

**Greeks still  
resisting...**  
*See page 7*

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# people's VOICE

## Angry Greeks battle EU-IMF austerity *page 10*



## Save the Wheat Board: *Pages 2 & 3*



Farmers rally in Winnipeg against the federal government's attack on the Wheat Board.

### **7** Occupy tragedy

A young woman has died of a drug overdose at the Occupy Vancouver campsite. Is this tragedy the fault of the Occupy movement, or does it reflect much deeper social problems?

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### **6** Canada First?

The Tory government's so-called "Canada First Defence Strategy" prioritizes profits for war-makers, not the interests of working people.

### **12** Taking liberties

One of Canada's most prominent defenders of civil rights and liberties exposes the chilling reality behind the so-called "anti-terrorist national security" political agenda.

# Act now to save the Wheat Board!

**Manitoba Committee,  
Communist Party of  
Canada, October 28, 2011**

We don't want to wake up after four years of Harper Conservative rule and not recognize the Canada we now have. More than 60,000 Western Canadian farmers and their Wheat Board are under the most serious attack in history.

Unless the labour movement comes out strongly to support the family farm now, then it will not have the allies it needs to defeat the Conservatives in 2015. It will be a huge task to build a broad alliance of popular movements.

Organizing outside parliament is the only strategy that works, swelling the progressive vote and nudging politicians to put people before profit. For example, the Canadian Labour Congress was part of the massive 1988 campaign by the Pro-Canada Network to defeat the Mulroney government's free trade proposal. The CLC targeted 50 incumbent PC candidates for defeat.

We have to start now to build an even stronger popular coalition than in 1988. The alliance needs to embrace farmers, Aboriginal peoples, the peace movement, youth and students, women and anti-poverty groups - all popular groups working for democratic rights.

Going back further in history, it was the dream of the Conservative Party to colonize Western Canada with farmers after cleansing the land of its original owners. It was the farmers and railway workers who brought Canada together as we know it today, not military exploits in 1812 or the First World War.

The farmers and workers of Western Canada have always been looked at as a source of profit for the industrialists in Ontario who backed the Conservative's National Dream. Today, Harper is acting for the giant U.S. grain corporations, not the Ontario industrialists.

**FALSE: Without the Canadian Wheat Board, farmers will make more money and the food industry will employ more people in Canada**

There is absolutely no research

that supports either allegation. The CWB, which works for large and small farmers, has unchallenged research that it provides a net benefit of \$500 million per year compared to the "open market."

Without the CWB, the earnings of smaller family farms will be more vulnerable to the monopoly practices of grain corporations whose only motive is profit. Thousands of family farms will be wiped out.

**FALSE: "The people of Canada have spoken and they want to get rid of the CWB."**

A week before the May 2 federal election, Conservative agriculture minister Gerry Ritz said he would respect a CWB farmers' vote about the future of the Canadian Wheat Board. We know now that was a false statement, although it was widely reported in Western Canadian farm newspapers.

A clear majority of both wheat and barley farmers in Western Canada voted in support of the CWB's single-desk selling mandate in a referendum this August. More than 60 per cent of voters opposed the Conservative Party in the last election which was the only elected party that wanted to get rid of the CWB.

**FALSE: "Losing the Wheat Board won't matter, especially to people in cities, and most farms are big corporations anyway."**

The CWB markets from \$5-8.5 billion a year in wheat and barley. It is the largest farmer-run marketing board in Canada and perhaps the world. The majority of farms in Canada are still family farms, under constant pressure from both monopoly suppliers and marketers, except where protected by marketing boards.

**FALSE AND INHUMAN: "Larger farms and putting the global grain trade into the hands of the giant grain corporations will end global hunger."**

Famine is spreading through the world. In 2008, the giant grain corporations were responsible for the record cereal grain prices that sparked food riots in at least 26 countries. They made a combined profit of \$266 billion that year. Now, prices are again at record

levels and millions of people are expected to die of starvation in Africa alone. The Canadian Wheat Board acts as a brake on the cartel-like actions of these grain giants.

So why is the Harper government giving even more to these corporations who already dominate the global grain market? He hates telling his friends in Washington their corporations can't control our grain industry.

Second, the democratic farmers' movement in Western Canada offers hope to the starving millions.

Finally and most importantly for Harper, the farmers' movement offers hope that people in Western Canada can curb Harper's unlimited greed. So Harper wants to wipe them out. These are people Labour should get to know.

In a 2008 global study, more than 1,000 agrarian scientists and

experts declared that continuing to force millions of smaller farmers off the land and into cities is shortsighted and a danger to the world food supply.

We cannot let Harper crush the democratic farmers' movement in Western Canada. They are needed to help block the monumental greed of the Harper Conservatives, which threatens both us and the starving millions abroad.

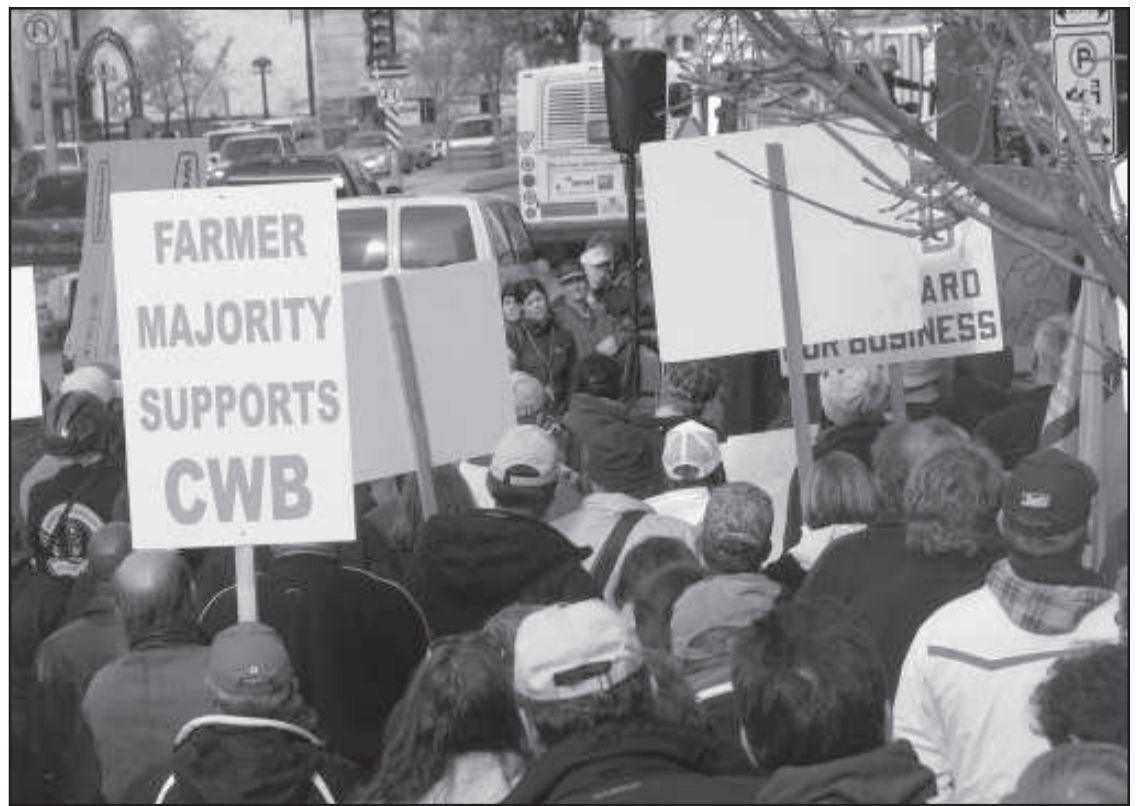
If it is to play a positive role in building a better Canada, the trade union movement needs to have a broad and liberating vision for the rest of society and not keep quiet when the country is being ripped apart. It needs to support the democratic rights of other groups in society, such as farmers who want to keep the CWB.

Farmers are working people, also. Many work off their farms to

make ends meet, many in a union job. While it is true that trade union members in Canada are getting older compared to the general public, it is short sighted to be focused only on economic issues of self-interest. An injury to one is an injury to all!

We need to act now to create the kind of popular alliance that will block the Harper Conservatives. First they are coming for the CWB, then they will go for the CBC, then medicare. The labour movement cannot afford to remain silent.

We cannot lose this monumental opportunity to make a firm alliance with the farmers of Canada, an alliance that will work to protect other valuable advances made by workers such as medicare, pensions and collective bargaining rights. ●



Farmers rally in Winnipeg to defend the Wheat Board.

## NFU campaign to back CWB

The National Farmers Union (NFU) has launched an emergency on-line petition to support Canadian food, Canadian farmers and the Canadian Wheat Board. Readers can sign on to the following statement at [www.nfu.ca](http://www.nfu.ca).

The Canadian Wheat Board (CWB) is under attack by the federal government. Agriculture Minister Gerry Ritz has stated repeatedly that he will not recognize the results of the voluntary plebiscite recently conducted by the CWB in which results were clearly in favour of keeping the CWB as the sole selling agent for prairie wheat and barley intended for human consumption. Instead he plans to introduce legislation to end the CWB's single desk authority in the fall session of Parliament.

The CWB was created by an Act of Parliament, and is run by a 15-member Board of Directors, ten of whom are elected by farmers. The CWB provides fair, equitable, reliable and cost-effective service to farmers. The existence of the CWB provides stability in uncertain times, and is a foundation of Canada's grain sector.

Ending the single desk authority of the CWB would throw western

agriculture into turmoil and would transfer wealth created by Canadian farmers to big private, often foreign-owned grain companies instead of being returned to farmers and spent in their communities. The Minneapolis Grain Exchange has already changed its rules to allow for speculation in futures contracts for Canadian wheat and barley, which will result in increasing price volatility for purchasers without providing any benefit to farmers.

Canada's political system is built on representative democracy. This means that the law, not merely the person in power, is to be respected and followed. The CWB Act is a law made by Parliament, and it contains a clause that requires a farmer vote before any substantive changes are made to the single desk authority. Our current government has stated it is ready to eliminate this requirement, or perhaps repeal the whole Act, in order to avoid such a vote. This is deeply concerning, as it strikes at the heart of our Canadian democracy.

We the undersigned:  
\* Recognize the billions of dollars of economic value that the CWB annually creates for farmers, rural

communities, short line railroads and the whole of Canada through its superior marketing ability, capacity to defend Canadian interests in trade disputes, and the fact that it returns all net proceeds from sales to farmers.

\* Are proud of the strong international reputation for quality and reliability that Canadian wheat and barley have, which is a direct result of the CWB and its companion institutions, Canadian International Grains Institute and the Canadian Grain Commission.

\* Deplore the federal government's stated intention to deny the outcome of the recent voluntary plebiscite where 62% of farmers voted in favour of keeping the single desk for wheat and 51% supported keeping it for barley.

We therefore call upon the federal government to immediately stop undermining the single desk authority of the CWB. If any changes to the Board are contemplated, we insist that the federal government comply with the Canadian Wheat Board Act Section 47.1 which requires a binding plebiscite (vote) of farmers before any substantive change to its single desk authority is implemented. ●

### Celebrate 90 years of the Communist Party in Canada



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# USW 1005 signs three-year contract

A year ago, members of Local 1005 USW in Hamilton were locked out by U.S. Steel. On October 15, the local ratified a three-year collective agreement. With 612 of 733 eligible voters casting a ballot, 61% were in favour, and 39% opposed.

The union agrees that nobody was pleased with the contract, which contains two major concessions U.S. Steel would not budge on: indexing on pensions, and removal of the defined benefit plan for new hires.

Local 1005 President Rolf Gerstenberger rejected the view of the *Hamilton Spectator*, which claims that this is virtually the same contract which was rejected in November 2010.

"Despite the setback, there is no reason to be disheartened," Gerstenberger told a union bulletin. "The *Spectator* and some sideline commentators who never believed in the fight in the first place are the ones saying that what the company offered today is virtually the same as it offered eleven months ago. This is simply not true, but their aim in making these meaningless evaluations is to say that we should not have resisted, we should not have organized to get another outcome.

