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people's VOICE

GOODBYE GORDO!

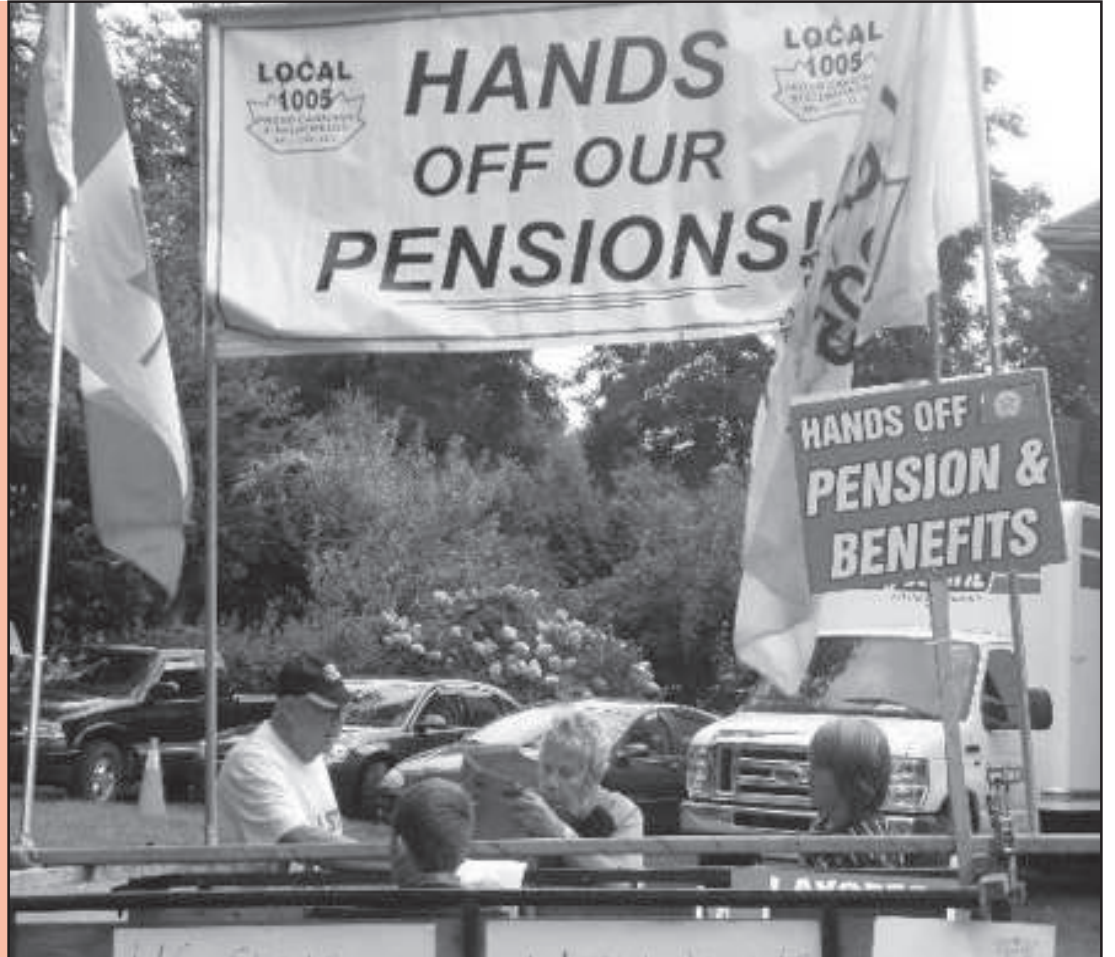
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U.S. Steel locks out Hamilton workers

*"No concession on pensions"
says Local 1005*

- See page 5 -



March 21, 2009: "white power" fascists march in the streets of Calgary. Their terror campaign has become even more dangerous with a murderous attack against two anti-racists on November 8.

Neo-nazi violence escalates in Calgary

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7 World Youth Festival

Next month, over 20,000 young people from 120 countries will head to South Africa for the 17th World Festival of Youth and Students. Among them will be dozens of young Canadians.

INSIDE

3 School closure debate

On the surface, closing schools to save jobs has some appeal - but not if the people most negatively affected are Aboriginal people and the poor.

12 Cuba's reforms

While economic change in capitalist Canada brings chaos and confusion, the reforms being launched in Cuba are intended to set the stage for important advances for working people on the island of socialism.

Neo-Nazi rampage continues in Calgary

By Kimball Cariou

The failure - or perhaps refusal - would be more accurate - by the Calgary Police Service to take serious action to halt neo-Nazi violence has led to the most serious attack to date. Early in the morning of Monday, Nov. 8, prominent Anti-Racist Action organizer Jason Devine and a friend were brutally beaten by a gang of five thugs, apparently members of the so-called "Blood and Honour" fascist group.

While some early media reports called this a "home invasion robbery," nothing was stolen. The attack was clearly aimed at trying to silence and perhaps even kill the most outspoken campaigner against white power gangs which have terrorised Calgary in recent years.

The first report of the attack circulated on Facebook said that "At 1:30 am 5 males carried out an armed home invasion on the house of Anti-Racist Activists Bonnie and Jason Devine... The armed assailants overwhelmed Jason and a friend who was visiting. They repeatedly beat Jason and his friend with blunt objects. His friend was bludgeoned throughout the head area and sustained a broken arm. Jason was surrounded as each assailant took turns beating his head, back, body, arms and legs, sustaining stitches and a concussion. Both were rushed to the hospital to receive treatment."

Speaking later that day to the *Calgary Herald*, Devine said he



Jason Devine shows some of the wounds from the Nov. 8 attack.

and his friend were sitting up in the kitchen after entertaining guests earlier in the evening, when they heard a loud noise. Within seconds, five black-clad men rushed into the room and began

beating them.

"All of them had metal or wooden weapons," said Devine, who showed the newspaper a deep purple bruise on his midriff and bloody wounds on his back. He

also received a large gash on the scalp, and his friend suffered a broken arm. After the attack, the men ran out to a waiting dark-coloured SUV.

Bonnie Devine remained in her bedroom, phoning for emergency help. The couple's four children were asleep downstairs and did not witness the attack.

Questioned by *People's Voice* about the failure of the police to act following previous cases of neo-Nazi attacks, a respondent at the Calgary police media line said simply that "evidence is required before charges can be brought."

Jason and Bonnie Devine have been the focus of neo-Nazi hatred for several years, in part because the couple are also well-known members of the Communist Party of Canada. Besides receiving death threats, their home has been vandalized on several occasions, including spray-painting of Nazi and white power symbols and slogans. The home was firebombed in February 2009, with their children sleeping inside.

Until now, the Calgary Police Service has dismissed these attacks and threats as a "dispute between extremists", even after a key Aryan Guard leader attempted to firebomb the home of one of his own followers.

In November 2009, police accused Aryan Guard member Kyle Robert McKee, and an unnamed 17-year-old male, of responsibility for a pipe bomb attack against the apartment of other Aryan Guard members.

In the wake of this incident, a statement was posted on the neo-Nazi "Stormfront" website, announcing the disbanding of the Aryan Guard following internal disputes. This was denied by others, and the activities of the Calgary neo-Nazis continue unchecked.

Both the police and the Calgary media call the actions of the white power group "expressions of free speech." The Aryan Guard has repeatedly used March 21, the International Day Against Racial Discrimination, as an occasion to rally against so-called "anti-white" racism, marching with "White Pride Worldwide" flags and black combat boots. These marches have been

met with massive community opposition, and the police have helped the neo-Nazis flee from protesters.

But this is not a "free speech" issue. Aryan Guard members and supporters in Calgary have been accused of several violent crimes against members of racialized communities, including Aboriginal people and immigrants.

Following an attack against the Devine home on Oct. 3, 2009, the Communist Party of Canada issued a statement warning that "The failure by the Calgary Police Service to seriously investigate neo-Nazi violence against anti-racist activists is a reckless and shocking dereliction of duty which endangers lives."

The Communist statement, proven correct by these latest events, said: "Despite its motto, 'to maximize public safety in Calgary with vigilance, courage, and pride,' the Calgary Police Service has ignored repeated public appeals to take action. Aryan Guard members are suspects in various other crimes, including the beatings of a homeless man, a gay community member, and a cab driver from North Africa, but no arrests have resulted.

