaq". View Tagaq's Polaris performance on YouTube and judge for yourself. For more about Tanya Tagaq, and the complete text of Berner's introduction, visit www.tanyatagaq.com.

Emily Yates: Iraq war vet songwriter

Since her return to civilian life, Iraq war veteran Emily Yates, who served a six-year stint in the U.S. Army as a military journalist, has taken up songwriting. The 32-year-old native of Syracuse, New York, is also an activist with Iraq Veterans Against the War (www.ivaw.com). She is emerging as an important voice in the anti-war movement, as well as a sardonic critic of American life. Her sharp wit and political satire can be experienced on two albums: I've Got Your Folksongs Right Here (2012) and Folk in Your Face (2014). Her songs can also be sampled online at YouTube. Look for such evocative titles as "Try Not to Be a Dick", "I Don't Want to Have a Baby", and "Foreign Policy Folksong". Best of all, check out the brilliant "Yellow Ribbon", with its chorus "take that yellow ribbon off your car". Here, accompanying herself on the banjo, Emily performs in front of a U.S. Armed Forces recruiting station. While her chops on the ukulele and banjo are so far pretty rudimentary, she gamely asserts that she's on a quest for "eventual world domination" (including ukulele "superstardom"). One of her dreams is to form a band of war vet musicians and go back to Iraq to collaborate with local artists on a musical project. Emily Yates is a bold new voice who deserves a wider audience. For more info: <http://emilyyatesdoeseverything.com/>.



La Trova Nuestra

Friday, Nov. 28, 8 pm

"La Peña Nuestra"

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

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

A saviour called Jyoti Basu

By Gurpreet Singh

It was January 2010. I was on my first visit to Kolkata. Previously known as Calcutta, the city is the capital of West Bengal state of India. The province was under Communist rule when I was travelling in that part of my home country. I went there mainly to visit Budge Budge, the site where the Komagata Maru ship passengers were shot in September, 1914. The Japanese vessel carrying over 300 South Asian passengers was forced to return by the Canadian government under the discriminatory continuous journey law, designed to stop Indian immigrants from permanent settlement in BC. Following a scuffle with the British India police at Budge Budge shore, the deported passengers were shot at, leaving many dead. A Sikh temple in memory of the deceased passengers greets visitors in the town.

My host Sohan Singh, a staunch supporter of the Communist Party of India (Marxist), directed me inside the temple. As a devout Sikh, he stood inside for a moment with eyes closed and hands folded in prayer before the holy-scriptures. Another man, a baptized Sikh and caretaker of the temple, told us about the history of the place. They said that the town was once populated by many Sikhs when the transport business was flourishing, but they started moving to other parts of West Bengal once the industry went through an economic downturn. The Sikhs are the backbone of the transportation industry in the state, and many I met were the second generation of Sikh migrants from Punjab, who can fluently speak Bengali.

Most intriguing, both these Sikh men supported the communists, who are otherwise infamous for being "anti-religion". Although the current Trinamool Congress government has earned the goodwill of the Bengali Sikh community and has a turbaned Sikh minister in the cabinet, the Sikhs in that region have mainly supported the communists.

The reason is simple. The communists had saved the Sikhs

during the 1984 carnage, while the community was targeted by goons led by supporters of the Congress party, seeking revenge for the assassination of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi by her Sikh bodyguards. While Sikhs were being killed with the help of police in Congress-ruled states, the community felt protected in West Bengal. Almost every Sikh I met during my visit felt indebted to the Marxist former Chief Minister, Jyoti Basu, for protecting the lives and properties of the Sikhs.

An ailing Basu was battling for his life in those days. I had a chance to visit the hospital where he was under treatment, but no one could glimpse the veteran communist leader, who was born during the year of Budge Budge shootout. I had interviewed him for radio over the phone a few years earlier. He wanted his body parts to be donated for scientific research after his death. He was against religious rituals. I really wanted to talk about it on my radio program. Since he couldn't hear anything over the phone due to aging, I interviewed him through an intermediary. Because of this, some confusion arose over my line of questioning, and he got agitated and left the conversation.