"As recently as a couple of weeks ago, the Company still

thought it could get away with dictating whatever it wanted. It found out it could not. There is nothing virtual about the difference between now and eleven months ago. It is only when a union takes a militant stand in defence of the rights of its members and its own role as their bargaining agent in the context of defending the rights of all, that it becomes clear how matters really stand. Everyone saw what it takes to defend what belongs to us by right. In the case of the Company, everyone saw what it means to defend the most narrow self-serving money-grubbing interests of a few big shots. They saw how dangerous it is to put Canada in foreign hands and we got an inkling of the fight which lies ahead to hold not only these companies like U.S. Steel to account but also governments.

"As a result of the militant stand taken by the active and retired members of Local 1005 and the community, everyone is now fully aware of what U.S. Steel is and how its word means nothing.

"Right from the beginning we said our security lies in the fight for the rights of all. This whole process has taught all of us the necessity to stand together. We not only upheld our dignity which the company sought to trample underfoot, but we understood first hand that this

is the only way forward in the future as well.

"You can see how the Company tried to break its promises under the Investment Canada Act with impunity and that it thinks that there is one law for them, the law of getting away with whatever serves their momentary interests, and another law for the rest of us, who lose our houses if we don't pay our mortgages.

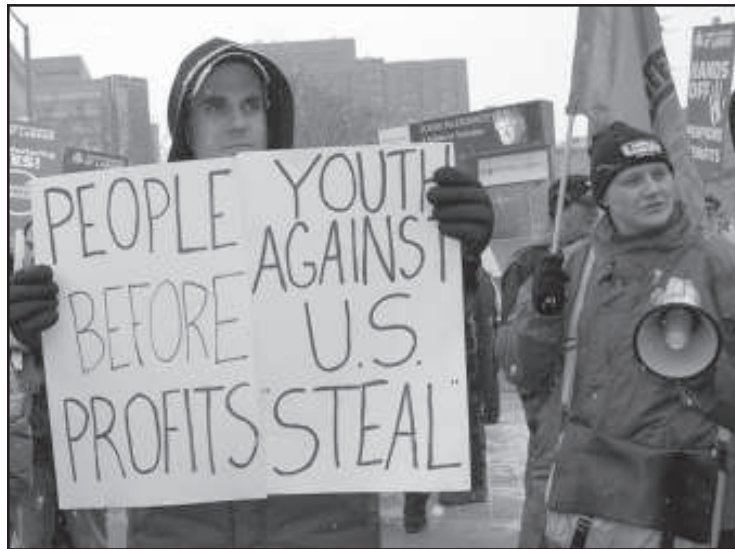
"Because the workers fought they were able to show the entire community how cynical and self-serving a company like U.S. Steel

is, and the dangers Canada faces in foreign hands. Far from this fight being to no avail, it will stand us in good stead to deal with the serious challenges facing us going forward...

"Did we break new ground? Yes, certainly. In a very practical manner we understood that we have to fight all over again to establish a regime which favours those who work and create the wealth Canada depends on for its well-being. The new regime of labour relations the Government of Canada wants to impose on the entire country, and

the concerted attacks which are being escalated against unions are just the tip of the iceberg of what lies ahead. Even as workers thought they would be enjoying their retirement in security or providing for their families with security, we now have a better idea of the fight this country faces. Workers across the country have to join forces in a very real way like we did in this fight. We have broken new ground by defining our fight. Now we have to carry it forward. Together we worked out what was to be done and what could be achieved at this time. We have to do no less in the future as well. And we will become better at it. The refusal of U.S. Steel to publicly commit to making the pension fund solvent and its constant repetition of a decontextualized interpretation of the law which tries to distort its intent tells us something about the fight facing us going forward. We will make sure it is held to account."

Gerstenberger thanked the community for its support of Local 1005 during the lockout, especially the workers' families and pensioners, the many union locals and businesses, city councillors, the Mayor and others. "We will continue to stand with all the pensioners who deserved better. We will continue to fight for a strong union," he concluded. ●



The people of Hamilton showed consistent solidarity with USW Local 1005. (PV file photo by Ed Bil)

## Tory dictators steamroll over CWB

Commentary by Joyce Neufeld, Waldeck, SK

Prime Minister Harper intends to steamroller his elimination of the Canadian Wheat Board (CWB) through Parliament. He intends to avoid Agriculture Committee Hearings and fast track Bill C-18 through the unusual use of a Legislative Committee hearing process. This will restrict Parliament's right to examine this legislation and to hear from those most affected - the farmers of Western Canada.

Should Harper, Ritz & Anderson be successful, we could see the firing of our democratically elected CWB Board of Directors within weeks, only to be replaced by five government stooges who obey the Minister of Agriculture and have no obligation to act in the interests of farmers, but will instead act in the interest of five large corporate Grain Traders and two Railways.

1. July 2008: Stephen Harper vows to "walk over" CWB supporters.

2. July 23, 2008: Minister of

Agriculture Gerry Ritz sends a secret letter to the CWB instructing the CWB to remove about one-third of the farmer-voters from the voters' list.

3. August 2008: Ritz changes the CWB regulations and removes the spending limits on third party interveners during the election period.

4. September 2008: Ritz sends a letter and ballot application to farmers/ranchers in western Canada encouraging non-permit book holders to vote. The application will not work for farmers who hold a CWB permit book but have been removed from the voters list.

5. September/October 2008: The ballot application posted on the election Coordinator's website will not work for farmer permit book holders who want to get back on the voters' list.

6. November 2008: Several Conservative MPs directly contravened the Code of Ethics for MPs by sending campaign-style letters directly to farmers from their offices in Ottawa.

7. October 7, 2011 - Regina: Harper said "This is a historic change that has been long overdue. It's time for the Wheat Board and others who have been standing in the way to realize that this train is barreling down a Prairie track. You're much better to get on it than to lie on the tracks because this is going ahead"

More recently, Harper has committed millions of Taxpayers dollars to shore up grain shipments through the Port of Churchill for the next four years (\$5 million) and more over three years (\$4 million) for maintenance - a cost that was previously covered by the present CWB system for as little as 8 cents per bushel by the farmer. 95% of Churchill business is due to CWB

export sales.

"In fact, the cost of winding up the CWB could cost taxpayers many more millions - in severance to employees, legal costs, etc. All this to get rid of a profitable enterprise that wasn't costing taxpayers a nickel" (Bruce Johnstone, *Leader-Post*, Oct 22, 2011).

Harper, Ritz & Anderson are making a complete mockery of Canadian Democracy in their headlong goal to hand the whole grain industry over to their corporate grain trading friends and railways at the expense of farmers.

The Grain Growers of Canada, a group which claims to represent more farmers than there are in all of western Canada, is fond of claiming that without the CWB value adding of grains will increase. It is also a favourite of Gerry Ritz.

Perhaps Ritz could explain the fact that a major Canadian company, Legumex Walker Inc. is

spending \$110 million US on a canola crushing plant to be located in Washington State, USA. After all, the CWB has nothing to do with canola, so why is a Canadian company running to the US to build a processing plant when there is so much Canadian-grown canola?

Then we have Larry Martin, George Morris Centre, saying "Wheat, durum and barley processing sector has been restrained by the single desk, which forces processors to pay more for board grain than if they bought the crops directly from farmers". (*Western Producer*, Oct. 13.) Is that bad - that the farmers get more for their product through the CWB?

The Harper Government has been extolling their role in the removal of a dictator from Libya, while at the same time practising their own brand of dictatorship here on Canadian farmers. ●

### NIAGARA NEWS BULLETIN

People's Voice Niagara Bureau

\* Welland food banks report that they are getting 200-400 more people per month, 30% of them children, than they were designed for. It's expected to get worse this winter as EI runs out for those laid off from profitable plants allowed to shut down and move equipment out of Canada, because of a lack of anti-plant-closing legislation with enforcement.

\* An educational concert remembering the Underground Railroad, "human smugglers" of the 19th century who went through Niagara and led in part by St. Catharines' Harriet Tubman, is being performed in Welland. Stephen Harper wants to criminalize the "human smugglers" of today's underground railroad.

\* The supervisor appointed by the Ontario government to take over Niagara-region local hospitals has said he won't undo any of the restructuring decisions such as selling off public hospital sites. But Niagara Falls City Council and Port Colborne's Mayor are joining activists in pressuring the supervisor to re-open local emergency rooms and review the re-structuring plan. Meanwhile a coroner's inquest has started into the death of a teenager who was in a car crash shortly after local emergency room closures, and had to be driven over half-an-hour to a different facility.

\* The District School Board of Niagara is looking at merging or closing local schools because of lower enrolment, instead of decreasing class sizes.

\* A local video game company touted as the next "GM" for the region's "new" economy received \$4 million in federal loans and another \$4 million in provincial grants. Silicon Knights was highlighted by St. Catharines Tory MP Rick Dykstra as an example of delivering for the riding. Now the firm is laying off 45 of its 75 workers, just like the "old" economy. Only last year, the company president had said the funding would have a "profound and long-lasting" effect.

### PSAC calls to save Wheat Board

The Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC) has joined with the Council of Canadians and others to file for intervenor status in a lawsuit seeking to prevent the closure of the Canadian Wheat Board.

The Conservative government's Bill C-18 would end the CWB's authority as a single desk seller of grain. It would also compromise the effectiveness of the Canadian Grain Commission and eliminate hundreds of grain inspector jobs held by members of PSAC's Agriculture Union.

PSAC members who are experts in grain inspection, storage and shipment warn that Canada's reputation for producing and exporting grain of the highest quality will suffer irreparable damage as a result of the dissolution of the Wheat Board.

"Our members know that Bill C-18 threatens the integrity of Canada's grain supply," says Bob Kingston, President of the Agriculture Union. "By dismantling the Canadian Wheat Board, the Harper government is ushering in multinational agricultural corporations that will dominate Canadian grain production. This will have negative implications for Canadian food security and food sovereignty."

Bill C-18 will also affect 100 employees of the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, due to the reduced number of grain loads requiring inspection. Several hundred employees of the Canadian Grain Commission, the Port of Churchill and in the broader shipping industry will also be at risk. ●

# EDITORIALS

## Vote COPE/Vision in Vancouver

Three years ago, Gregor Robertson's Vision Vancouver swept eight of eleven City Council positions, and a majority on School Board with their COPE allies. We welcomed this decisive rejection of the NPA's anti-working class, pro-business policies - and noted that this victory would be tested by differences between Vision's centrist approach and COPE's left policies at City Hall.

Nothing since 2008 has fundamentally changed this picture. COPE has regained part of its historic labour support which had temporarily swung to Vision, and Mayor Robertson has lost some of his shine. COPE and Vision have cooperated on important issues (environmental initiatives, Insite, street homelessness), while disagreeing on others (the tax shift from business to homeowners). Popular pressure compelled Vision to move on casino expansion and civil liberties during the Olympics. At the School Board level, Vision and COPE trustees have been united to defend public education against the Liberal government's attacks.

This fall, the NPA is raising millions of dollars from forestry and mining corporations. The Harper Tories back the NPA's vicious strategy, hoping to turn Vancouver City Hall into a new outpost for their far-right ideology.

There are plenty of names and parties on the ballot in Vancouver, and Vision's shortcomings include its links with developers. But the real enemy is the NPA-corporate machine, which can only be defeated by one combination of candidates: the Vision/COPE electoral alliance backed by the labour movement. Attempts to divide the centre and left forces can only play into the hands of the NPA, with disastrous results for working people. On November 19, we urge Vancouver voters to back the entire Vision/COPE slate, which offers the best chances to fight for positive change over the next three years.

## Crime & punishment, by PM Harper

For a politician who claims to speak the hard truth, Stephen Harper plays fast and loose with the facts. His government's so-called "Safe Streets" bill is a work of complete fiction based on neo-con ideology rather than science.

Groups such as the Canadian Bar Association and the Civil Liberties Association present an understanding of crime and punishment in the real world, not in the fevered imaginations of far-right politicians. The facts are undeniable. Crime rates have been falling for years, not rising; this is no consolation for victims, but basing public policy on headlines leads to disaster. Similarly, jailing people for minor offences doesn't work. Even the average Tory MP should grasp that prison inmates often learn crime tips from each other.

Bill C-10 will jail tens of thousands for "crimes" as ridiculous as growing a handful of marijuana plants. The provinces will bear the multi-billion dollar burden of this policy, leading to more social cuts and/or higher taxes on working people.