"This pattern has gone beyond neglect, into the territory of tacit encouragement of criminal activity. If serious injury or death results from further attacks, innocent blood will not only be on the hands of the perpetrators, but also on the hands of the Calgary Police Service which hides behind the feeble claim that 'both sides are equally responsible' and that the Aryan Guard is simply exercising its right to free speech."

"The time has come for the City of Calgary and the Alberta provincial government to intervene in this crisis situation. Strong political leadership is required to replace Chief Rick Hanson with a police chief who is willing and capable of ensuring that swift action is taken to bring an end to these racist attacks. In the meantime, we extend our ongoing full solidarity to anti-racist activists and all democratic-minded citizens of Calgary who are standing up to the violent neo-Nazis in their community." ●

Free Canadian scientists to talk to journalists

By Kathryn O'Hara/Nature News/CALM

What happened to the transparency and accountability promised when Stephen Harper formed the first of his two minority governments in 2006? Its communication policy, posted online, directed civil servants to "Provide the public with timely, accurate, clear, objective and complete information about its policies, programs, services and initiatives."

Today, that openness is being held ransom to media messages that serve the government's political agenda.

In spring last year, press reports revealed that climate scientists in Environment Canada were being stymied by Harper's compulsive message control. Researchers were prevented from sharing their work at conferences, giving interviews and even talking about research that had already been published.

Carefully researched reports intended for the public - *Climate Change and Health*, from Health Canada, and *Climate Change Impacts*, from Natural Resources Canada - were released without publicity, late on Friday afternoons, and appeared on government websites only after long delays.

It is not just climate-change research that is being targeted. Margaret Munro, a science reporter for Postmedia News, has uncovered a policy that stipulates all federal scientists must get approval from their minister's office before speaking to journalists who represent national

or international media.

The approval process requires time-consuming drafting of questions and answers, scrutinized by as many as seven people, before a scientist can be given the go-ahead by the minister's staff. This is to spare the minister any surprises. This message manipulation shows a disregard for the values and virtues of both journalism and science, and subverts timely disclosure and access to scientific data.

All governments try to control their political message and push for policies that reflect party philosophy, but these new restrictions also seek to control the scientific message in research with no link to partisan politics.

When Scott Dallimore, a geoscientist for Natural Resources Canada in Sidney, B.C., reported evidence of the colossal flood that occurred in northern Canada at the end of the last ice age, he was put through the message-moulding

machine. While the news broke elsewhere, journalists in Canada who had previously had open access to Dallimore, a gifted communicator, were left spinning their wheels while deadlines passed. The flood happened 13,000 years ago, so how can this work be construed as politically sensitive?

The Canadian Science Writers' Association in Toronto is asking for timely access to federal scientists whose research is published in journals or presented at conferences open to the media.

Journalists need to speak with scientists to avoid misinterpretation of research. And, as journalists around the world will testify, scientists usually avoid politics and steer clear of policy-sensitive discussions. Canada's researchers are no different.

- Kathryn O'Hara is professor of science broadcast journalism at Carleton University and president of the Canadian Science Writers' Association. ●



Frank Paul inquiry resumes

The final stage of the inquiry into the death of Aboriginal man Frank Paul has resumed in Vancouver. In December 1998, Paul was left by police in an alley, soaking wet and unconscious, and died of hypothermia. In this stage, the inquiry is seeking to find out why crown prosecutors did not bring criminal charges against the police who were involved. The B.C. Civil Liberties Association points out that prosecutors have never approved any charges related to a police-involved death in custody, despite many such cases in the province. Above: Indigenous Movement spokesperson Kat Norris speaks to a Nov. 1 rally outside the inquiry venue.

Closing Vancouver schools would be a tragic error

By **Sam Hammond,**
Vancouver

After a decade of resisting pressures to close schools, the Vancouver Board of Education faces a crucial decision by the end of December. Five elementary schools on the east side of the city are up for potential closure in June 2011, a move which could save about \$1.5 million annually.

Since late October, the Board has been engaged in public consultations, giving ample opportunity for trustees and senior Board management to hear directly from parents, teachers, students, and other concerned community members. Not surprisingly, the provincial Liberals who forced this debacle on the Board have been absent, except for a few "plants" reading from the new Education Minister's script.

Some of these meetings have drawn up to 600 people, such as at Carleton Elementary. Most presenters have focused on the terrible stress placed by closures on vulnerable sections of the population, especially Aboriginal peoples, new immigrants, poor people, and families with special needs students.

It must be recognized that Vancouver is among the few districts which have held out against a tide of nearly 200 closures; the sole exception here was a small school annex closed back in 2003. Vancouver trustees from COPE, the Greens, and even the NPA, and Vision since 2008, have resisted the right-wing mantra that closures mean "necessary efficiencies".

This has become increasingly difficult due to the perennial campaign by the far-right Fraser Institute, which uses blatantly

manipulated "school rankings" to press for privatization of public education. The Institute's annual report, based on test scores in grades 4, 7 and 10, presents a false picture of schools in communities with high levels of poverty, or with many ESL students. The results encourage families to transfer their children to "better" schools. In Vancouver, this means a migration to wealthier west side schools, or to private schools with selective admission standards.

The Vancouver Board has been left in a no-win situation, with many east side schools operating below full capacity. To their enormous credit, the COPE and Vision trustees have consistently exposed the attack on public education, demanding that the province fund cost increases. Since the Campbell Liberals took office, funding shortfalls in Vancouver have added up to a shocking \$67 million, a huge burden for a Board with a \$450 million budget. Successive boards (especially the 2002-2005 COPE majority) have cut administration costs and found other ways to minimize the impact of funding shortfalls on the classroom. But there are limits to this process. The 2009-10 budget year was particularly painful, as the Vision-COPE majority had to cut over 100 positions to cover a \$17 million funding shortfall.

From this perspective, reasonable arguments can be made for a tough decision to save staff, not buildings.

But there are problems with this choice. The most obvious is that closures shift the burden onto families: grandparents who face long walks taking the kids to school, special needs students who lose

irreplaceable connections with friends and teachers, parents who rely on after-school programs and child care spaces which often can't be expanded into nearby schools. This option means yielding to the corporate-government drive to slash public services, adding to the costs paid by society for higher unemployment, homelessness, and other problems. It's the old "short term gain for long term pain" scenario.

But perhaps the most significant downside is the impact on Aboriginal students and families, long deprived of anything near equality in education. In June 2009, following years of negotiations and consultations, this serious inequity was finally addressed by the historic Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement. Signed by the Board, the provincial government, and First Nations, this is essentially a formal nation-to-nation agreement, hammered out in a complex urban environment which includes a wide range of Aboriginal peoples. But the ink wasn't even dry when the province started its latest budget cuts.

The biggest percentage of Vancouver's 10,000-plus Aboriginal residents live in areas affected by the potential closures, especially around Macdonald and Queen Alexandra elementary schools.

Macdonald has an overwhelmingly Aboriginal student body. Its small enrolment actually makes the school a safer environment, one where Aboriginal heritage is celebrated in the midst of a city which is often deeply racist.

About one-fourth of Queen Alexandra ("Q.A.") students are Aboriginal. Every staff member and student took part in a special signing of the Agreement, reflecting a collective decision to bring this commitment to life at their school.

Yes, closures would reduce the number of layoffs across the district. But the trustees are being warned that the closures of Macdonald and Q.A. would be seen by the Aboriginal community as yet another broken treaty, the latest in a long history of colonialism and racism. The fact that the trustees (including Vision's Ken Clement, the first Aboriginal trustee in Vancouver history) have the best interests of students and staff in mind, would not change this tragic reality. For this reason, many have stressed that it would be a terrible error to close these schools.

The trustees have been urged to consider other strategies. If this was a one-time crisis, options such as fund-raising drives to keep schools open might be worth exploring. But underfunding will not disappear. The Board faces another \$9 million shortfall for 2011-12, which means more layoffs and more closures next year.