Basu wrote in his memoirs that he was near Chennai for a national conference of the Water Transport Workers' Federation when Indira Gandhi was murdered. He rushed to New Delhi the next day. Basu's government called out the army in Calcutta, and once he was back to West Bengal, his party supporters worked hard to protect the Sikhs and organized an "Amity Rally". He accused the Congress in his memoirs of using the communal card to win the parliamentary election after the riots. He pointed out that the Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh, a Hindu nationalist organization, backed the Congress while targeting the Sikhs.

During my visit to the hospital another important development took place. A prominent film star, Amitabh Bachchan, visited Basu. His fans crowded a street near the hospital entrance to get his picture on their cell phones. That was the first time I saw Bachchan live. As

he walked out after seeing Basu, the crowd cheered boisterously. Ironically, Bachchan was elected a Congress MP following 1984 carnage. Born to a Sikh mother, Bachchan never uttered a word to publicly denounce the anti-Sikh violence. Known as angry young men, Bachchan and other Congress MPs got elected with a brute majority, riding on the anti-Sikh wave. I wondered who the real hero was: the one who faked fights on the silver screen, or the one who stood against the current in real life.

Obviously, the real hero was inside the hospital under medical care, whose legacy even affected the critics of the communists. A case in point is a Sikh driver who took me to different places in Calcutta. He had a big sticker of Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale, a fundamentalist Sikh preacher, pasted on the rear window. Bhindranwale had started Sikh militancy in Punjab. His followers killed close to 300 communists. Yet, this Sikh driver acknowledged that Basu will always be remembered as a saviour.

The day I returned to Delhi, Basu passed away at the age of 96. The Punjab government declared a holiday to mourn his death. Basu was also a politician and had his own limitations and contradictions, but he proved himself a real defender of secularism by helping a minority community at the time of crisis. ●

BJP misdeeds...

continued from page 9

this government, which pursues the politics of hatred and hoodwinking more than the economic reforms it promised.

Putting DD (Doordarshan), India's official broadcaster, at the disposal of RSS chief Bhagwat to address the nation on the eve of Dusehra, a Hindu festival which is also RSS Foundation Day, was quite a new phenomenon. In his hour-long broadcast, Bhagwat talked about his concern that illegal Muslim immigration into Assam, West Bengal and Bihar from Bangladesh had the potential to endanger the "Hindu society". Pleading for Modi, Bhagwat said that people should give more time for efficient execution of BJP policies. He pressed for a complete ban on cow slaughter and meat exports, and urged people to stop buying Chinese goods. The difference, if any, between RSS and Modi's BJP, disappeared. Both look like two sides of same coin.

The Congress, SP and Left parties played the national channel for playing into the hands of the government and wasting taxpayers' money by allowing Bhagwat to propagate the RSS agenda of saffronisation, instead of pressing problems like poverty alleviation or fighting joblessness.

In the end

Even so, many surveys show an NDA lead in state elections. Evidently the federal poll outcomes are still fresh in voters' memories, and Modi's tricks also play their part. For example, Modi

What's Left

Vancouver, BC

Left Film Night, "Weight of Chains", 7 pm, Sunday, Oct. 26, documentary on the NATO destruction of Yugoslavia, Centre for Socialist Education, 706 Clark Drive. Next film Nov. 30. Ph. 604-255-2041 for details.

La Trova Nuestra, evening of Latin American music, admission \$10, 8 pm, Friday, Nov. 28, Centre for Socialist Education, 706 Clark Drive.

Revolution Banquet, Sat., Nov. 29, annual event sponsored by Centre for Socialist Education, at Meridian Cultural Centre, 4306 Victoria Drive. For tickets and information, ph. 604-254-9836.

Montreal, QC

Public services and programs under attack! Halloween demo against Liberal austerity carnage, Friday, Oct. 31, 11 am, gather at McGill College Ave. and Sherbrooke (near Metro McGill).