Add to this the plans for warrantless electronic spying on Canadians, and \$500 billion on military spending over the next two decades, and a clear pattern emerges. Right-wing politicians are not eliminating the state, they are removing universal social programs and redistributive spending, in favour of a massive binge on the police, prisons, spies, and weapons. When the Harperites are finished, Canadians will be under constant surveillance, and jailed for a wide range of "offences" against the morals of a small minority. Canada will become a militarized thug state, a willing accomplice of the U.S. and its NATO allies, imposing the rule of transnational capital across the planet. It's a scary future, but not inevitable... if sufficient resistance can be built, starting today, not during an election four years from now.

## PEOPLE'S VOICE

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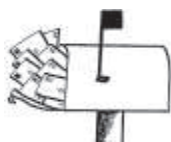
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### LETTERS

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

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## Letters to the Editor

### A letter from cell 9, block 59, Givon Prison

On Nov. 4, the Saoirse (Ireland) and Tahrir (Canada), the first two vessels in the "Freedom Waves" campaign to bring material solidarity and to defy the siege of Gaza were intercepted by Israeli military forces in international waters. The solidarity activists and crew members were arrested and taken to prison in Israel.

David Heap, one of the Canadians aboard the Tahrir, hand-wrote the following letter, brought out by some who were released.

Dear sisters and brothers, friends and loved ones,

I write to you from cell 9, block 59 Givon Prison near Ramla in Occupied Palestine. Although I was tasered during the assault on the Tahrir, and bruised during forcible removal dockside (I am limping slightly as a result) I am basically ok. We, Ehab, Michael, Karen from Tahrir, as well as Karen, Kit (US) and Jihan who we saw briefly this morning. We are most concerned about our Tahrir shipmate, Palestinian Majd Kayyal from Haifa, last seen by us at Ashdod being photographed and put in a police car.\*

Although Michael and I (among others) were transported in handcuffs and leg shackles, let me stress that we are neither criminals nor illegal immigrants but rather political prisoners of the apartheid state of Israel. Four from the Tahrir are imprisoned with 12 Irish comrades from the Saoirse, who have more experience with such issues. The four of us, Ehab and I (Cdn), Michael (Aus) and Hassan (UK) have joined with the Irish in their political prisoners' committee in order to press our collective demands:

- association in the block - i.e. open cells
- adequate writing and reading

material

- free communication with outside world - i.e. regular phone calls
- information about shipmate women held at same prison

We add one Tahrir-specific demand: that Israeli state recognize the professional status of Democracy Now journalist Jihan Hafiz in accordance with her credentials from the US government. All political incarceration is unjust but let me stress that in duration and conditions, our situation pales in comparison to the plight of thousands of Palestinian political prisoners and to the open air prison of Gaza.

If you have energy to devote to solidarity actions in the coming days, please concentrate on them. We must get Tahrir back and hope Freedom Waves continue.

Free Majd Kayyal! Free all political prisoners! Free Gaza! Free Palestine!

Anishnabe-debuewin, restons humaine, stay human, in love and struggle,  
David

(\* Majd Kayyal was released, but it appears David and the other political prisoners weren't told where he was taken.)

(Editor's note: On Nov. 7, while Israel claimed that all 27 people aboard the Tahrir and Saoirse had been released or were awaiting deportation, the Freedom Waves campaign was able to confirm that just seven had been released or deported: Majd Kayyal (Palestinian from Haifa), Lina Attalah (Egyptian journalist), Casey James (U.S. journalist), Aimane Zoubir (Moroccan journalist), Capt. George Klontzas (Greece), Capt. Zacharias Stylianakis, and Karen de Vito (Canada).

For the first 24 hours of their abduction, none of the activists, crew, or journalists, were allowed to call a lawyer or family members. The next day, a few were able to make a single one-minute phone call.

The Israeli authorities tried to pressure the activists to sign a voluntary deportation agreement.

The activists refused, because the waiver states that they came to Israel voluntarily and entered the country illegally, statements which are patently untrue. According to Israeli law, those who refuse to sign the waiver are detained for 72 hours and then brought before an immigration judge, who will rubberstamp the deportation order.

Organizers of the Canadian Boat to Gaza are demanding Foreign Affairs Minister John Baird step down for failing to do his job.

"Our friends have been assaulted, tasered, beaten, kidnapped, robbed, and imprisoned and we have now learned that the Department Foreign Affairs is telling them they have to pay for their deportation flight," said Wendy Goldsmith, an organizer with the Canadian Boat to Gaza. "If Minister Baird wants to put the interests of a far-right Israeli government before Canadians, he should apply for the job of Israel's ambassador. Otherwise he should demand the immediate release of the Canadian political prisoners in Israel and an immediate end to Israel's illegal blockade of Gaza."

For more information, see the websites [www.tahrir.ca](http://www.tahrir.ca) and [www.irishshiptogaza.org](http://www.irishshiptogaza.org).

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# Bill C-10: omnibus attack on human rights

## PV Vancouver Bureau

On September 20, Tory Justice Minister Rob Nicholson tabled Bill C-10, an omnibus bill titled the Safe Streets and Communities Act. Combining amendments from bills that failed to pass in previous Tory minority parliaments, the legislation would make fundamental changes to Canada's criminal justice system.

Among other changes, C-10 proposes: new criminal offences; new and increased mandatory minimum sentences; the selective elimination of conditional sentences; increased pretrial detention and harsher sentencing principles for young offenders; longer waiting times to apply for pardons; increased barriers for Canadians detained abroad who wish to serve the remainder of their sentence at home.

The Bill also amends the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act, to grant the Minister of Immigration broad discretion to deny work permits to any foreign national who is "at risk of abuse", and introduces changes to allow victims of terrorism to sue certain (but not all) foreign entities and governments for damages.

Many groups have condemned the legislation. For example, the Canadian Civil Liberties Association says the Bill proposes "a few welcome changes," such as

requiring the Parole Board of Canada to provide statistics relating to record suspensions, which replace pardons for some offences.

Overall, however, the CCLA warns that "the direction these changes set out - jail more often, for longer, with more lasting consequences - is a dangerous route that is unsupported by the social science evidence and has already failed in other countries. Indeed, the research suggests that putting an individual in jail for longer will actually increase the likelihood of re-offending. It's hard to see how this Bill will make streets and communities safer. What it will do is needlessly increase the number of people in prison, skyrocketing costs and imposing unjust, unwise and unconstitutional punishments. This is exactly the kind of policy Canada doesn't need."

The CCLA raises several specific concerns.

The legislation proposes "vague amendments to the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act", giving a very broad mandate to deny any foreign national a work permit, without specifying what factors define an individual as "at risk" of being exploited. A better public policy, says the CCLA, would address employers who exploit such individuals.



Fundamental Freedoms rally, Toronto, June 2011 (Photo: Ed Bil)

The expansion for the rights of victims, says the CCLA, leaves out victims of torture. Both torture and terrorism are serious crimes, and yet the amendments make access to the courts available only to victims of terrorism, who must have their cases "pre-approved" by the government. The Harper Tories would have the ability to decide which governments can or cannot be sued; presumably, the U.S. and other close allies would be exempt.

The use of mandatory minimums for broad and vague underlying offences, says the CCLA, may result in grossly disproportionate sentences. The drug provisions include jail terms for possession of as few as six marijuana plants, and would even target all those who rent or live in a so-called "grow-op" house they do not own. Several provinces warn that a flood of harsh jail sentences, against people who are not criminals, will mean

enormous new expenses for taxpayers.

The bill's child pornography provisions would impose mandatory minimum jail sentences, for consensual, legal sexual activities of youth and young adults.

In the CCLA's view, C-10 will greatly increase the prison population, with a devastating impact on marginalized communities, particularly Aboriginal peoples and those with mental health needs who are already greatly over-represented in correctional institutions.

The Canadian Bar Association (CBA) has raised serious concerns with several aspects of C-10. The CBA argues that the Bill will worsen problems faced by the criminal justice system, with huge resource implications.

"The impact on northern residents, Aboriginal people and people with mental illness will be

especially profound," warns the CBA's Dan MacRury. The association speaks for 37,000 lawyers, law teachers, and law students across Canada.

The Canadian Council on Refugees (CCR) points out that Canada is a signatory to the UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons Especially Women and Children, which aims to protect and assist the victims of trafficking in persons, with full respect for their human rights. Currently, non-citizen women, children and men who are trafficked into Canada are often detained and deported, treated as criminals rather than as victims of a crime. As the CCR points out, C-10's answer to this problem is to exclude people, mostly women, from Canada.

"It is demeaning for women to have a visa officer decide that they should be kept out of Canada for their own protection," says the CCR, warning that the bill "fails to address the situation of the most vulnerable of exploited non-citizens: those who have no valid work permit. In fact, closing the door on valid work permits may expose women to greater vulnerability, by forcing them underground."

The group also criticizes the government's "moralistic" focus on strippers from other countries. "Instead of passing moral judgment," says the CCR, "the government should work on ensuring that non-citizens' rights are protected and that they have the freedom to make informed choices about their own lives." ●

## What could the rich afford?

The 400 wealthiest families in the U.S. aren't just filthy rich, they are downright dirty. Collectively, these households own \$1.37 trillion dollars, a number that is nearly impossible to comprehend. So how much is \$1.37 trillion dollars? Here are 11 things that the richest 400 households in the U.S. can buy with their "hard-earned" cash:

- \* pay off every student loan for every single student in the entire United States.
- \* pay the rent of every single renter in the entire United States for three years.
- \* pay the mortgages of every house in the whole country for 14 full months.
- \* buy every single house that was foreclosed on in 2007 and 2008.
- \* pay the annual salaries of 19 million families for one year.
- \* pay off all credit card debt for every single person in the entire United States.
- \* give a \$10,000 bonus to every single worker in the entire country.
- \* buy a new car for every family in the United States.
- \* pay for 3.5 years worth of gas for every driver in the country.
- \* triple the number of teachers in the United States, then give every single one a \$30,000 raise.
- \* The richest 400 households alone could replace 70% of all money lost by Americans in the Great Recession of 2008.

(Source: website of the AFL-CIO, [www.aflcio.org](http://www.aflcio.org))

## \$10 billion profit for Exxon-Mobil

Exxon Mobil Corp. said Oct. 27 its third-quarter profit rose 41% to \$10.33 billion, or \$2.13 a share, from \$7.35 billion (\$1.44 a share) in the same period of 2010, as the oil major benefits from higher crude prices. Wall Street analysts expected Exxon to earn \$2.12 a share, according to a survey by FactSet Research. Capital spending fell 2% to \$8.62 billion, but the Texas-based company noted it has spent a record \$26.7 billion so far in 2011. Exxon bought back \$5 billion in stock in the third quarter and plans to buy back another \$5 billion in the fourth quarter. Exxon's oil-equivalent production fell 4% during the quarter.

## Big Brother is watching you...

Britain's anti-snooping laws must be radically overhauled to prevent "unnecessary, unwarranted and unchecked state intrusion," says Justice, a UK human rights group. More than 20,000 warrants for the interception of phone calls, emails and internet use have been issued since the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act (RIPA) came into force in 2000, according to Justice.

The legal group called for a "root-and-branch" reform of Britain's surveillance powers to provide "genuinely effective safeguards against abuse." It said so-called directed surveillance, where someone can be followed or have their house watched, had been authorised on at least 30,000 occasions in the past decade. Some 2.7 million requests were made for information such as phone bills or location data, along with more than 4,000 authorisations for bugging operations. This figure does not include many other cases such as warrants and authorisations issued on behalf of the security and intelligence services, including MI5, MI6, and GCHQ, which may never come to light.

Justice said the proposals to curb the excessive use of surveillance powers by public bodies such as local authorities in the proposed Protection of Freedoms Bill, do not go far enough.

"RIPA has not only failed to check a great deal of plainly excessive surveillance by public

bodies over the last decade but, in many cases, inadvertently encouraged it," says Justice. "Its poor drafting has allowed councils to snoop, phone hacking to flourish, privileged conversations to be illegally recorded, and CCTV to spread. It is also badly out of date. Root-and-branch reform of the law on surveillance is needed to provide freedom from unreasonable suspicion, and put in place truly effective safeguards against the abuse of what are necessary powers."

In August 2010 Poole Borough

Council admitted that it spied on a family using laws passed to track criminals and terrorists to find out if they were lying about living in a school catchment area. The couple and their three children were put under surveillance by the council for more than two weeks using powers under RIPA.