Some hope to wait until the Liberals can be defeated, perhaps through the recall process, or at the next election in May 2013. But unfortunately, the NDP has made it clear that they will not reverse Gordon Campbell's tax cuts to the wealthy and the corporations, which blasted a gigantic hole in the provincial treasury. Without such revenues, a new NDP government would be unable to restore the

Liberal cuts to schools, health care and social programs - a crucial point that NDP MLAs avoid mentioning.

The only way out is to mobilize enough pressure to force the Liberals to start covering the full costs of rebuilding a school system devastated by years of cutbacks. Some groups are already at work, such as "APPLE-BC", the Alliance of Parents and Partners to Lobby for Education. This broad coalition called an emergency rally at Premier Campbell's constituency office on Nov. 12. APPLE-BC plans further actions leading up to and beyond

the next provincial budget in February 2011.

Limiting the fightback to speeches and news releases just won't satisfy the large majority of British Columbians who want more funding for public education. The Premier's Nov. 3 resignation opens the door to new possibilities for mass action. The struggle to dump the Liberals and reverse their policies needs stronger progressive leadership; that could start with a vote by Vancouver trustees to block these closures.

(Sam Hammond is the leader of the Communist Party of BC.) ●



Rally last winter at the Vancouver office of former Education Minister Margaret Macdiarmid. (PV file photo)

Cattle trucked more safely than farmworkers

UFCW/CALM

On October 5, five agriculture workers were injured near Surrey, B.C., after a pickup truck crashed into a flatbed wagon being towed behind a tractor.

The workers, employed by Greenway farms in Surrey, were riding in the wagon while perched on a stack of produce boxes.

The driver of the pickup truck was arrested, but so far no charges

have been laid against the employer for transporting workers unsafely.

In 2007, three farm workers near Abbotsford were killed and 14 others injured when a ten-person van jammed with the 17 workers flipped and crashed. The coroner's inquest made recommendations to regulate the safe of transportation of farm workers, including strict inspection standards by a third party.

The B.C. government rejected that recommendation, and the

sighting of farm workers being transported in unsafe, substandard vehicles remains too common an occurrence.

"The way the system is working now, cattle are trucked more safely than agriculture workers. It's shameful that the B.C. government continues to turn a blind eye to the cor-

oner's recommendations," says Wayne Hanley, the president of U F C W C a n a d a ,

which in cooperation with the Agriculture Workers Alliance (AWA) operates farm worker support centres in B.C.

"How many more workers have to be killed or injured before the authorities in British Columbia, and Alberta and Ontario stop treating agriculture workers like disposable commodities, and start ensuring that the health and safety of the workers who put food on our tables is properly protected?" asks Hanley.



Support public education in BC!

Warning that "our kids can't take another round of cuts," a new coalition will rally at the Vancouver-Point Grey constituency office of Premier Gordon Campbell on noon on Friday, Nov. 12. The office is at 3615 W. 4th Ave.

An appeal circulated by the Alliance of Parents and Partners to Lobby for Education in BC (APPLE-BC) lists some of the negative impacts of education underfunding by the Liberal government.

"School closures - at present 191 closed, with 25 more threatened since 2001. By the end of the current school year, this number will exceed 200.

"Teacher layoffs affect vulnerable students - up to 3,000 teachers laid off since 2001; hundreds in specialty areas such as special needs, ESL, learning assistance, Aboriginal education and skill development, with devastating impact to these students.

"Parent fundraising - dramatic increase in parent fundraising over the past decade, with parent advisory committees forced to compensate for cutbacks to programs and services. Parents fundraise for school supplies, resources, materials and playgrounds. Fees levied by schools have sharply increased and community organizations scramble to take up the slack. And BC Liberals claim the "greatest ever" funding for schools!"

APPLE-BC has chosen November 12 for their first day of action because this is one of ten days cut from the Vancouver school calendar due to the catastrophic cutbacks. As the group points out, "Of course each of us has the right and responsibility to advocate for our own school if it's threatened with closure. But, in addition, we all need to defend and advocate for every school, for every community, for every educational program, for every student in the face of unprecedented government cutbacks." ●

EDITORIALS

Potash decision a victory

Ottawa's denial of the BHP Billiton hostile bid for the Potash Corp. of Saskatchewan is an important victory, despite the crass opportunism behind the decision. In ordinary circumstances, the Harper Tories would have approved this deal without batting an eye, believing that whatever corporations want must be delivered. But instead of the usual rubber-stamp given to foreign investors, Industry Minister Tony Clement argued that the deal does not provide a "net benefit" to Canada.

Of course, the real reason for Clement's position was the electoral needs of the Conservative Party. The loss of even a handful of Saskatchewan Tory MPs would make Stephen Harper's quest for a majority in Parliament much more doubtful.

Right-wing pundits and politicians are frantic to demand that this decision (which could still face an appeal) must not represent a "precedent". What nonsense! Foreign TNCs will continue seeking to buy up Canadian natural resources, understanding that BHP ran into trouble for threatening to deprive a Conservative stronghold province of a huge percentage of its revenue base.

But this case does have an important positive side. The debate over the future of potash has raised awareness that Canadians are increasingly denied the ability to make critical decisions over our economy. Even a grudging recognition by the federal Conservatives that there is such a concept as "net benefit to Canada" is an advance in the long-term struggle to achieve Canadian control of resources. The job of progressive forces is to continue to extend the struggle for sovereignty, including full and immediate abrogation of the treasonous Free Trade Agreement and all other "treaties" which allow corporations to control our future.

Reverse Campbell's tax legacy

Gordon Campbell's goal was always to make B.C. home of the lowest corporate tax rates in North America, and he succeeded. One of his first moves as Premier was to slash over \$1 billion annually from taxes paid by the wealthy and the corporations. The resulting huge hole in provincial revenues has compounded over the years, starving funds for social programs, education and health care. Occasional tax cuts to lower and middle-income earners were offset by regressive user fees and charges, such as the doubling of Medical Service Plan premiums. Outright giveaways to the corporate sector abound. Early in 2010, Finance Minister Colin Hansen cancelled the "Financial Institutions Minimum Tax," the final step in erasing annual revenue of \$100 million from the big banks to the provincial coffers.

The biggest gift is the HST, which transfers \$1.6 billion annually from the pockets of consumers to the business sector. The HST also triggered a referendum initiative drive and recall campaigns against Liberal MLAs, and saddled Campbell's potential successors with a looming vote on the HST.

But the tax issue may also haunt the NDP. Making friendly with the big corporations, Carole James has pledged to keep Campbell's tax cuts, and is even reluctant to repeal the HST. While the most pro-corporate premier in B.C. history has been driven out, the cornerstone of his policies - the sweeping redistribution of wealth to the rich - may remain locked in place.

This cannot pass without mounting a serious challenge. We urge the B.C. Federation of Labour and its allies to rally around a call for genuine tax reform, based on reversing the Campbell cuts to the wealthy, and using these revenues to rebuild health care, public education and social programs. Failure to fight for such an alternative will leave the field open for the political right wing, a nightmare scenario which would transform jubilation over Campbell's exit into a longer term defeat for working people.

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CPP fiction & facts: labour's view

CLC/CALM

The best way to help today's workers save enough for retirement is by increasing what everybody gets from the Canada and Quebec Pension Plans. A modest increase in contributions today will produce thousands of dollars a year in extra benefits for workers when they retire.

The Canadian Labour Congress is proposing a gradual doubling of future CPP benefits - a proposal that won support from a majority of finance ministers and municipal governments.

The CLC plan has come under attack from some special interest groups. Let's set the record straight about the CLC's plan for the CPP.

Fiction: Labour's plan to gradually double future CPP benefits will double CPP contributions for workers and employers.

The Facts: The reality is that a gradual doubling of future CPP benefits can be paid for by a modest increase in contributions, spread out over seven years. This means increasing what everyone contributes to their CPP savings by about 0.43 per cent of pensionable earnings each year for seven years. For a worker earning \$47,200 or more per year, the initial cost of gradually doubling future CPP benefits works out to about nine cents an hour or \$3.57 a week. That's less than the cost of a newspaper subscription. For a worker earning \$30,000 per year, the initial cost would be about six cents an hour, or \$2.27 a week. That's less than the cost of a medium double-double with a donut at Tim Hortons. This is first-rate retirement savings at a low cost.