People's Voice deadlines

November 16-30 issue: Thursday, Nov. 6

December 1-31 issue: Thursday, Nov. 20

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



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showered praises on the Khap Panchayats (the most reactionary and backward village organizations, which stand against modernization and gave verdicts against women in Haryana and elsewhere) to get votes. "I bow before these khaps of Haryana," he told an election rally there, inviting loud cheers from party workers.

But that isn't the end of everything. Peoples' struggle for their emancipation from tyrant regimes does ultimately bring

positive results. It is hoped that Indians belonging to various regions, races or religions, and speaking different dialects, who together defeated British Imperialism in 1947, won't let the country fall into the hands of dictators and fascists in the 21st century. We are sure that the saffron clouds hovering over India right now can't stop the rainbow of secularism and socialism from appearing over the horizon. Let it be a temporary phenomenon, like a bad dream. ●

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4306 Victoria Drive

Great food, music and speakers

*Celebrate the Great October Socialist
Revolution and all struggles for liberation!*

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706 Clark Drive, Vancouver

**Full details in our next issue.
For information or to reserve tickets,
ph. 604-254-9836.**

Why new Euro-Canada treaty is a gift to oil firms

By Murray Dobbin, in
TheTyee.ca, Oct. 6, 2014

By sheer coincidence the media has recently been filled with stories that reflect the parallel universes we seem to be living in. The first were the stories about the international climate summit and the huge climate march (and hundreds of smaller ones) that preceded it - punctuated by the launch of Naomi Klein's powerful call-to-action book *This Changes Everything: Capitalism versus the Climate* adding to the power of the moment.

But while climate activists were demonstrating and some 100 world leaders were making pledges to finally get serious about climate change, many of those same leaders had already put their name to an international investment treaty parts of which seems to have been virtually written by the same oil companies targeted for criticism and calls for greater regulation. That agreement is called the Comprehensive Economic Trade Agreement (CETA), in the news recently because of yet another photo op with Harper signing it with European leaders.

While there has been attention paid to some key provisions of CETA - such as its investor state rules, its impact on Canadian drug pricing and its curbs on governments' ability to buy local - there has been almost nothing in the media about CETA's chapter on domestic regulation. But a new Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives report on CETA suggests there should be because the articles of that chapter seem designed to kill efforts to regulate the resource industry. In other words just as governments need to get deadly serious about reducing our dependence on fossil fuels they are tying their own hands through new restrictions on their right to regulate.

CETA's domestic regulation chapter would be more aptly called "Gifts for the Oil and Gas Industry". These CETA provisions are so biased in favour of corporations it is easy to picture industry execs sitting at the elbows of CETA's negotiators, guiding their pens as they draft the agreement. Short of an international treaty banning all government regulations outright, CETA gives the oil and gas industry virtually everything it has been

asking for, for decades. Of course these anti-regulation gifts are also available to other sectors including the mining industry but given the special place in Harper's universe reserved for Alberta's oil patch it's not hard to see where the impetus came from.

Most trade and investment agreements are full of obscure legalese, but the Domestic Regulation chapter of CETA is actually relatively simple to understand. So check it out. The restrictions on regulation you will find are right out of the oil and gas industry's wish list. Chapter 14 on Domestic Regulation provides so many grounds for regulations to be challenged that almost any regulation could conceivably be ruled in contravention of the agreement.

Other voices...

CETA places an absolute value on the ease with which corporations can get approval of their projects. It demands that parties ensure "...that licensing and qualification procedures are as simple as possible and do not unduly complicate or delay the supply of a service or the pursuit of any other economic activity." (Article II.7) Requiring that oil and gas companies do environmental assessments, archaeological studies or get approvals from different levels of government is clearly a process that could be made simpler by doing away with these requirements. Obligations to consult with the public and First Nations certainly complicate the regulatory process and cause delays.

Whether or not governments have simplified their licensing processes to the absolute maximum extent possible and are not causing "undue" delays or complications would be up to a panel of trade lawyers to decide in the event of a dispute. They could look at examples from the most deregulated jurisdictions to determine what is "as simple as possible."