Eric Metcalfe of Justice said: "From phone hacking to council snooping, RIPA has not only failed to prevent unnecessary surveillance but also encouraged it. Little more than a decade old, it is already badly out of date." ●

## Bleak future for young Brits

### From the Morning Star

Young people across Britain are being condemned to a bleak future as a result of employment and opportunity "blackspots," new research shows. A Work Foundation-backed study warned on Nov. 4 that young people living in the north are the most likely to be "Neets" - not in education, employment or training - because of a lack of job opportunities. It urged the government to invest heavily in northern towns and cities.

The study's authors warned that unless the government acts decisively whole generations of young people will be condemned to a life of crime, lower wages and lower life expectancies than the rest of Britain. Almost one million 16 to 24-year-olds are Neets, with 186,000 of these aged between 16 and 18.

The foundation's study, which analysed Neet levels in 53 of Britain's largest towns and cities, revealed that areas from Liverpool across to Hull were among the most troubled in Britain.

Report authors Neil Lee and Jonathan Wright warned: "Neets in these cities face a double hit - reduced employment opportunities and a weak economy and reduced services resulting from public-sector cuts."

They said the recession had widened the gap between cities with high Neet rates and those that were lower and failure to address the problem would damage individual opportunity, leading to growing costs for "the government, our economy and society." ●

## REDS ON THE WEB

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

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

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

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

# Peace Congress slams "Canada First Defence Strategy"

The Canadian Peace Congress, which has continued to expand its activities in recent years, will hold its next convention on Nov. 25-26 in Toronto. A comprehensive draft statement on the work of the Congress is available online at [www.canadianpeacecongress.ca](http://www.canadianpeacecongress.ca). We reprint sections of this draft which look at the pro-war shift by the Harper Tories in Canada.

The election in May of the Conservative majority government is the single most important political event since our Extraordinary Renewal Convention in 2008, one which radically alters the country's political landscape...

During the previous seven years of minority government, and even during the preceding Liberal majority governments, the peace movement had some ability to work with progressives within the opposition parties to expose the aggressive, militaristic and integrationist policies of the government and, to a limited extent, block some of the more extreme

aspects of those policies. Key examples of this are the massive protests in 2003 that forced the government to reject direct military involvement in the invasion of Iraq and to maintain distance from that war and occupation; sustained public education and lobbying that has continued to deter Canadian participation in Ballistic Missile Defence and the weaponization of space; and the campaign to expose Canada's complicity in the torture of Afghan detainees, which was so effective that the Harper government needed to prorogue Parliament to remain in power.

However, with the Harper Tories now holding majorities in both the House of Commons and the Senate, the ability to confront the corporate war agenda in the parliamentary arena has been severely diminished. While it remains vitally important to maintain and expand work with progressives in government, the focus for peace and progressive forces must now shift decisively to the extra-parliamentary struggle...

During their minority government, the Harper Conservatives made several changes in policy that clearly indicate the trajectory of Canadian capital with respect to international issues. Paramount among these is the foreign policy orientation that is reflected in the war in Afghanistan. While Canada's participation in this aggression was initiated under the Liberal government, it is under the Conservative government that it matured and assumed a central focus in international policy.

For a long time, the advanced sections of the peace movement have understood that the war in Afghanistan was never a localized conflict - it has been, from the beginning, part of a regional campaign that includes the war against Iraq and Israel's role in the Middle East. Clearly, the war in Afghanistan is a key component in the drive by the United States (and its Canadian, British and NATO allies) to recolonize a huge, resource-rich area of the world. It is also about encircling China and establishing a large, US military presence near Russia and India. Canada's involvement in the war is consistent with these objectives, as is Canadian foreign policy generally.

Beyond these objectives, however, the war in Afghanistan has an even deeper significance for the Canadian peace movement: it represents the practical arena in



which a new direction/orientation in foreign policy is being tested and clarified... Perhaps the clearest example of how foreign policy has developed in light of the war in Afghanistan is the Conservatives' half-trillion dollar Canada First Defence Strategy (CFDS), the government's blueprint for defence and foreign policy.

CFDS promotes the growth, modernization and combat readiness of the Canadian military and its interoperability with US military forces for one main reason, to commit Canada to current and future US-NATO wars, interventions and occupations as the first principle of Canadian government foreign policy.

CFDS boasts of the experience gained by Canadian forces in Afghanistan as a "military that can operate far from home on a sustained basis". According to Prime Minister Harper the ability to wage war is the path that will return Canada to the international stage as a "credible and influential country." CFDS elevates commitments to NATO, NORAD, NORTHCOM, the Security and Prosperity Partnership (SPP) and the Civil Assistance Plan, the latter permitting US troops on Canadian soil in the event of a "civil emergency", above all other Canadian international obligations and treaties. As such CFDS actually weakens Canadian sovereignty by subordinating Canadian defence policy to the global military strategy of the US and NATO.

Fear mongering about alleged threats to Canadian security is the method used by the Conservative government to justify massive transfers of public finances, without Parliamentary approval, to foreign and domestic defence contractors to stimulate a speculative expansion of the economy. This is what is meant by the "military partnership with Canadian industry".

CFDS is profoundly undemocratic, and was implemented without seeking Parliamentary approval. It commits \$492 billion over 20 years on top of the \$5.3 billion already allocated in 2006, approaching 2.2% of GDP, all to guarantee the profits of defence contractors and investors. The Canadian government policy of rapid militarization of the economy is the only job creation project the Government has to offer youth, the unemployed and the underemployed. CFDS cannot be implemented without sacrificing the needs of public health care, pensions, child care, seniors' needs, low cost housing and the peaceful development of the country.

Since winning a majority, the Conservatives have moved quickly and aggressively to implement new imperialist policies. In addition to continuing their previous policies of increasing military spending, pursuing the war in Afghanistan, promoting deeper integration of military and foreign policy with the United States and

see PEACE CONGRESS, p. 11

## "Build the Peace Movement Through Anti-Imperialist Solidarity"

Canadian Peace Congress convention, Nov. 25-26, Metro Hall, 55 John Street, Toronto

Convention opens at 7 pm on Nov. 25 and continues at 10 am on Nov. 26. For more information, check [www.canadianpeacecongress.ca](http://www.canadianpeacecongress.ca) or phone Dave at 416-535-6586.

# Class war at Qantas Air

From The Guardian, newspaper of the Communist Party of Australia

It's full-on class war. Qantas is determined to deunionise its workforce and slash labour costs. The airline's sudden and arbitrary grounding of all flights was nothing short of a premeditated act of bastardry against its workforce and the travelling public. The company's actions and the struggle of its workforce to defend their jobs, wages and working conditions has brought to a head an insidious process that has been under way for decades.

The "globalisation" or equalisation of wages and working conditions in the name of competition is a race to the bottom. The cost of labour is not too high in Australia. Working conditions are not unaffordable. Qantas workers insisting on their rights are not pricing themselves out of jobs. It is the constant drive by the private sector to boost profits that is behind the attack on Qantas workers and other workers across the globe.

For decades, the private sector has been exporting jobs offshore, raking in ever larger profits through the super-exploitation of lower paid labour on unregulated and non-unionised labour markets. The manufacturing sector in Australia was hit hard by trade liberalisation when tariffs and quotas were lifted. In more recent times, technological developments have seen

offshoring extended to jobs that no one a few decades ago would have imagined could be exported.

Qantas has offloaded a large proportion of its potential domestic and international operations to Jetstar. As reported previously in *The Guardian*, foreign crew employed by its subsidiary Jetstar have been working shifts as long as 20 hours on a base monthly wage of \$258.

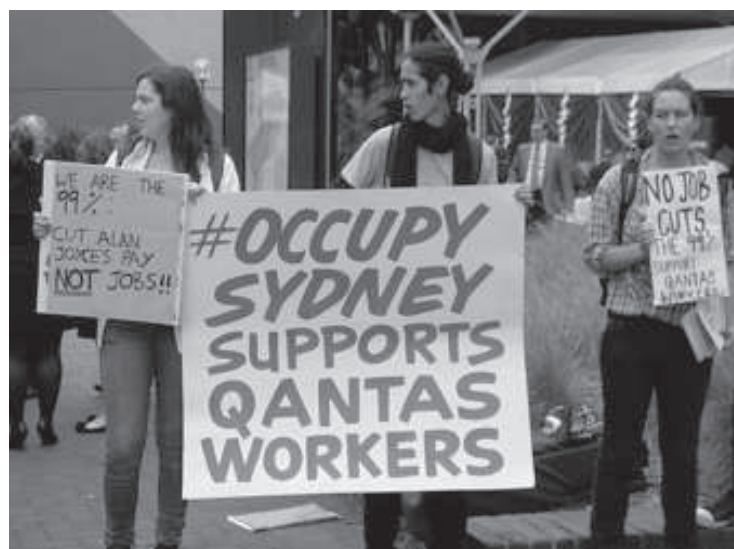
The media, Murdoch's *Australian* newspaper in particular, have backed Qantas and other corporations in their offensive against Australian workers and trade unions. Repeatedly, they accuse the trade union movement of "intransigence", of threatening to wreck productivity and costing workers their jobs. David Greig's "Qantas unions in a time warp" (*The Australian*, 26-10-2011) was a classic piece of employer propaganda, trotting out the all too familiar myths about competition, deregulation, higher productivity (read profits) and flexibility benefiting workers.

"The only way to secure aviation jobs in Australia is to make it uneconomic to send them abroad," Greig claims. How do you do that? One method is to pay them "third world" rates on a non-union deregulated labour market where there are no limits to the hours worked or protection of conditions. Get rid of those "generous work roster and restrictive maintenance work practices" - that's the way to go

according to Greig.

"The unions need to change tack and work hard with management to find ways of increasing flexibility and producing more per employee," Greig says. What, fewer pilots in the cockpit? Passengers load their own luggage? Qantas already has passengers weighing and checking in their own luggage. Cut back on maintenance checks by aircraft engineers - wait until something goes wrong?

Greig's advice means one thing. The same thing that Qantas, the banks, the manufacturers and other corporations are after: lower wages, longer hours, slave-like working conditions and short cuts with safety. If the unions and workers won't cop it in Australia then go offshore or bring in guest workers.



see PEACE CONGRESS, p. 11

# Tragedy shakes Occupy Vancouver

By Kimball Cariou

The death of a young member of the Occupy Vancouver (OV) movement has shocked her fellow participants and turned up the political temperature, days before a crucial Nov. 19 civic election.

Ashlie Gough, a 23-year-old from Victoria, overdosed in a tent at the Art Gallery site on Nov. 5. The tragedy highlights many of the issues raised by the international Occupy movement: homelessness, inequality, health crises such as addictions, and the role of the state in a wealthy capitalist society. The OV tents, complete with first aid, library, soup kitchen, etc., sit amidst gleaming corporate towers and condo buildings. Just a couple of blocks away, one condo - the entire top floor of the Shangri-La - sold for \$20 million.

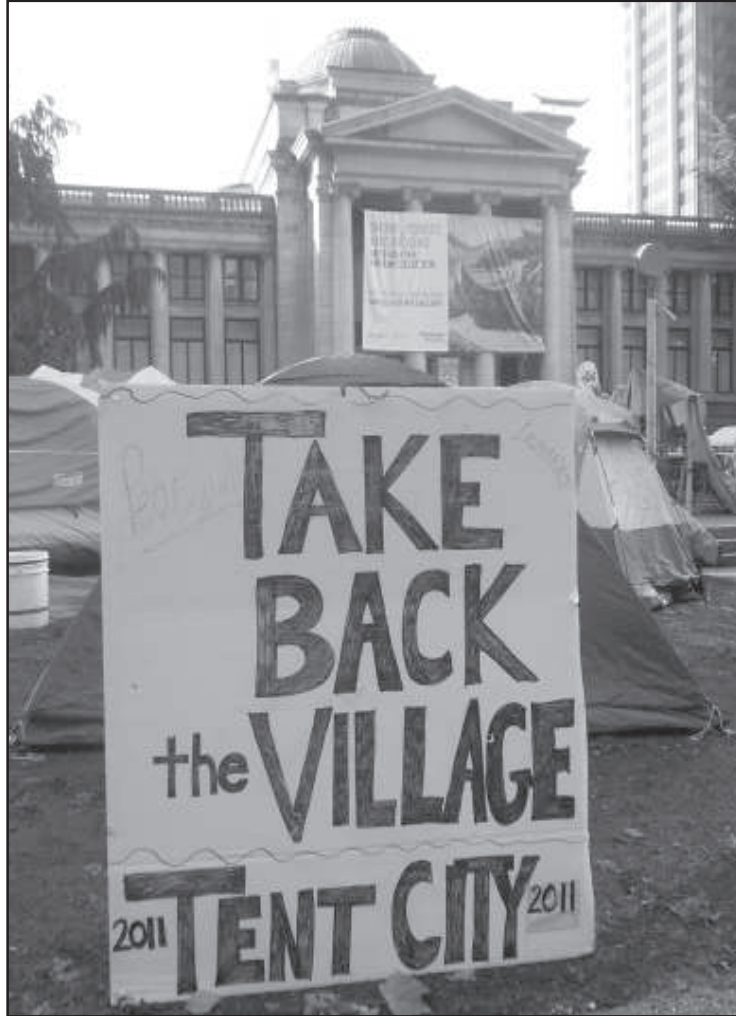
Ashlie's death touched off a firestorm of hypocrisy. Reactionary bloggers and media outlets have labelled OV as a drug den and a blight on the city. They rarely mention that despite some progress, drug overdose deaths and homelessness are still common.