Fiction: Labour's plan for the CPP is a job-killing tax.

The Facts: CPP contributions do not discourage employers from hiring workers. In 1997, the unemployment rate was 9.1 per cent. That year, the federal

contributions. Right now, one-third of Canadian workers aged 24-64 have no personal retirement savings at all. Today's young workers will benefit the most as they will be able to save more for retirement and get more from the CPP when they retire.

Fiction: Expanding the CPP will hurt lower income workers who cannot afford to pay for increased premiums.

The Facts: The reality is that the CPP already exempts the first \$3,500 of income when it calculates everybody's contributions - that's a policy designed to make contributions easier for low income workers. It is lower income workers who stand to gain most from a gradual doubling of future CPP benefits.

The increased contributions needed to pay for those improvements will be modest and phased in over seven years. The cost to workers who earn \$10,000 per year to expand the CPP is just two cents an hour each year over the next seven years. This will pay for a future doubling of CPP benefits.

This is first-rate retirement savings at a low cost. Most low income workers have no workplace pension plans. If nothing changes they are destined for a life of poverty or near poverty in retirement. ●

other voices

government announced plans to increase CPP contributions for both workers and employers from 2.5 per cent of pensionable earnings to 4.95 per cent over a five-year period. The move was immediately labelled a job-killing payroll tax-hike by business lobbyists.

Fiction: The CPP won't be there for young workers when they are ready to retire.

The Facts: The reality is that the CPP is recognized as one of the most stable pension plans in the world, and it will be there for the next generation of workers when they retire. The CPP is actuarially sound for the next 75 years. Today's young workers have nothing to worry about, nor do their kids.

Fiction: Expanding the CPP will hurt younger workers because they will have to pay more to provide improved benefits for older workers.

The Facts: The reality is that a gradual doubling of future CPP benefits would be fully paid. Future benefits for each worker will be based on the number of years that worker made expanded



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A better war is not possible: Don't extend it, end it

Statement by the Canadian Peace Alliance, Nov. 8, 2010

Defence Minister Peter MacKay has told the Halifax security summit that Canada may keep troops in Afghanistan after 2011. It has since come to light that as many as 1000 troops may remain in a "non-combat" role.

This follows months of speculation, during which the Prime Minister has insisted that Canada will bring the troops home next year. Minister MacKay went on to say that any extension will focus on training Afghan troops and would be "inside the wire" i.e. not in harm's way.

Regardless of the specifics of the mission, by staying in Afghanistan, Canada continues to enable a corrupt warlord led government that abuses the rights of the Afghan people. Canada and NATO have thus chosen to side with the drug warlords in a civil war in Afghanistan. How Canada chooses to support the warlords isn't the issue.

Any foreign presence in Afghanistan is building up the resistance movements while simultaneously arming the various factions within the government. We are leaving a legacy of a divided and heavily armed state.

There are a series of problems with the strategy outlined by Minister MacKay. First, after almost a decade of training Afghan army and police forces they are still not able to provide basic functions of security. The notion that another two years of the same policies will alter this trajectory is foolhardy.

In fact, many of the police trained by the west join the resistance after their training is complete. For example, on November 1, in Ghazni Province an entire detachment of Afghan police burned their police station to the ground, stole the weapons and "defected" to the resistance movement. The US Defense Department and the Inspector General for Reconstruction in Afghanistan admit that there are extremely high

rates of desertion from the Afghan army with at least 25 per cent of new recruits defecting each year.

Also, the notion of a non-combat training mission is a farce. According to the Pentagon's own figures there are high levels of resistance activity in 97 per cent of the country. If any Canadians remain as trainers, they will be in combat. General Rick Hillier, the

former Canadian commander in Afghanistan has stated that there is no effective option for a non-combat role while training in Afghanistan.

This about face by the Conservatives is nothing new - in fact it is their preferred bait and switch tactic. In 2008, just before the debate that extended the mission to 2011, then Defence Gordon O'Connor, was adamant

that there would be no extension. "Our military commitment is, at the moment, to the end of February 2009," he said. "I don't know how many times I can say that, but I'll keep saying it as long as they ask."

The Prime Minister also stated that the mission would have to end in 2009. According to Canada.com: "(W)hen asked whether he has any desire to prolong the combat mission in southern Afghanistan beyond 2009, Harper said: 'No.' I think Canadians are expecting that if we're in Afghanistan after 2009, it would be a new mission," Harper told a Calgary radio talk show on Nov. 8.

"Canadians have been fairly clear that if we were to be in after 2009, that they would expect our participation to evolve in some way," Harper said.

A majority of Canadians have said they want Canada out of Afghanistan. Once again, the Conservatives, with the help of the Federal Liberals are dismissing the opinions of the Canadian people. We need to make sure they hear us loud and clear. ●



Saskatchewan labour takes aim at Wall government

By Darrell Rankin

The Saskatchewan Federation of Labour will be mobilizing over the next year to defeat the reactionary policies of Premier Brad Wall. That was the firm verdict of delegates at the SFL's annual convention, held in Regina, October 27-30.

Close to 1,000 delegates approved a large budget for the Labour Issues Campaign, which will be fine tuned over the next few months. It will include a massive membership education effort.

According to SFL president Larry Hubich, the number one goal of the campaign will be to "mobilize our members to demand a government that is accountable to the people and that respects workers' rights."

"We have the power to demand a government that governs on behalf of the people of the province, not just to appease its corporate masters," said Hubich in his opening speech.

Some delegates urged large protests to oppose the Wall government; others spoke about the need to defeat the government itself and its anti-labour, privatization policies.

To applause, one delegate demanded the SFL get the backing of the official opposition NDP MLAs to roll back Wall's massive "reform" of provincial labour law. Last year, the right-wing Fraser Institute ranked the Wall government the second most anti-union government in Canada and the U.S. combined.

There were some differences over tactics, especially the decision by the SFL executive to authorize a legal challenge to some of Wall's worst labour laws. The debate spilled over into a leadership bid by Tom Graham, CUPE Saskatchewan President. Hubich was re-elected for his fifth term with 59%, 533 to 371. Graham called for delegates to back the elected leadership in the struggle ahead. ●

Put the Communist Party on your holiday gift list!

The Communist Party needs your support in 2010 to stimulate and help lead the fight for peace, jobs, democracy and sovereignty in 2011 - a year when the corporate attack on labour and democratic rights, on women, workers, youth and racialized communities will be sharper than ever.

With economic recovery exposed as nothing more than a recovery for profits, while working people are forced to pay the price with escalating wage cuts, job cuts, collapsing living standards and security. Youth face the prospect of a jobless future. The situation demands urgent action, mass political struggle, and an alternative and progressive vision for the future.

A small party with big ideas, the Communist Party is Canada's party of socialism. A working class party, we know the future will be grim without a powerful People's Coalition that can

mount a counter-offensive against the large corporations and their reactionary governments, and that can turn the tables in favour of working people, for real and fundamental change opening the



doors to socialism.

Please help us this holiday season, with a tax deductible donation. Help us build a strong Communist Party and a powerful and united People's Coalition to defeat war and reaction in Canada.

Your donation up to \$400 will generate a \$300 tax rebate when you file your 2009 taxes, costing you just \$100. A \$500 donation

will cost you just \$150. A \$750 donation will cost \$275.

Here's how it works:

For donations up to the first \$400, you receive a federal tax rebate of 75%. For the next \$350 in total donations, receive a tax rebate of 50%. And for the next \$350, the tax rebate is 33%. The maximum allowable annual federal donation is \$1100, for which the rebate totals \$600.

The Communist Party is solely supported by contributions from people like you. Every donation, large or small, helps us. With your donations, we can keep organizers in the field, publish new leaflets and pamphlets, build the fightback, and campaign for a progressive people's alternative to the crisis - during and between elections.

Thank you for your support! We couldn't do it without you.

Please make your cheque or money order payable to "CPC", and mail to: 290A Danforth Ave, Toronto, ON, M4K 1N6. ●

US Steel locks out 900 workers, 9,000 pensioners

PV Ontario Bureau

HAMILTON - On November 7th at 7 pm, US Steel locked out the 900 working members and 9,000 retirees of Local 1005, United Steelworkers in Hamilton, after the Local leadership refused to put the company's "final offer" to union members.