China, for example, allows



corporations to ignore requirements for environmental impact assessments (EIA) and just pay a small fine after the fact. An article in *Businessweek* reveals the results of the "simple" Chinese process: "In November 2013 an oil pipeline burst in Qingdao, killing or injuring more than 100 people; a faulty EIA process was partly to blame for the deaths. As Chinese environmental journalist Liu Jianqiang commented in reference to the Qingdao disaster, "It is common in China for EIAs to be faked and planning assessments to simply not exist ... and so our country is littered with such ticking time bombs."

CETA's Chapter 14 requires that all regulations that governments have not expressly excluded from the agreement must be "objective" and "established in advance". (Article 2.2) Given that these terms are not defined they can mean anything that a trade tribunal decides they mean. While the word "objective" might not seem threatening in most contexts, here it is loaded with danger for public interest regulation. If a tribunal interprets "objective" to mean "not subjective", existing regulations could be challenged. Why? Because they are based on a government regulator's effort to balance competing interests - a necessarily "subjective" exercise. If licensing approvals are based to some extent on public opinion of a project, this too could mean licensing decisions are not "objective."

And what does it mean to say that regulations have to be "established in advance"? Does that mean that new regulations cannot be introduced? Even if this provision is just interpreted to mean that regulations cannot be changed once an application has been approved, there are very good

reasons why a government might need to impose new regulations on operations that are already licensed. BC's Mount Polley mine spill is a perfect example of where a government had to impose new requirements on established mines after a catastrophic regulatory failure. CETA could make that impossible in the future.

Disputes arising out of so-called "trade" agreements are decided by tribunals of corporate trade lawyers. These dispute panels are nothing at all like any public court of law. The model is taken right out of the international commercial dispute resolution process - designed to settle narrow disputes between commercial entities. As such there is almost no room for taking into account interests other than commercial interests. This is square-peg-in-a-round-hole territory.

But at least in other trade and investment agreements governments are allowed to defend their regulations as necessary to protect human health and the environment. Either by intent or sheer carelessness, this defence is not

applied to the domestic regulation chapter of CETA. For example, if environmental assessments are challenged as "unduly" delaying oil and gas development, a government would not be able to defend these assessments as necessary to protect the environment. EU governments could go to bat for their oil giants Total and BP - and force Canadian governments to gut licensing regulations for the whole industry.

Just as the world is trying to come to grips with the growing climate crisis and Canadians are increasingly skeptical about a national economic strategy relying on expansion of the tar sands, CETA threatens to make action on those concerns increasingly difficult. Environmentalists point out that the faster you develop the tar sands, the worse it is for climate change but CETA could make it extremely difficult to slow down their expansion. There are many good reasons to hope that CETA never actually comes into effect, but perhaps the best is to preserve the policy space needed to address climate change. ●

Exhibition reveals horror of Odessa Massacre in Ukraine

An exhibition highlighting the massacre of Ukrainian trade unionists and political activists in Odessa on May 2, 2014, was shown October 12 to 17 at the Teacher's Club in Dublin, Ireland.

The exhibition included photographs showing the events that surrounded the Odessa Massacre, in which far-right gangs killed at least 42 political activists. The exhibition also included images from the conflict in other parts of Ukraine and a presentation by Oleg Muzyka, a survivor of the Odessa Massacre.

The exhibition was hosted by Mobius, an organisation of Ukrainians in Ireland that seeks to highlight the violent activities of the fascist militias which support the Kiev Regime.

Mobius spokesperson, Sergey Menshakov, said: "People in Ireland are largely unaware of the horrors that are being perpetrated by fascist gangs in the Ukraine. These gangs, which act in support of the regime that was installed in Kiev after the coup in February, have killed many men, women and children.

"In Odessa in May political activists and trade unionists that were protesting for a federal Ukraine were chased into the local trade union hall. The building was then set on fire and as people tried to escape the flames they were set upon and killed by a fascist mob".

He added: "We are calling for a proper investigation of this mass murder and for the Irish people to be aware of the horror that is happening in another European country." ●



Masked gunmen calmly walking among local police officers during the May 2 massacre in Odessa. Photo: www.globalresearch.ca/

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