A few days earlier, NPA mayoralty candidate Suzanne Anton (who has been trailing in the polls) failed to get a seconder for her motion at city council to begin removing the occupation tents. Requests by the firefighters and health officials for improvements at the site were accepted after some debate at OV's nightly general assemblies, and

the situation appeared to be improving.

But Anton's right-wing forces cynically hope to use Ashlie's death to box Mayor Gregor Robertson and his Vision majority into a corner. While public opinion

in Vancouver remains largely sympathetic to the goals of the movement, the view that "the time has come to remove the tents" has also gained some traction. For the NPA, whipping up this sentiment is their last hope to win a majority.



Sign at Occupy Vancouver, a few meters from the Nov. 5 tragedy. (Photo: K. Cariou)

Robertson's response has been to retreat, suddenly agreeing that the OV site is "unsafe". City staff have begun preparations for a removal operation which will likely be resisted. Given Vancouver's long history of police brutality, the potential for a violent clash is growing.

By offering to help homeless campers find accommodations, and stressing that the OV protests are welcome to continue, the Mayor and his party hope to avert a direct confrontation. This would allow Vision to appease some critics, while still defending the free-speech rights of the Occupy group.

Those rights were exercised on Nov. 6, as hundreds of Occupy supporters marched through the streets against the impact of corporate mining interests on Indigenous peoples, both in Canada and internationally.

This approach, however, will not satisfy the NPA, which is running a multi-million dollar campaign largely with huge donations from forestry and mining companies. These interests calculate that buying a friendly NPA mayor and council would shift Vancouver's pro-environment image to a pro-corporate stance, which would be a huge public relations victory for resource profiteers.

The NPA campaign is also linked to Stephen Harper's Tories,

and shares the same anti-democratic outlook. Electing a Rob Ford-style city council in Vancouver would give the federal Tories a big boost for their "law and order" agenda.

These forces no doubt want a violent clash at the Art Gallery. Challenging the Mayor to send in the cops, the NPA has made it clear that dissent in the streets will be curbed if they retake City Hall.

Fortunately, there are wiser voices on the scene, especially the Coalition of Progressive Electors, which has an electoral alliance with Vision. In a Nov. 6 statement (see sidebar), COPE candidates pledged to continue support for the goals of the Occupy movement, and urged city officials to "work carefully... to ensure the health and safety of the Occupy Vancouver demonstrators."

But the situation remains extremely tense. A mayoralty debate between Robertson and Anton on Nov. 7 saw the candidates shouted down frequently by some OV activists, a tactic which may have backfired. There are also sharp debates within the OV group about whether move the camp in response to the city's pressure.

Robertson and his party will need to steer carefully through these complicated waters, avoiding a clash which could benefit the NPA and their corporate backers on Nov. 19. ●

## End Harper's war on workers, says CUPE

PV Vancouver Bureau, with files from www.cupe.ca

Meeting at the Vancouver Convention Centre, some 2000 delegates at the CUPE National biennial convention held Oct. 31-Nov. 4 debated an emergency resolution responding to the Harper Government's attack on working people.

Since getting a majority government in May, the Conservatives have interfered with collective bargaining at Air Canada and Canada Post, in both cases trampling on the rights and benefits of working Canadians. Legislation restricting the ability of unions to engage in political activity has been introduced and the government has ignored a plebiscite by western farmers, instead moving ahead with a plan to dismantle the Canadian Wheat Board.

The Emergency Resolution

called upon CUPE to work with the CLC and other allies to oppose the Harper government and begin planning for the 2015 election of an NDP government.

Debate on the floor was spirited and supportive of the motion, with many delegates expressing frustration that working people have been losing rights over the last few years.

Local 116 delegate Colleen Garbespoke in favour of the motion. "This resolution is long overdue. We are losing ground over and over again."

Several Air Canada employees spoke in favour of the resolution. John Reis of Toronto Local 4092 said "Free collective bargaining is a right that has been stripped away by the Harper Regime."

Vancouver delegate Ken Davidson called for a tougher approach, arguing that the Labour movement has no choice but to act

or be destroyed.

"We can't survive on the idea that a good argument is the solution, cause it ain't working," said Davidson. "I'd much sooner go out swinging then sit back and say I tried what I could and it didn't work."

Delegates also overwhelmingly adopted a resolution calling on their union to convene a Canada-wide community labour coalition along the lines of the Action Canada Network which was active during the Mulroney era.

Presented by the CUPE Toronto Council, the resolution urges efforts to build a stronger fightback against the anti-labour and anti-people policies of the Harper Tory government. Toronto CUPE Council President Helen Kennedy called for CUPE to assert its role as the largest social union in the country and to inspire the fightback by calling for a People's Assembly by March of 2012.

Given the prominence of the occupy movements across the country, such a People's Assembly could help to set the stage for a much broader fightback against Harper and the austerity agenda.

Early in the convention, delegates rallied at lunch hour in solidarity with Occupy Vancouver. After several speeches condemning the right-wing policies of provincial and federal governments, some 600 delegates held an unplanned march to the Vancouver Art Gallery, making a powerful statement in the streets. ●



Delegates rally before marching to Occupy Vancouver on Nov. 1.

## COPE candidates express sympathy and solidarity

NOV. 6 - The Coalition of Progressive Electors expresses our profound sympathies and compassion for the loss of a sister within the Occupy Vancouver encampment in front of the Vancouver Art Gallery. COPE's candidates, members and supporters are deeply saddened by this tragic event and wish the family of the deceased and all participating in the demonstration our sincerest condolences.



COPE continues, as we have from the beginning, to support the goals and message of the Occupy movement around the world: democratizing the global economy and working towards true economic justice, equality, and environmental sustainability.

COPE urges officials at the city, fire department, police, and health care workers to work carefully, and in coordination, to ensure the health and safety of the Occupy Vancouver demonstrators and we are confident they will do so. The Occupy movement has been committed to non-violent action and peaceful dialogue. We urge them to continue these tactics and are confident they will do so.

We must continue to address homelessness, poverty and drug addiction. Vancouver has been at the forefront of making

housing a top priority, yet there is still so much more work to do. It is also clear that Vancouver's championing of the Insite supervised injection site has been a success, but with the facility at capacity, we need to expand harm reduction services to more parts of the city. Every drug overdose death is a preventable death, and it is the

responsibility of us all, whether it is governments or protest organizers, to ensure everyone is kept safe.

COPE will continue to struggle for equality, social justice and environmental sustainability with our fellow citizens, in solidarity with Occupy movements around the world.

In the spirit of the global Occupy movement, COPE supports occupiers taking this movement beyond the Vancouver Art Gallery, to work with community groups, service agencies, resident-based neighbourhood councils, the trade union movement, churches, and environmental NGO's and to bring together a new Solidarity Coalition.

COPE has been committed to progressive social change for more than 40 years. Beyond Election Day on November 19th, COPE will continue to fight for a Vancouver and a planet for everyone. ●



# GLOBAL CLASS STRUGGLE

## Papua mine strike heats up

The United Steelworkers (USW) has requested that the U.S. Department of Justice begin to investigate whether corporate mining giant Freeport-McMoRan, headquartered in Arizona, has been bribing security forces in Indonesia. The Indonesian police have told the local media that they accepted millions of dollars from Freeport-McMoRan's Indonesian subsidiary PT Freeport to provide security for its operations in Papua. The Foreign Corrupt Practices Act bans U.S. companies from paying foreign officials to do or omit to do an act in violation of their lawful duty.

Police personnel providing security for Freeport-McMoRan have played a highly controversial role in a strike by some 10,000 miners at the Grasberg mine in Papua. This includes firing on strikers during a demonstration on October 10, killing two and injuring eight others. Police have failed to lift road blockades stopping fuel and food reaching the mine after clashes with striking miners and local tribesmen on Nov. 4.

The strike at Grasberg, the world's second-biggest copper mine, began in mid-September, disrupting output and stopping shipments. The struggle has seen sabotage to pipelines and deadly attacks on striking employees. Workers and people from seven local tribes are blocking the main road near an airport in Timika that links Freeport's port to the Grasberg mine, and refused to shift after police gave them a deadline to move by Nov. 1.

"People fought back. The police gave several warning shots but they have left now," said a striking worker, adding there were no casualties reported. "The tribes have conducted war ceremonies. They are ready to die for this."

The worker dispute over pay has drawn in local tribes who have their own grievances over land rights, pollution and a lack of benefit for the region from its resource wealth. The police and army have been criticised for human rights violations in the mountainous region, where a separatist movement has simmered for decades. The company has offered a 30 percent pay rise but the union is holding out for a fivefold increase.

Pay rates at the Grasberg mine are \$1.50-\$3 per hour. In 2010, Freeport-McMoRan reported profits of \$4.33 billion, an average of \$146,000 for each of its 29,700 employees worldwide.

## Social unrest to rise, says ILO

The global economy is on the verge of a new and deeper jobs recession that may ignite social unrest, warns the International Labour Organization (ILO), predicting that it will take at least five years for employment in advanced economies to return to pre-crisis levels. The ILO also says that in 45 of the 118 countries it examined, the risk of social unrest

was rising.

In its World of Work Report 2011, the ILO says a stalled global economic recovery had begun to "dramatically affect" labour markets. Approximately 80 million net new jobs would be needed over the next two years to get back to pre-crisis employment levels, but the recent slowdown in growth suggests that only half the jobs needed would be created.

"We have reached the moment of truth. We have a brief window of opportunity to avoid a major double-dip in employment," said



Raymond Torres from the ILO.

The group also measured levels of discontent over the lack of jobs and anger over perceptions that the burden of the crisis was not being fairly shared. It said scores of countries faced the possibility of social unrest, particularly those in the EU and the Arab region.

Meanwhile, in its latest projections for G20 economies, the OECD forecast growth in the eurozone of 1.6% this year, slowing to 0.3% next year. As recently as last May, the OECD had forecast growth of 2% per year in both 2011 and 2012.

## Labour backs Colombia students

Colombia's Central Worker's Union (CUT) has announced its support of the student protests taking place throughout the country since early October. The weekly protests, sparked by a controversial government reform on education - "Law 30" - have spread to all of Colombia's main cities.

CUT President Tarcisio Mora declared that all affiliates would back the next student demonstration, planned for Nov. 10. "We give all our support to the student movement, because the youth has given a clear example of a civic protest and of a democratic proposal", Mora said.

The student protests caused Colombia's capital city to effectively shut down on Nov. 3, as tens of thousands of students took to the streets. Bogota's mass transport network, Transmilenio, was forced to stop selling tickets and cease operations, while major thoroughfares were temporarily shut down as a result of major traffic jams.

The students, who have been on academic strike for weeks, decided to cancel a proposed meeting with the Education Minister, Maria Fernando Campo. One of the student leaders, Sergio Fernandez, told W Radio, "the only way to return to dialogue is for the

government to withdraw the project."

Despite the increasing likelihood that the university semester will be cancelled, Fernandez went on to say, "we will not permit the loss of public education. We would prefer to lose the semester, or whatever it takes, than to lose this right."

The government claims that "Law 30" will inject funds into the education system, improve the quality of the education system and increase access. However, critics believe Law 30 will lower the quality of the academic studies, undermine the autonomy of universities, and spiral the cost of education for students.