The offer - unanimously rejected by the negotiating committee and Local Executive - would have cut pensions and imposed a defined contribution pension plan.

With only 900 members working, the company was gambling that the working

members would sell out the pensioners and sign on to the deal. In a letter mailed to union members, US Steel noted the number of steel locals that had accepted similar concessions, including Vale Inco in Sudbury, where steelworkers struck for a year before being forced back to work with the new deal.

But the company's letter backfired, as hundreds of union members - working and retired - turned out at the gates for a mass rally to support their leadership and demonstrably reject the company's demand for concessions.

Angry young workers wanted to force the gates open as company

cops closed and locked them. The show of anger and militancy should be taken as a warning to US Steel - this local union is solid and it's ready to fight. "No concessions" is the union's position.

Local union President Rolf Gerstenburger says the issue is about respect for workers, workers' rights, and about nation building versus nation wrecking.

"We're guided by the spirit of 1946" says Gerstenburger, in reference to the historic 1946 strike which helped bring the Rand Formula and the closed shop to Canada.

More on this story in the next issue of *People's Voice*. ●

Communist Party candidate in Winnipeg North by-election

The Communist Party of Canada is proudly nominating Frank Komarniski for the Winnipeg North federal by-election, set for Nov. 29. Frank was a candidate in 2008 in the same riding. The party will advance a solid working class platform in the riding, important in the history of the Communist Party and all workers in Canada since the 1919 General Strike. The campaign will demand

policies to put Canada back to work and an end to the occupation of Afghanistan.

"Socialism would be a much fairer society," says Frank, "and we could accomplish a lot more if we could work together."

A father of four, Frank has been a City of Winnipeg outside worker for 17 years and is a member of CUPE Local 500. He was born in Ste. Rose du Lac, Manitoba and grew up in Thompson. He moved to Winnipeg in 1982.

For more information or an interview, phone the campaign office at 204-586-7824. ●



Frank Komarniski, CPC candidate in Winnipeg North

Campbell was devoted to corporate welfare

Statement by the Communist Party of British Columbia on the resignation of Gordon Campbell, Nov. 5, 2010

The three terms of the Campbell Liberals have been characterized by implementing the lowest taxes for the wealthy and corporations in North America at the expense of the standard of living, wages and social programs of BC residents. His forced resignation is a compliment to a tenacious and awakened electorate who has had enough.

In his devotion to corporate welfare, Gordon Campbell kept the minimum wage at the lowest level in Canada while presiding over an economy where the top ten CEO's collectively in 2009 earned \$70 million dollars. Upon the imbalanced scales of extreme wealth and extreme poverty, Gordon Campbell's weight was always on the side of extreme wealth.

For seven years British Columbia has had the worst child poverty in Canada. After nine years of tuition fee increases, B.C. takes in more from tuition fees than it does from corporate taxation. The massive privatization of healthcare services, with parallel cutbacks in quality and accessibility, has channelled hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars into corporate bank accounts, while rolling back healthcare wages 15% and then freezing them at that level.

The Campbell Liberals repeatedly broke election promises that had value to the public, and steadfastly adhered to every policy that gave away public resources to private business. They have

brought almost every school board in B.C. into a funding crisis that has put nearly 200 schools on the closure list so far. They broke their

promise not to privatize BC Rail, and in the corrupted bidding process implicated cabinet ministers in a scandal currently

hidden behind two scapegoats and a plea bargain that hides the extent and involvement of elected officials in betrayal and corruption.

The Campbell Liberals have gutted the Environmental Assessment Act and created Cabinet powers that overrule municipal by-laws and autonomy to the point that municipalities can only govern if they don't interfere with corporate interests. They cut the transfer of gambling profits to Charities and the Arts from 33% to 10%. They made massive funding cuts to women's shelters, closed down homeless hostels, and cut and slashed their way through almost every social or special needs program in the province.

For Gordon Campbell to whine about a vindictive public and the strain on his family after ruining so many lives is typical of the arrogance and contempt he and his government have exercised. The NDP MLAs and Party Leader who stroke him on his way out with platitudes about "years of public service" should tell the truth and expose the years of "corporate service" if they don't want to appear as members of the same club.

Gordon Campbell was not brought down by the parliamentary opposition; he was not brought down by a caucus revolt. He was brought down by massive public rejection of the Liberal Government's record of lies broken promises and deceit that made it impossible for him to continue. The HST debacle and the transfer of \$1.6 billion from the public to the private purse has become the catalyst, the glue of all the diverse forces screaming betrayal.

The historic pending referendum is evidence of the public rage. Gordon Campbell is going, he should be gone and his entire caucus that supported him doggedly should leave with him. ●

"At every turn, the Liberals put business interests ahead of the well-being of British Columbians. The Liberals brought us a decade that saw the abandonment of forest workers and forest communities. They doubled tuition costs that prevented unemployed workers and young people from getting the training they need. They brought us a decade of record poverty rates. They gutted employment standards and took the highest minimum wage in the country and left us today with the lowest."

- BC Federation of Labour President Jim Sinclair



Campbell didn't act alone: HEU

Nov. 3, 2010 - The Hospital Employees' Union says that under Gordon Campbell's premiership, B.C. has undergone massive privatization of health care services, unprecedented attacks on the rights of health care workers, and growing instability and chaos on health care's front lines. But the union, which represents 43,000 members, says that it is important to remember that the premier did not act alone, and that the entire B.C. Liberal cabinet and caucus must be accountable for the damage done to health care and workers' rights.

HEU secretary-business manager Judy Darcy says that the policies of the Campbell Liberal government have pushed hundreds of millions of health care dollars into the pockets of private corporations through the privatization of everything from seniors' care facilities to hospital cleaning to patient food services.

"This has undermined the quality of care for patients and seniors and has destroyed thousands of decent, family supporting jobs in communities across B.C.," says Darcy. She says that for HEU members, Gordon Campbell will be remembered first and foremost as the politician who ripped up their collective agreements despite promising not to - and for unilaterally rolling back their wages by 15%.

In January 2002, the Campbell government passed Bill 29, tearing up legally negotiated collective agreements and clearing the way for massive layoffs and contracting out in the sector. In 2007, the Supreme Court of Canada struck down key provisions of Bill 29 as an unconstitutional attack on the rights of union members to engage in bargaining. ●

The neighbourhood that said "NO"

By Kimball Cariou, People's Voice Editor

On the morning Gordon Campbell announced his resignation, I stepped outside the People's Voice office for a few minutes, talking to pedestrians along Clark Drive. The response was 100% unanimous - everyone was delighted.

This wasn't surprising, since we are in the heart of east Vancouver, the working class neighbourhood that said "NO" to Gordon Campbell since 1986. That's when COPE's radical city councillor Harry Rankin ran for mayor against Campbell, winning polls in the Commercial Drive area despite losing the rest of the city.

Campbell won three terms as mayor, but never the hearts of east Van residents. We cheered when his provincial Liberals went down to defeat in 1996, and then shuddered when he became premier in 2001. In that election, the Liberals swept 77 seats out of 79; only the east Van ridings of Vancouver Hastings and Mount Pleasant elected New Democrats, by sizable margins.

"Gordo" confirmed our fears, acting swiftly to slash over a billion dollars a year from the taxes paid by corporations and high-income earners. He attacked the Hospital Employees Union, and accelerated the former NDP government's underfunding of education and

social programs, forcing major cutbacks.

Through all this, Campbell's fat-cat smirk outraged our community. The Premier and his advisors knew the area was a hotbed of opposition, and they were reluctant to drop by for a visit.

The first real test of this mood came in October 2002, during a major escalation of progressive political organizing - actions against the impending Iraq war, the occupation of the abandoned Woodward's building by anti-poverty groups and homeless citizens, and the COPE steamroller which swept Campbell's NPA team out of City Hall, School Board and Park Board a month later.

In the midst of this upsurge, somebody was informed that the Premier had been invited to open a corporate-funded expansion of a family drop-in located beside the Britannia Community Centre. The Centre is a focus of east Vancouver life, including an elementary and secondary school, a library, recreational facilities, and much more. The news spread like wildfire. The next afternoon, hundreds of community members gathered to greet the Premier outside the drop-in, met by a huge contingent of cops. Emotions swung from exultant at the prospect of telling Campbell off, to dread at the fear of a possible police assault.

Sure enough, the belligerent cops soon broke the ice, but they

picked a poor target. A local United Church minister was among the protesters, wearing a clown outfit. Straying too close to the drop-in doors, he was grabbed by the cops, who took him around to the side of the building for a quick beating. We watched in horror as they smashed the clown's face into a wall and roughed him up in plain sight. The sirens of a police van were soon heard, coming to take

the minister away.

The timing of this thuggery was equally stupid. Just before the police wagon arrived, dismissal bells rang for the Britannia students. Hundreds poured out of classes, directly into the scene of a bizarre confrontation, with the cops dragging a bedraggled clown down an alley to the van.

The political views of the Britannia students were typically east Van. Many of them Aboriginal or Latino, the students reacted angrily to this police brutality outside their school. "Let the clown go!" was the immediate student chant, taken up by the demonstrators. More police wagons quickly arrived, pop cans were hurled, and dozens of students began a sit-in to block the cops.

Meanwhile, the Premier and his entourage were nearing the scene. Bystanders on Commercial Drive witnessed limousines coming up the street, only to pull a quick U-turn. The corporate celebration at the drop-in was called off, and no official explanation was ever given.

Long story short, that was the last time anyone can remember Gordon Campbell coming to meet the folks in our 'hood. And now, we'll never have another chance to vote against Gordo. As the saying goes, "good riddance to bad rubbish!"

(Kimball Cariou is also the organizer of the Vancouver East Club of the Communist Party.) ●



Protester on Commercial Drive during the Winter Olympics Torch Run last February. When over 1,000 people gathered to protest the event, organizers had to re-route the Torch Run.

Canadian youth heading to South Africa

By Johan Boyden

The 17th World Festival of Youth and Students (WFYS) is coming!

The Festival is being held this December in Johannesburg, South Africa, just weeks from now. Youth from around the world will meet and discuss the fight for peace, democracy, anti-imperialist solidarity, and socialism. More than 20,000 youth will attend - in the homeland of Nelson Mandela, international hero and icon in the struggle against racism and apartheid.

A proud history

The World Festival of Youth and Students has a proud history going back to the end of WWII. That's when (contrary to the re-branding of the Harper Conservative government around Remembrance day) the youth of the world gathered in a conference to demand "a lasting, just peace."

The international meeting brought together veterans of the allied armies, partisans, people from Africa, Asia, Europe, North and South America - including Canada. They decided the best way to continue the spirit of friendship between all nations was to organize a giant festival of sports, culture, music, conferences, discussions, debates and planning for action.

Sixty-five years later, youth are still gathering with these hopes and aspirations. *People's Voice* will carry updates on the work to build the largest gathering of anti-imperialist and pro-peace youth in the world.

International preparations

National preparatory committees have been formed in over 120 countries, including Angola, Brazil, France, Lebanon, Mexico, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and Venezuela. Promoters of the Festival are travelling around the world, and some are facing harsh resistance.

Most recently, festival promoters, including a member of the European Parliament and the leader of the World Federation of Democratic Youth, were deported from Morocco trying to reach a protest camp in the occupied territories of Western Sahara. On a more positive note, festival promoters in Latin America appeared on *La Nueva Televisora del Sur* - the new TV Network of the South, broadcast throughout Latin America from Caracas, which is also promoting the festival.

Last October, the International Organizing Committee of the 17th WFYS had its inaugural meeting at Burger's Park Hotel, in Pretoria, South Africa. Since then, the committee has been busy visiting festival locations and sites in weekly meetings. The President of South Africa, Jacob Zuma, has been made the honorary president of the IOC. The IOC has also held special meetings with the South African Communist Party and the Young Communist League of South Africa, about the political reality of the youth and students in the country. A logistical committee has been set up to accredit all

delegates at Oliver Tambo airport upon arrival.

The conferences at the festival will be facilitated by speakers from South Africa, and will include presentations from the International Organizing Committee, as well as one speaker per each region (Africa, America, Asia, Europe and Middle East) to present a regional or national perspective. There will also be workshops, seminars, an anti-imperialist Court and Tribunal; cultural activities and sports activities; and a friendship fair.

Delegates will be able to visit locations related to South Africa's history of liberation struggles. There will be direct shuttles from the Festival venues to those places, with admittance at low rates or free.

Canadian delegation

The cross-Canada committee is working hard to bring together a Canadian delegation that reflects the youth and student movement in our country. It will be a once in a lifetime experience for each member of the All-Canada delegation, something we will never forget.

As *People's Voice* readers know from previous Festivals, the WFYS is an experience that brings home young activists ready and willing to add their weight to the struggle for peace, democracy, anti-imperialist solidarity, and socialism here in Canada. Over the last six decades, many Festival alumni have made important contributions to the fight for peace and

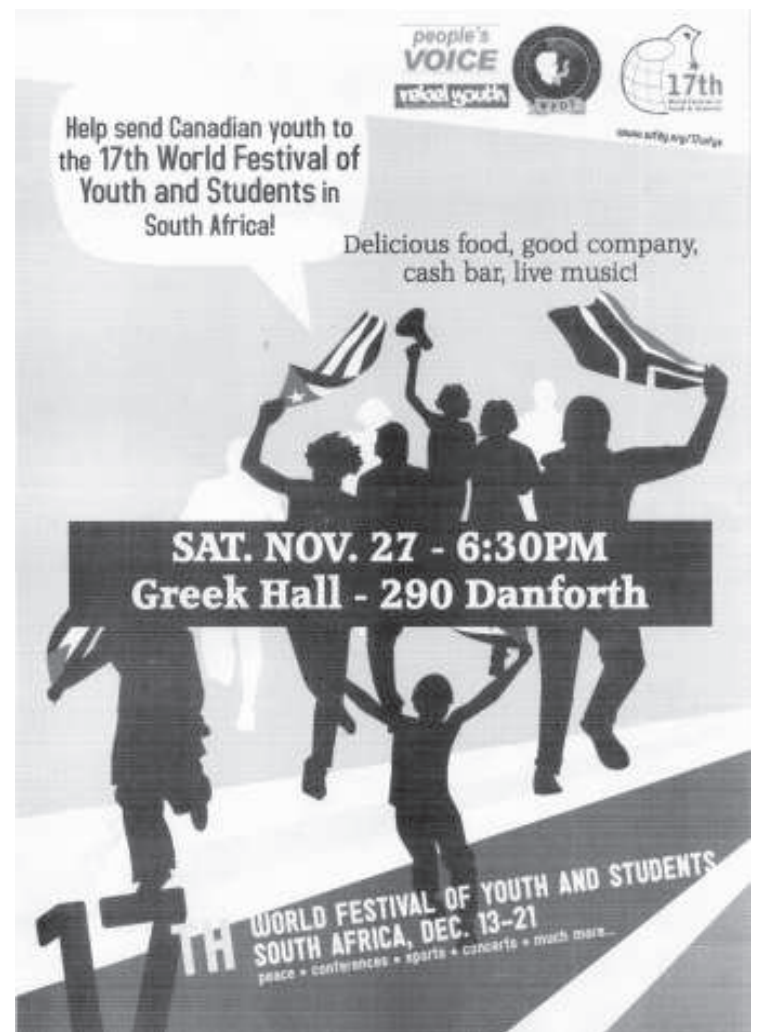
disarmament, for medicare and universal social programs, for civil, democratic and labour rights, and for fundamental social change in Canada and globally.

Fundraising across the country!

Fundraising for the festival is taking place across the country. **The latest event is in Toronto, on Saturday, Nov. 27, 6:30 pm, at the GCDO Hall, 290A Danforth Ave.** If you can't come but would like to make a tax deductible donation to support the Canadian delegation, please make your cheque out to "Marty Skup Memorial Fund" and mail to us, c/o Sharon Skup, 56 Riverwood Terrace, Bolton, Ontario, L7E 1S4. The Fund is a registered Charitable Organization with Revenue Canada (#119034189RR0001). We greatly appreciate your support!