## Crackdown on Fiji union activists

The general secretary of the Fiji Trade Union Congress, Felix Anthony, was detained overnight at the Lautoka Police Station after being arrested on the afternoon of November 4. The labour leader was arrested by Fijian security forces, including a six member police team and six soldiers who travelled in a special military vehicle. There was tight security around the cell block in which Anthony was kept and he was denied contact with his lawyer. The next morning, Anthony was transferred to Suva under heavy armed guard provided by the same 12 member team.

Felix Anthony's arrest was preceded by the Oct. 29 detention of Daniel Urai, the President of the Fiji Trade Union Congress. Urai has also been denied his basic right to legal counsel, and remains imprisoned. He was arrested upon returning from the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) held in Australia.

The campaign of intimidation, harassment and beatings of union leaders is growing, a clear signal that the regime's objective is to smash the trade union movement and its leadership. Fiji has been under a military dictatorship since November 2006, when Commodore Bainimarama seized power.

## Intern or slave?

Thousands of unpaid interns in Britain could be entitled to compensation after government legal advice has emerged suggesting employers are breaking the law by not following national minimum wage rules. The Guardian newspaper reports that the warning from government lawyers comes as growing numbers of companies turn to interns to carry out work that lasts far longer than traditional work experience placements, yet refuse to pay them.

The Conservative/LibDem government has been promoting the wider use of internships as part of a so-called drive to improve social mobility. But a Guardian analysis of a graduate internships job board run by the Department for Business Innovation and Skills (BIS) reveals that more than half its job advertisements are for unpaid or expenses-only internships which could breach employment laws.

Of the arts internships advertised on the BIS-sponsored website, 92% were unpaid.

Seventy-seven per cent of advertised fashion internships were unpaid, and 76% of PR internships were unpaid. Half of the media internships were unpaid.

Civil servants advise that internships that do not breach minimum wage laws are likely to exist only in short-term placements, normally classified as work experience. "Legal colleagues take the view that most interns are likely to be workers and therefore entitled to the minimum wage and other worker rights," the document states.

Anyone who works in Britain is entitled to the current hourly rate of 6.08 pounds (about \$10 Can.) for those aged 21 and over. Those who volunteer for charity or a government body can be exempted.

The government's own estimate is that there are between 50,000 and 70,000 internships a year, of which between 10,000 and 15,000 are unpaid. However, in the largest online UK internship survey to date, carried out by Interns Anonymous, 87% out of 594 respondents said they were paid below the minimum wage. This would suggest that there are many more thousands of unpaid interns in the UK than currently estimated.

The TUC fears that internships are replacing paid work for young people and pushing down pay for those in work. The government body responsible for enforcing

minimum wages has only prosecuted seven companies for breaching the law since its introduction in 1999.

The Department for Work and Pensions has confirmed that government-run job-centres are recommending that unemployed youth take up long-term "work experience", including positions at supermarkets, allegedly to help them gain further skills.

## Grenada strike

Operations at Grenada's seaports were disrupted on Nov. 3, after workers went on strike because the Port Authority missed an Oct. 31 deadline to pay \$143,000 Cdn. in a settlement awarded by an arbitration tribunal in 2007. The strike has affected all three of the Caribbean island's ports at St. George's, St. Andrew's and Carriacou.

The Technical and Allied Workers Union said the workers would stay off the job indefinitely. In a statement, the union said the port authority had also refused to sign the agreement it made with the union and a joint consultative committee set up by the arbitrators. The long-running dispute concerns retroactive back pay due to the workers following job reclassifications.



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

## Send me information on the Communist Party of Canada



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

**Central Committee CPC**  
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416-469-2446 <info@cpc-pcc.ca> [www.comunist-party.ca](http://www.comunist-party.ca)

**Parti Communiste du Quebec** (section du Parti communiste du Canada)  
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Box 70, Grand Pré, NS, B0P 1M0  
Tel/fax: 902-542-7981



# Cuban doctor solidarity tour across Canada

## Special to PV

The Steelworkers Hall in Toronto was filled on Oct. 24 with 100 people who came to hear about Cuba's health solidarity in Haiti. Dr. Jorge Balseiro talked of his experience working with the Henry Reeve Brigade, a team of Cuban doctors and health care workers, to assist the victims of the January 2010 earthquake.

Dr. Balseiro's kindness and professionalism were very evident, witnessed by his power point presentation about the dire situation in Haiti before the earthquake. Cubans had worked to lower the infant mortality rate, and build an internal health program with the assistance of ALBA (Bolivarian Alliance for the Americas).

The meeting, organized by the Canadian Cuban Friendship Association, was part of a three week tour of Canada sponsored by the Canadian Network on Cuba, to which the CCFA is affiliated.

Dr. Balseiro explained how the Cuban team worked extremely hard to save lives, when for the first time ever a cholera epidemic struck Haiti. The Cubans have a proactive preventative protection plan in place, going out in the communities to look for people with illnesses that can be treated early. The rate of mortality of patients treated by Cubans was 0.37% compared to the overall rate in Haiti of 1.72%.

"Cuba is also helping with reconstruction of the health system in Haiti" Dr. Balseiro told the audience, stressing the word "help" because it is the Haitian system. Cubans do not interfere, but just give their experience and assistance.

Following the presentation, Dr. Balseiro answered several questions. One participant was emotional in his expression of thanks to Dr. Balseiro and the

Henry Reeve brigade for their work: "I am impressed with Dr. Balseiro's deep professionalism, as well as the length and scale of assistance. I am part of the 99% occupying Toronto. Reagan said there is no alternative. Fidel said another world is possible. Cuba shows this - tiny Cuba in its own unique way is a different world".

The moderator for the meeting was Professor Keith Ellis, who is chair of the Cuba for Haiti campaign, which has raised over \$300,000 to support the Cuban efforts in Haiti. Prof. Keith welcomed a number of special guests, including Consul General of El Salvador Mr. Oscar Armando Toledo; Consul General of Haiti, Dr. Eric Pierre; and a representative of the Cuban Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Lisset Cambiella.

Elizabeth Hill, President of the Canadian-Cuban Friendship Association, and also co-chair of the Canadian Network on Cuba, outlined the purpose of the tour, and expressed appreciation to everyone who helped make the event possible.

Kevin Edmonds, representing the Toronto Haiti Action Committee, talked of his work in exposing the negative effects the United Nations in Haiti. Sandra Ramirez from the Cuban Institute of Friendship (ICAP), spoke of the organization's long history with friends of Cuba, and in particular the Che Guevara Brigade from Canada which celebrates its 20th brigade in May 2012. She talked of Cuba's special relationship with Haiti, which flows naturally from Fidel's school days with Haitian children in eastern Cuba.

The Consul General of Haiti praised the compassionate assistance of Cubans, who are suffering with the people, putting themselves at the level of Haitians. He said that the work they are doing will snowball: "I hope the

type of assistance of countries like Cuba will create a sense of social equity."

Cuban Consul General Jorge Soberon talked of brigades to other countries. After the 2005 earthquake in Pakistan, the children learned to speak Spanish from brigade members, who used body language to communicate. Soberon pointed out that the billions the USA spends on its military could have totally rebuilt Haiti. The continuing US blockade against Cuba makes no sense, he said. "Cuba will have brothers in Haiti as long as we live. Jose Marti said - let each person be a torch to enlighten the world".

The Cuban Doctor tour was a torch going across Canada, including events in Montreal, Quebec City, Halifax, Ottawa,



Kingston, Toronto, Calgary, Edmonton, Vancouver, Nanaimo, Sechelt, Winnipeg, St. Catharines,

Hamilton, and Windsor.

For more information, visit [www.canadiannetworkoncuba.ca](http://www.canadiannetworkoncuba.ca). ●

## News from Colombian prisoner Lilianny Obando

We have reported several times on the situation of Lilianny Obando, the most prominent political prisoner in Colombia. Well-known in Canada as a labour and solidarity activist, Lilianny remains in the "Buen Pastor" women's prison in Bogota, still awaiting trial on bogus charges. Arrested in 2008, she is the last of the accused in the "farc-politica" trials; other defendants have been released after the government's case fell apart under closer scrutiny.

*Kevin Neish of Victoria, B.C., has visited Lilianny several times during her incarceration. Here is his latest first hand report:*

I got in to see Lilianny in the high security women's prison "Buen Pastor" last Saturday (Oct. 24). Lilianny's son Camilo accompanied me. He is now 18 so he can visit every Saturday. Unfortunately her 8-year-old daughter Laura can only visit once a month, which is a very sore point with all the prisoners and is a rather cruel punishment. Children under three stay with their mothers in prison, and then are taken away and get only one four-hour visit a month until they are 18.

The guards were cooperative and friendly. During my last visit in March 2010, the guards threw me out because they had suddenly changed the rules on the documents I needed. This time I breezed through the entry process but as usual I was x-rayed, scanned, gone over with a wand, frisked, fingerprinted twice, had my shoes disassembled and sniffed by a drug dog. I almost didn't get in as the authorities once again changed the rules and now require a specific photo, but fortunately the local lawyers group LAZO quickly obtained this for me.

Lilianny seems to be in very good spirits even though she is now in an even higher security cell block. It has no daylight, even the yard is enclosed. At one point I commented that the heavy rain they are having is terrible. She replied that she enjoyed it when it rained hard, as then she can hear it falling on her cell block roof, giving her contact with the outdoors. Not being able to see the sun, feel the rain or even a breeze is a terrible added punishment.

There are only 27 other prisoners in her new cell block, which measures

about 60 by 30 feet, so it is less crowded. But she is now in with very dangerous common criminals, right-wing paramilitary prisoners and rich drug dealing prisoners, who despise her and would likely kill her if they had a chance. This might be the authorities' plan, but she thinks she is safe. She has only one companera in the cell block and so spends almost all of her time in her cell. She is trying to politically organise these new fellow prisoners, as she did in patio 6, which is why they moved her, but it appears to be a hard job. Since she left cell block 6, the new warden has clamped down on her friends and taken away rights Lilianny had successfully won there. Most of the prisoners in her new cell block 7 want to cooperate with the guards to make their own lives easier.

Her accommodations are better than in Patio 6, as she has a bit bigger room with a tv, a bathroom and only one roommate, but now



Lilianny Obando

the bunks are concrete slabs with a thin foam mattress. The patio 7 cells are locked down at 7 pm so it really limits her political organising.

Typically for Lilianny, she challenged the "head" prisoner in charge of the cell block, because she was cooperating with the guards too much. So Lilianny has lost her TV privileges controlled by this prisoner overseer.

Like my last visits, it appears that Colombian unions and activists, other than the brave LAZO lawyers, are scared to come close to Lilianny due to fears of right wing retaliation. She has almost run out of legal options. A final Supreme Court appeal is coming soon, and if lost, that could leave just waiting for her trial to end. Everyone else who was arrested

using the "magic" FARC computer information has had their trials thrown out due to this evidence being compromised or bogus, except for Lilianny.

It appears that the government knows the evidence will not convict Lilianny, so they are simply delaying by not holding any trial dates. She has been in prison for over 40 months so they are simply punishing her without a trial. Political pressure would seem to be the only hope. I will hopefully get in to visit her these next two Saturdays.

Her kids, Camilo and Laura, appear to be doing better than the last time I saw them. Camilo is in university studying to be a journalist and Laura is in grade two and made many new friends and is primed and ready for Halloween. When I accompanied her to buy a costume, she initially wanted to get a striped prisoner costume, but eventually got a princess outfit.

The letters and phone calls Lilianny gets from us on the outside are extremely important, and she thanks us for them (but would like more please).

PS: Regarding the Canada Colombia Free Trade deal. On the plane here, a fellow passenger was bragging that his Canadian-Colombian company's stock had increased in value over 60%, making him wealthy. At that same moment a Canadian company named Pacific Rubiales Energy in Puerto Gaitan is violently suppressing the Colombian oil workers union, just one of numerous Canadian companies doing this. Union leaders are being shot and disappeared every few days. Colombia is a classic case of Western countries getting wealthy stealing resources and cheap labour to support our first world economy. It is obvious who is benefiting from the Free Trade deal.

From Bogota, Kevin Neish  
*Letters can be sent to Lilianny Obando, TD-065593, Patio 7, Reclusion de Mujeres, Buena Pastor, Cra. 47, No. 84-25, Bogota, Colombia.*

*The direct number for her cell block yard phone is 011-57-1-5300702; just ask for Lilianny Obando, "por favor". ●*

## Blair and Bush face "trial" for war crimes

In the latest example of global condemnation of their policies, the former leaders of Britain and the United States will be put on trial Nov. 19-22 in the Malaysian capital of Kuala Lumpur.

Charges are being brought against Tony Blair and George W. Bush by the Kuala Lumpur War Crimes Commission (KLWCC). Having received complaints from war victims in Iraq in 2009, the Commission has conducted an in-depth investigation for two years, leading to formal charges against Bush, Blair and their associates.

The Iraq invasion in 2003 and its occupation resulted in the death of an estimated 1.4 million Iraqis. Countless others endured torture and untold hardship. But to date, the international community has not acted on these crimes. The KLWCC was established in 2008 to provide an avenue for victims to file their complaints and let them have their day in a court of law.

The first charge accuses Bush and Blair of "crimes against peace," in particular the invasion of the sovereign state of Iraq on March 19, 2003, in violation of the United Nations Charter and international law.

The former U.S. president and seven members of his administration are also charged with the war crime of torture: Donald Rumsfeld, Dick Cheney, Alberto Gonzales, David Addington, William Haynes, Jay Bybee and John Yoo.

This group are alleged to have formulated executive orders in violation of international conventions and laws, including the Convention against Torture 1984, Geneva Convention III 1949, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the United Nations Charter, in relation to the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. They are also accused of authorising acts of torture and cruel, degrading and inhuman treatment.

The trial will be held before the Kuala Lumpur War Crimes Tribunal, which includes retired Malaysian Federal Court judge Dato' Abdul Kadir Sulaiman.

The Tribunal is considered a "body of conscience." In the event that any of the accused are convicted, their names will be entered in the Commission's Register of War Criminals and publicised worldwide. ●

# Greek coalition to impose "dead-end policies"

*Special to PV, with files from the Morning Star (UK)*

Greece's "establishment" parties began emergency talks on Nov. 7 to set up a coalition to impose more "austerity" measures. The PASOK ("Socialist") and right-wing New Democracy parties have agreed to form a "national unity government" which will rule until early in 2012, but the European Union and IMF are pressing to delay elections for two years.

Despite partisan differences, the parties agree on further slashing of social security and public-sector salaries in return for a 130 billion euro bailout deal, and a partial debt write-off by banks whose reckless speculation plunged the eurozone into economic crisis.

Greek Communist Party leader Aleka Papariga said the parties' "dead-end" policies represent "the plutocracy and the EU", not the public. Opinion polls suggest over 90 per cent of the population oppose the assault on the public sector.

"This government will not be for a few weeks only," warned Papariga. "They intend to drag it on for as long as possible. But even if it is for a few weeks it will take measures which concern the living standards and the rights of the people for at least 10 to 15 years... We call on the working class, the popular strata to cast down this government with their struggle as quickly as possible, to make its life difficult, to utilise whatever difficulties the new alliance government has and to shorten its stay as far as possible, before final decisions are made, and to impose elections."

New Democracy leader Antonis Samaras had previously called for immediate elections, before withdrawing this demand under "strong pressure" from EU chiefs.

Negotiators suggested that the coalition could be headed by former European Central Bank vice-president Lucas Papademos to ensure it met the bank's demands.

EU finance ministers met on Nov. 6 to decide whether to send the next batch of previously agreed

loans to Greece, which were suspended when outgoing Prime Minister George Papandreou announced plans to hold a referendum on the bailout. Polls indicated that the public would have rejected the EU debt deal, possibly leading to Greece withdrawing from the eurozone and defaulting on its debts, causing heavy losses for French and German banks.

A spokesperson for German Chancellor Angela Merkel acknowledged that she had received a grovelling phone call from Papandreou thanking her for her "close and good co-operation" with Greece in recent weeks. The spokesperson added: "We are counting on the incoming transitional government implementing, and implementing fully, the decisions from Brussels."

In a statement from its media office, the KKE said the safeguarding of the next instalment of international loans is "the pretext to justify the formation of an open coalition government of PASOK-ND and other parties of the system. This is the demand of the Greek plutocracy and the EU. Their goal is not to save the people but to subjugate them... The people can see with their own eyes the blatant

interventions of the leaders of the EU and other mechanisms of capital...

"In opposition to this extremely hostile alliance of the bourgeois parties, the people must pose right now their own popular alliance and counterattack to erect obstacles and ruin their reactionary plans. This open governmental alliance shows their difficulties and fear of the people, their emancipation and organization.

"The capitalist crisis in Greece and the Eurozone is deepening, competition inside and outside the EU is sharpening, and for this reason their parties and mechanisms are escalating their war against the peoples. The people should not be afraid of the EU, the monopolies. On the contrary it must utilise their crisis, their contradictions to fight them... The salaried workers, the self-employed, the poor farmers, the youth must raise their heads up decisively in the workplaces, in the neighbourhoods, proclaiming their determination to put an end to the sacrifices for the profits of capital, the protection of the EU and the Euro." ●



## "The people are owed everything," says KKE

As Greece spiralled toward chaos in early November, the main organized force resisting capitalist austerity plans was the Greek Communist Party (KKE), which demanded new elections prior to any final agreement.

On the evening of Friday, Nov. 4, the KKE organized a huge mass rally in Syntagma Square, outside the Parliament in Athens. The demonstration took place a few hours before a vote of confidence on the PASOK government, which promised to seek wider consensus with the bourgeois parties. The government was backed by its own members, with 153 votes, while 147 from other parties voted "no", including the KKE's 21 MPs.

The main speaker at the rally was KKE leader Aleka Papariga, who said bluntly, "Down with the government and the parties which

serve the plutocracy, as well as those parties which foster illusions amongst the people that another government with participation of these parties will solve the problem.

"We do not conceal from anyone the fact that the class struggle must be directed towards one single goal, the acquisition of working class power, a power which serves the working class and the other popular strata.

"They are lying that the timeline imposes the voting of the loan agreement before an election. We demand a caretaker government and elections in 20 days so that the people will be able to express their will with their vote. The controlled bankruptcy has already been agreed, while there exists a serious possibility of an uncontrolled bankruptcy, which has not been cancelled out by the packages agreed with the EU."

In reference to the next elections, Papariga noted: "The elections will take place in an atmosphere of the most unprecedented intimidation, with the so-called support packages of the EU and the threat of an uncontrolled bankruptcy at its epicentre, in an atmosphere of intense anti-communism and provocations which are the vehicles to put the people in the position of the supplicant.

"What do we mean by anti-communism? Physical attacks on communists and other militants. Extortions so that we change orientation and become a party of the system. The support and funding of anti-communist propaganda, fascist mechanisms which will carry out the dirty work so that the bourgeois parties are not officially exposed. We state, you cannot break us, we are too tough."

In relation to the new loan agreement, Papariga said, "The money which they allegedly are giving us is in fact our money, it comes from the toil of the people. The people do not owe anything, in fact they are owed everything."

Regarding the difficulties which the bourgeois parties are facing, she commented, "They are in a difficult position because due to the crisis, the competition between the member-states of the predatory

alliance and the business groups is intensifying to threatening levels. The bourgeois political parties and their partners are afraid that the coherence of the bourgeois class itself will be split." ●



The historic Ukrainian Labour Temple in Winnipeg; note the detail of the revolutionary slogan, "Workers of the World Unite"

## Ukrainian Labour Temple declared National Historic Site

*PV Manitoba Bureau*

Winnipeg's Ukrainian Labour Temple will be officially declared a National Historic site on November 19. The ceremony is free to attend, starting at 3 pm with the singing of the Internationale.

Located at 591 Pritchard Ave., the ULT was completed in 1919, after the banning of socialist organizations in 1918. The building served as a meeting place in the North End for workers during the Winnipeg General Strike, and became a centre for left activities.

During the Second World War, the ULT was confiscated by the federal government after the Ukrainian Labour-Farmer Temple Association was banned. It was given to an anti-communist "nationalist" Ukrainian group totally opposed to the policies of the ULFTA, until it was returned shortly after the war.

The federal board responsible for the designation notes that the ULT served as "a headquarters for several national organizations that provided educational, mutual aid, charitable and other services while seeking to forward the goals of socialism and organized labour through publications and meetings for left-wing instruction, debate and strategizing."

Mathew Popowich, aged 28 in 1918, led the efforts to build the ULT. In 1921, he was a delegate to the Communist Party's founding convention in Guelph. The first Ukrainian translation of Karl Marx's *Capital* was completed and printed in Winnipeg, and the city's North End elected North America's first communist city councillor in 1926. ●

## "Four Directions Walk to End Poverty"



More than 100 people rallied at the Manitoba legislature on October 22 as part of the Four Directions Walk to End Poverty in Manitoba, the largest in four years. Some walked from Winnipeg's perimeter from four directions, and more joined along the way. "The problems have been studied long enough..., the problem is that there are not enough jobs, and the pay is not high enough," said Cheryl-Anne Carr, one of the organizers. "The problem is the province wants to keep people poor so that there's a huge pool of labour that's frightened and can be used to keep wages down, and prices high. There's a shortage of housing, there's a shortage of education spaces." The walk was supported by several groups, including FemRev (Winnipeg), Occupy Winnipeg, Action 1:21, and church-based soup kitchens The Urban and Feed my Lambs.

## Which direction for the OFL?

By Liz Rowley

The Ontario Federation of Labour meets Nov. 21-25 in Toronto, but without the Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU), the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) and the Ontario Nurses Association (ONA), who refuse to pay up back dues in a continuing struggle over the OFL's direction and leadership.

The decision isn't unanimous. One of the biggest OPSEU locals in the GTA opposes the boycott, calling for a united labour movement and a united fight against the employer-government attack on free collective bargaining, the right to strike and wages and living standards.

This struggle goes back to the 1990s, when the Harris government's attacks on union rights, living standards, jobs and social programs galvanized public anger and led to the Ontario Days

of Action. Escalating protests included one-day strikes and demonstrations led by local Labour Councils and community-based Days of Action committees around the province. Before they were abruptly ended, these very effective tactics were on track for province-wide Days of Action that could have brought down the Harris government.

The right-wing forces opposed this strategy, and brought in Wayne Samuelson to put an end to mass political action by the OFL for 12 years. The same forces are trying to cripple President Sid Ryan's efforts to build a Common Front of labour and its allies today.

This is the crucial question facing OFL delegates: what kind of a trade union movement do workers need in the face of unprecedented corporate and government attacks? What kind of a fightback plan can win?

On the one hand, there are unions and leaders that support a mobilized, militant OFL that takes the lead to build a Common Front of labour and its allies, to fight for full employment, rising wages and living standards, strong social programs, affordable housing, labour and democratic rights, progressive tax reform. In short, policies that will benefit labour and the 99%, with the capacity to back up those demands with mass united political action that puts

thousands of people into the streets.

On the other hand, there are unions dominated by leaders who are fundamentally and ideologically opposed to mass action. They prefer to contract out labour's political aims to the NDP or the Liberals, and to approach governments cap-in-hand. They narrow the role of unions to collective bargaining, and some have advocated concessions in the name of common cause with the employers in tough times.

During speaking engagements in southern Ontario this month, political commentator Michael Parenti observed that it's hard to find the trade union movement in the US today because it is so small. Decades of unrelenting corporate-government attacks, combined with a policy of concessions by the leadership, have decimated the once powerful US labour movement.

In Canada, most trade unions rejected concessions, recognizing that collaboration with the employers would strengthen the corporations, not workers. This experience led to the birth of the CAW as an independent Canadian union, and a renewed movement for Canadian autonomy and democracy in the international unions. It helped that unions like CUPW, UE, CAW, CUPE, Mine Mill and others had strong and progressive leaderships, fighting for class struggle policies and for mass independent labour political action. This strategy resulted in stronger unions, stronger collective agreements, and higher wages and living standards in Canada.

The attacks by Reagan, Thatcher and Mulroney in the '80s, and by Mike Harris in the '90s, required the labour movement to unite, and to work with allies to mount an effective fightback and defend interests of workers and their communities.

Today, OFL delegates must decide between two directions: unity, solidarity and mass action, moving to a counter-offensive to curb corporate power and Big Business governments? Or, more studies, more lobbying, and more cap-in-hands that were a main feature of the Samuelson decade, when the OFL was virtually invisible as massive job losses and plant closures racked the province, stealing our livelihoods and our futures?