From Canada, 50 young people will attend, representing youth and students from coast to coast. That will include a National delegation from Quebec, united with the all-Canada delegation, working to share representation on panels and presentations. An All-Canada declaration has been released, which calls for troops to immediately withdraw from Afghanistan, and for peace, jobs, democracy and sovereignty.

The call-out from the delegation says, "We are going to the festival to share our experiences, hopes and dreams for a better Canada; to again raise our local campaigns to an international arena; to build our connection between young



People's Voice editor Kimball Cariou will speak at this Nov. 27 fundraising dinner in Toronto.

activists from diverse countries, communities, campuses, and many groups; to strengthen bonds, reach agreements; to have a clearer and more global understanding of the problems and their causes that we face;

and to assume a collective commitment - uniting all of our efforts for a better Canada and a better world!"

(Johan Boyden is the co-Chair of the All-Canada Festival Committee.) •

Toronto elections: right-wing majority on Council

By Liz Rowley

The October 24th election in Toronto reaped a whirlwind when an unprecedented 50%-plus turnout of voters elected right-wing populist Rob Ford to the Mayor's seat, a right-wing majority to Council, and a progressive majority to School Board. About a third of Councillors and Trustees are new. The demand for change was heard across the city. But what kind of change?

For years, local taxpayers have had to pay for costly services including transportation, health, housing, welfare, downloaded onto the city by the Harris government in the '90s. Fully half of the property tax bill is the education tax, pooled by the provincial government and redistributed across Ontario. As well, the property tax load has been rapidly shifted off business and onto local ratepayers and tenants.

Provincial transfers and federal support for Toronto's subway and transit system, child care, social housing, and social assistance, have sharply declined relative to increased demand, resulting in cuts to service, increased user fees, and contracting out. Add in mass unemployment, and declining wages and living standards, and the stage is set for a municipal revolt.

In an effort to maintain services, outgoing Mayor David

Miller led a Canada-wide battle to force senior levels of government to deliver a new financial deal to cities. The provincial Liberals delivered the City of Toronto Act, which gave the city limited new powers to increase taxes on ratepayers and tenants, but not wealth or business. The result was the \$60 annual licence plate tax, and the land transfer tax, which became symbols of the unsustainable and unfair tax load on Toronto residents.

Second, the municipal workers strike of July 2009, quickly morphed from a normal set of negotiations into a massive attack on public sector unions and free collective bargaining. Instead of setting the record straight on the minor issue of bankable sick days, which the right-wing characterized as a 'gravy train' for city workers, Miller and the progressive majority on Council (mainly NDPers) remained virtually silent throughout the strike.

The zipped lips of progressives on Council cost Miller the support of labour, and set the stage for the right-wing (and their wealthy and powerful backers) to turn the 'gravy train' attack onto Council itself.

Caught in the headlights, progressives had little to say about the real problem of rising taxes and declining services. The NDP's position was "if you want good services, you have to pay."

But a majority of electors didn't buy it, especially in the suburbs where services were never as good

as in the city's core, and where taxes (because of current value assessment) were always higher. This explains why Ford topped the polls in the suburbs, and secured enough votes in the core to win.

Rob Ford, George Smitherman (former Liberal Health Minister), right-wing Liberal Rocco Rossi, and liberal Sarah Thompson, all campaigned on platforms of cutting jobs and services, identifying the city's financial problem as excessive spending.

Nobody - not even labour-backed candidate Joe Pantalone - talked about the revenue problem, and the fact that the regressive property tax base can't bear the load of running a modern city like Toronto. There was virtually no discussion of the Harris download of services and the load it placed on ratepayers and tenants. In the end, the votes split among right-wing candidates who weren't very different from each other on policy issues.

For most voters, the issue became the unsustainable status quo. Progressive candidates were consistently painted as big spenders, corrupt, indifferent to the plight of their constituents, and riders on the gravy train. Rob Ford often attacked progressive Councillors as "socialists" - the biggest indictment of all.

Ford's agenda includes eliminating the right to strike for TTC workers, whose collective agreement comes up in February. Defeating this proposition will be the first test of the progressive

block on Council and the progressive forces in the city. It will be a very important fight.

The new mayor aims to eliminate the city's Fair Wage policy (which prevents contracting out to minimum wage labour), to contract out garbage collection, and to cut 6,000 city workers (and the services they deliver) in four years. He wants to reduce the size of Council from 44 to 22, and eliminate the licence plate and land transfer taxes.

Defeating this agenda will take a tide of mobilized public opposition, and an organized municipal movement. COPE in Vancouver comes to mind as one model of a civic party which has historically united labour with progressive community struggles.

One Toronto, a loose coalition of labour and progressive movements which campaigned against Ford, may have the capacity to morph into that kind of movement, but it will need to address issues like property tax reform and a new financial deal for municipalities. Progressives have to articulate an answer to the problem of rising taxes and declining services. They have to be willing to take on the issue of corporate taxation - and debate the issue of who should pay for services.

(In our next issue, we will examine the outcome of the School Board election in Toronto.) •



GLOBAL CLASS STRUGGLE

Rights not respected in Belize

The ITUC has released a report on core labour standards in Belize, coinciding with the Trade Policy Review of the country at the WTO. The report finds that internationally recognised labour standards are violated especially with regard to child labour and trade union rights.

In Belize the rights to organise, collectively bargain and strike are recognised, but in practice, exercising these rights is limited, and there are significant limitations to trade union organising. The situation is worst in the country's export processing zones (EPZs), where employers refuse to recognise unions while the government fails to ensure the law is respected. As a result, there are no trade unions in the EPZs.

The report shows that women face discrimination in employment and in remuneration. Other groups that face discrimination in access to employment are persons who live with HIV/AIDS, homosexuals and members of the Mayan ethnic group.

Child prostitution is a problem, and many children work in informal activities, mainly in agriculture, but also in urban areas as street vendors. Although traffickers of adults and children are prosecuted, the courts usually dismiss trafficking cases.

Copper mine on verge of strike

Following a 99.9 per cent intent-to-strike vote, the union representing 1,550 permanent copper miners at the Dona Ines de Collahuasi mine in northern Chile could soon be on strike. Collahuasi plans to use non-union employees and contract workers to ensure output continues at full capacity during a strike.

The 535,000-tonne copper mine, the world's third largest, is 44 per cent owned by Xstrata and 44 per cent by AngloAmerican, with the remaining 12 per cent held by a consortium of Japanese companies led by Mitsui & Co. Collahuasi miners have just ended a three-year contract achieved by a four-day strike in 2007.

Miners are seeking a 10 per cent wage increase, and a bonus comparable to the one awarded by BHP Billiton (57.5 per cent) and Rio Tinto (30 per cent) at its joint venture Escondida mine last year. That bonus was US\$28,000. Management is offering a wage increase of two-to-three percent less than the union's demand, and a bonus of US\$19,000.

An industry representative involved in the 2007 talks told Reuters there is no question that the company can pay what miners are demanding. A strike could prove costly for Xstrata and AngloAmerican with the price of copper at record levels. The mine posted net earnings of US\$1.56 billion last year.

The strength of a strike by workers represented by Chile's national private-sector miners' union federation will largely depend on whether contract workers at Collahuasi honour

picket lines. They are likely to do so, after staging their own week-long blockade of roads in May 2010. There are some 4,000 contract workers employed by scores of sub-contractors at Collahuasi, which is just finishing the first phase of a US\$750 million expansion project.

A strike could also set the template for other unions representing copper miners in Chile, notably in state-run Codelco's Radomiro Tomic mine. It is part of the company's largest and most profitable operation - Codelco Norte - and the 760 miners at Radomiro Tomic already rejected an inferior offer in September. The collective agreement expires at the end of November.

Radomiro Tomic contributed 23 per cent of Codelco Norte's first-half 2010 net earnings of US\$1.28



billion. The Codelco Norte division also includes the Churquicamata and Mina Sur mines, and the three mines produced 440,000 tonnes of copper in the first half of 2010, up from 391,000 tonnes in the same period of 2009.

Foxconn violates China's labour laws

Guo Jun, minister of Democratic Management at the All-China Federation of Trade Unions (ACFTU), says that Foxconn has violated laws, and the management system has serious problems. He made the statements while talking about the series of suicide incidents at Foxconn. As of May 26, 2010, there were 12 incidents where people jumped from buildings in Foxconn factories in China, leaving 10 dead and two injured.