With a deep recession on the

organizations in Canada;

\* Announced the introduction of severe austerity measures - combined with massive military spending increases...

Peace and the survival of the planet are conditional upon the ability to overturn aggressive imperialism by the organized political and social actions of the vast majority of humankind. The forces of peace and human progress in all continents declare that hunger, disease, poverty, lack of education and unemployment and abuse of the environment can never be solved by militarism, wars of aggression and occupation that perpetuate the dominance of a few powerful imperialist states over all of humanity.

The basic necessities of life and human happiness can only be achieved in a society that eradicates all of the causes of war. •

## Peace Congress....

continued from page 6

NATO, and an aggressively pro-Zionist policy toward the Middle East, the new Conservative government has:

\* Enthusiastically promoted and participated in the imperialist attack on Libya, with a shameful vote of support by the government that had only one member opposing and 307 (including the entire NDP caucus) supporting;

\* Announced its intention to secure rights to build military bases in countries around the world;

\* Indicated it will pursue a policy of militarization in the Arctic, combined with the development of shipping routes and resource extraction industries in that region;

\* Overseen espionage projects by military intelligence against aboriginal peoples and

## Revolution from the South

### 2012 People's Voice Calendar

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

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



## What's Left

### Vancouver, BC

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

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

**Left Film Night**, screening of "Will the Real Terrorist Please Stand Up," rescheduled to 7 pm, Sun., Nov. 27, Centre for Socialist Education, 706 Clark Dr. Admission by donation, call 604-255-2041 for details.

### Edmonton, AB

**Class Struggle from the Russian Revolution to Occupy Wall Street**, with CPC leader Miguel Figueroa, 7:30-9 pm, Sat., Nov. 19, City Arts Centre Drama Room, 10943-84 Ave., near U of A campus. All welcome, organized by Edmonton Club CPC.

### Winnipeg, MB

**Celebrate 90 years of the Communist Party**, Sat., Dec. 3, Ukrainian Labour Temple, 591 Pritchard Ave. Dinner-Politics-History-Culture, speaker CPC leader Miguel Figueroa. Tickets \$50 waged (includes tax credit), \$15 unemployed/students. Call 586-7824.

### Toronto, ON

**Cafe Cuba**, Fri., Nov. 25, 7 pm, 1482 Bathurst St., 4th Floor (CUPE-OSSTF building), hear Amanda Hale on her new book *In the Embrace of the Alligator*, and see the Cuban documentary "Well Paid Lies", which shows how the U.S. Interests Section in Havana attempts to influence Cuban artists. Free admission, all welcome, sponsored by Canadian Cuban Friendship Association, call 416-410-8254.

**Build the Peace Movement Through Anti-Imperialist Solidarity**, Canadian Peace Congress convention, Nov. 25-26, at Metro Hall, 55 John Street. Convention opens 7 pm Nov. 25, continues 10 am Nov. 26. For information, please check www.canadianpeacecongress.ca or ph. 416-535-6586.

**Celebrate 90 Years of Struggle** by Canada's party of socialism, Sat., Nov. 26, GCDO Hall, 290A Danforth Ave., (Chester subway). Cocktails 6 pm, Dinner and speakers 7 pm, live music and dancing at 9 pm. Tickets \$20 (\$10 unwaged; children under 12 free). Auspices: Toronto Committee CPC. For tickets and info call 416-469-2446.

### Montreal, QC

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

way, or even a global depression, and more job losses, privatization, and tax cuts for the corporations and the wealthy, more attacks on labour and democratic rights, and impoverishment and insecurity for the 99%, the answer should be clear.

It's a long time until the next

convention. Delegates must make their voices heard now for a strong, united and militant OFL, leading the struggle to stop the corporate juggernaut and to champion a people's agenda for Ontario.

(Liz Rowley is the Ontario leader of the Communist Party.) •

## People's Voice deadlines

December 1-31 issue: Thursday, Nov. 17

January 1-31 issue: Thursday, Dec. 15

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

## Celebrate 90 Years of Struggle by Canada's party of socialism

Saturday, November 26  
GCDO Hall, 290A Danforth Ave.,  
Toronto (Chester subway)

6 pm - Cocktails  
7 pm - Dinner and Speakers  
9 pm - Live Music and Dancing

Tickets: \$20 or \$10 unwaged; children under 12 free

Auspices: Toronto Committee,  
Communist Party of Canada  
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# Taking liberties with "national security"

By Matthew Behrens,  
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Just after Thanksgiving, Montreal's Westin Hotel played host to a gathering of high-powered Federal Court judges, NGO heads, lawyers, academics, and members of Canada's torture-complicit spy service, CSIS. Coming together under the predictably dry title "Terrorism, Law and Democracy: 10 years after 9/11," the conference sought to determine "whether Canadian law has successfully preserved fundamental rights and values of substantive and procedural justice while at the same time contributing to anti-terrorism."

This collegial-sounding gathering - entry to which was restricted to those who could shell out the \$895 entrance fee - appears to have been one of those periodic gabfests where elite representatives determine the responsible manner in which the rest of us will perceive terms like "terrorism" and "national security". Importantly, attendees were safely insulated from the most compelling voices of the past 10 years: those who have been victimized by numerous conference participants. The latter included judges who have presided over secret hearings, spies whose organization falsely labels individuals security threats, and academics who produce papers defending arbitrary detention.

Indeed, Canadians Abdullah Almalki, Ahmad El Maati, and Muayyed Nureddin, who three years ago this month were found by a secretive federal inquiry to have been tortured with the complicity of Canadian government agencies, including CSIS, were not on any of the panels. Nor were Abousfian Abdelrazik and Omar Khadr, both tortured with CSIS complicity. Benamar Benatta, an Algerian refugee rendered to torture by Canadian hands on Sept. 12, 2001, wasn't there to talk about how his Charter rights had been violated either, nor were Adil Charkaoui and Hassan Almeiri, whose bogus secret trial security certificates were finally quashed after a decade-long struggle. Mohammad Mahjoub, Mahmoud Jaballah, and Mohamed Harkat, who are still facing deportation to torture without being

able to see the secret "case" against them, were similarly absent.

Each of those individuals was more than capable of delivering an eloquent assessment of the conference theme - indeed, the names and stories of those who have suffered a fundamental denial of rights at the hands of Canadian authorities in the past decade could fill volumes. But conference organizers instead brought in CSIS Assistant Director of Intelligence Raymond Boisvert, and former CSIS Director Jim Judd (who in one Wikileaks-released document

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lamented Canadians' "paroxysms of moral outrage" over the human rights abuses committed by his organization).

It must have been an odd sight to witness those CSIS veterans sharing a polite panel discussion with critics of human rights abuses such as of Amnesty International Canada's Alex Neve, and the Canadian Civil Liberties Association's Nathalie des Rosiers. One wonders if either of them directly challenged the CSIS men, perhaps asking why there has been no apology, no compensation, and no systemic changes in CSIS to prevent the kind of torture suffered not only by the above-mentioned men, but by numerous others.

Equally important, did conference organizers and participants consider the manner in which the scandal-plagued CSIS is accorded a significant degree of legitimization and acceptance by having its heavyweights appearing at such a gathering? Or that those who have been targeted, such as Maher Arar or Adil Charkoui, suffer an equal degree of de-legitimization by not inviting them onto the agenda?

As with any important political issue, who sits at the table of such conferences generally determines the scope of the discussion. In this instance, the absence of key voices raises significant issues about how the never-defined term "national security" is framed, filtered, and

ultimately understood in this country. Such a closed, circular world logically produces a Canadian military that names First Nations advocates threats to national security and explains why the Canadian financial intelligence unit FINTRAC was found recently to have tarred environmentalists and animal rights activists as terrorists in their online tutorials.

In a similar vein, it will come as no surprise that most mainstream media outlets buy into such narrow narratives. Most reporters assigned to the national security

beat are not physically embedded within the RCMP and CSIS in the way those covering the occupation of Afghanistan seem to become stenographers for the Canadian military. But they tend to write as if they were, buying the assumptions created and sustained by those who benefit most from them while generally ignoring the fact that these agencies have a historical profile that reads "pathological liar."

Witness the Canadian media's wall-to-wall coverage of the 10th anniversary of the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, which occurred in another country. The event allowed many journalists to step outside of their proudly professed neutrality and share their feelings about having "been there." But the 10th anniversary of the U.S.-led terrorist attacks against Afghanistan the following month failed to elicit significant coverage, much less sympathy, especially for the thousands killed in aerial bombing strikes in the first months of the invasion or those who continue to die under the drone strikes or rot in that country's torture chambers.

While the Canadian media embeds got caught up in an exercise of group-feel and the endless "can it happen here" scenarios, few bothered to note that the 2011 Terrorism Risk Index ranks Canada as 86 out of 197 countries for risk of terrorism, and the lowest of

"western" economies. That low ranking is likely not because Canada has dedicated close to \$100 billion in subsidizing its national security industry over the past decade. Based on its appalling record of falsely labelling countless individuals security risks, it's doubtful that Canada's spies would actually recognize a real terrorist if they saw one. They certainly have not made moves to arrest Dick Cheney or George W. Bush during their Canadian visits, despite proud admissions that they authorized torture.

Ultimately, the national security lens moves depending on political expediency. No clearer example can be found than in the on-again, off-again demonization/friendship cycle with former Libyan dictator Muammar Gaddafi, who one minute was the "mad dog of the Middle East" and the next a generous host for the extraordinary rendition to torture program for agents of the U.S., U.K. and Canada. Indeed, while CSIS spokespeople grabbed their muffins and shared small talk with their Montreal conferees a few weeks back, Human Rights Watch revealed that Canadian citizen Mustafa Krer had been detained, interrogated, and tortured in Libya for eight years, and that CSIS agents had flown over to take part in the interrogation on at least three occasions.

Gaddafi is now out of the picture, so new arrangements will have to be made. With the apparent decline of Al-Qaeda - some analysts claim the organization will be kaput within 18 months - those whose job requires an enemy are desperately searching for an understudy to

play The Next Great Evil. While different groups are being tried on for size and traction - the Haqqani Network in Pakistan has been the subject of numerous auditions, floated before the press like a taste test - there are always old standbys like Iran. Prime Minister Stephen Harper recently condemned the recent alleged plot by Iranian agents to assassinate the Saudi Ambassador in Washington (and also claimed that Tehran now represents the most "significant threat" to the world), yet failed to mention that the Obama administration is running an illegal, global assassination campaign using aerial drones and Hellfire missiles that have claimed countless hundreds of civilian lives while violating the most basic rule of law precepts.

At a time when some NGO representatives lament what they term "torture fatigue" and "national security fatigue" - a feeling that people have heard enough about these horror stories and simply want to move forward, as Barack Obama pledged to do when he refused to consider exposure and prosecution of Bush administration criminality - it's important to remind ourselves that such violations are not a consequence of or reaction to events of ten years ago, but are grounded in historical patterns and power dynamics that continue to evolve. We neglect them at our peril.

(This column first appeared on the Rabble.ca website. Behrens is a freelance writer and social justice advocate who coordinates the Homes not Bombs non-violent direct action network.) ●



The real "security threats" to our planet are the leaders of the U.S. and other imperialist powers which launch wars of military aggression and occupation. (PV file photo: Ed Bil)

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### New persecution against solidarity activists in Europe

The persecution of political activists who help build solidarity with struggles for social justice and freedom took another turn for the worse recently in Denmark.

Anton Nielsen is a Danish communist who is president of the Horseroad-Stuffhof Association, which includes political prisoners who opposed the regime which collaborated with the Nazi occupation forces during the Second World War. Nielsen has been sentenced to six months in prison for collecting and sending funds to support humanitarian work done by the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine in the occupied Palestinian territories of West Bank and Gaza.

Another communist, Viggo Tofte-Joergensen, a leader of the Danish carpenters' union, has also been convicted of supporting the FARC, which has led a decades-long resistance struggle in Colombia.

A statement issued on Oct. 22 by several European communist parties warns that "inclusion of these two organizations on the list of 'terrorist groups' of the European Union is a way of criminalizing those who show their solidarity with the just struggle of the Palestinian and Colombian peoples for their rights, freedom and socialism. We demand the immediate acquittal and the withdrawal of all charges against the Danish comrades and the immediate elimination of the EU list of terrorist organizations." ●