According to the Shenzhen Institute of Contemporary Observation, in 2009 Foxconn employees' overtime hours totalled 117 hours per month - up to 140 hours for some. China's labour law implemented in January 2008 says workers should not extend working hours more than three hours per day and overtime should not exceed 36 hours per month.

"Working overtime more than 100 hours per month, is this not against the law?" Guo said. "If the employers consult with the employees and call it legal, then there will be no cases that violated the law."

Guo Jun said Foxconn's biggest problem lies in its corporate management. Foxconn adopts the Ford-style business management, which optimizes all aspects of production and maximizes efficiency. Its employees are like Charlie Chaplin in the film *Modern Times*, and their freedom outside

of working hours is not guaranteed. In addition, Foxconn also has "quasi-military management" features.

Foxconn Technology Group is the world's largest professional manufacturer of electronics. It has factories in Shenzhen, Tianjin, Wuhan, Chengdu and other places on the Chinese mainland.

(Huang Beibei, *People's Daily Online*)

Anti-union drive at tuna processor

Seatech International is a Colombian tuna processor committed "to give society a healthy environment together with sustainable development." At the company's giant Cartagena plant, 1,500 workers produce Van Camp's branded products for export throughout Latin America.

Yet only 13 of these workers are employed on permanent contracts. The rest are outsourced, disposable, casual workers. Many have been employed for decades on these "temporary" contracts. According to company human resources director Jaime Davila Pestana, it is "not possible" to have direct employees.

On August 7, over 100 Seatech workers formed the Trade Union of Food Industry Workers (USTRIAL). Management immediately began dismissing members, including most of the union officers. The layoffs continued until August 12, when the plant was closed until August 23 "for maintenance". The number of dismissed then climbed to 87. USTRIAL President Fredis Marrugo - one of the 13 permanent employees - is a prisoner at work, constantly surrounded by security officials who prevent him from talking to fellow workers. Police have cordoned off the plant and denied the dismissed workers all access, even to the road.

Seatech union activists have formed an association to deal with the epidemic of repetitive strain injuries which afflict large numbers of workers. The Fundacion Manos Muertas (Dead Hands Foundation) assists the victims of carpal tunnel syndrome and related RSI injuries resulting from the punishing hours and pace of work. RSI injuries are not recognized as occupational diseases, leaving Seatech free to dismiss disabled workers without compensation.

According to USTRIAL officer Edna Guzman, employed for 18 years as an outsourced worker at Seatech: "We want to show the world who Seatech is and how it makes its famous Van Camp's tuna at the expense of workers' health. Everyone must know about the barbarous conditions here"

12-hour workdays "an opportunity"

Russia's "misunderstood" oligarchs have no intention of asking anyone to work a 12-hour day, still less a 60-hour week. Despite reports that the RSPP (the so-called oligarchs' trade union) is proposing a sharp increase in working hours, the rich and influential claim they have been demonized.

"The RSPP never suggested and could not suggest extending the working week from 40 to 60 hours," said vice-president Fyodor Prokopov. "Journalists have unnecessarily and willfully confused the issue. We are not evil businessmen who want to take unilateral advantage of workers," *Komsomolskaya Pravda* reports.

The proposed 60 hour working week would be available to those who choose to work extra hours, but for two different companies. At present Russian law does not allow staff to work more than 40 hours for one company without overtime payments kicking. The change merely authorises a system which already exists but has yet to be formalised, New Eurasia Foundation president Andrei Kortunov told *The Moscow News*.

"This is most likely a way to avoid paying overtime," railway workers trade union spokesperson Yevgeny Kulikov told RIA Novosti. Under present legislation employers must pay double for extra hours. "It has only one meaning, if we take on these amendments then the working week will increase," he warned.

The Federation of Independent Trade Unions promised "tough opposition" to the proposals.



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

Send me information on the Communist Party of Canada

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

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UK government plans to slash 500,000 jobs

The most savage public spending cuts in 50 years in the United Kingdom have been outlined by the Conservative government of David Cameron. UNISON, the UK's largest public sector union, says the government is condemning the country to a dismal, downward spiral.

"The government has failed to consider that there is a fairer alternative," said Dave Prentis, general secretary of UNISON.

The union says the government's plan to cut 80 billion euros out of the budget over the next four years will result in 500,000 public sector job losses. That will prove to be a false economy and will cost the private sector a further 425,000 jobs. They could cost the Treasury around 4.6 billion euros lost tax revenue and 6.1 billion euros in increased benefit payments adding 10.7 billion euros a year to the annual deficit and almost entirely cancelling out the apparent 12.5 billion euros saving to the public sector pay-bill.

Tens of thousands of jobs have already been cut in local government.

Following the Chancellor's Comprehensive Spending Review, Prentis said: "For CSR read Cuts Strangle Recovery. The Tories' ideologically driven, no hope, no ideas, cuts agenda is poisoning the country's chances of recovery, infecting the public sector and costing 425,000 jobs in the private sector."

(NUPGE/CALM)

An Uprising at the United Nations

Excerpts from Part One of a recent "Reflection" by Fidel Castro

The October 26 session of the United Nations General Assembly, supposedly the top political authority in the planet, was convened for the purpose of discussing an item that has been reiterated for so long that it even sounds familiar: "Necessity of ending the economic, commercial and financial embargo imposed by the United States of America against Cuba." This has been the most debated and approved - although never implemented - draft resolution in the history of the United Nations...

It has been already nineteen times since this draft resolution was first approved in 1992 by the General Assembly, calling for an end to that abusive and criminal action. But, while the number of times this Resolution was put to the vote and approved has increased, the group of countries supporting it has also increased, and the number of those who abstained as well as the minute handful of those which voted

against has grown ever smaller. Last time there were only two which voted against and the three which abstained were small States that are in fact US colonies...

The general debate began at 10:00 in the morning. The first speakers were the representatives of five countries who spoke on behalf of the Group of 77, the Non-Aligned Movement, the African Union, CARICOM and MERCOSUR, all of them in support of the Resolution.

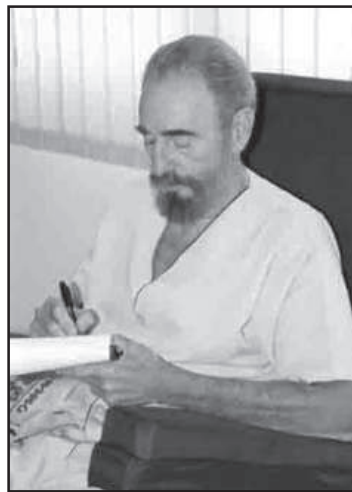
Then, fourteen countries took the floor, two of them with more than one billion inhabitants each - China and India. They both account for almost 2.5 billion inhabitants. Others which also took the floor have more than one hundred million, such as the Russian Federation, Indonesia and Mexico. Another nine play an outstanding role in the international arena - Venezuela, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Algeria, South Africa, Solomon Islands, Zambia, the Gambia, Ghana and Barbados. Nineteen speakers took the floor before Cuba's Foreign Minister Bruno Rodriguez.

He began his speech by referring to the grave dangers of the war that threatens us, and added:

"In order to survive, it is indispensable for humanity's awareness to take a leap, which would only be possible through the dissemination of truthful information about these issues which are hidden or ignored by most politicians, not published by the press, and found by people so horrible that seem to be unbelievable."

"...the US policy against Cuba is devoid of any ethical or legal grounds and lacks credibility and support. So it has been evidenced by the more of 180 votes cast at this United Nations General Assembly which during the last few years have been calling for an end to the economic, commercial and financial blockade."

"Latin America and the Caribbean have vigorously and unanimously rejected such policy. The Summit of Unity held in Cancun in February resolutely stated the same. The leaders of the region have conveyed this feeling directly to the current US President. It could be assured that the express rejection against the blockade and the Helms-



Burton Act, characterizes, as very few other items do, the political heritage of the region."

"Equally unequivocal views have been endorsed by the Non-Aligned countries Movement, the Ibero-American Summits, the European Union and Latin American and Caribbean Summits, the African Union, the ACP Group Summits and virtually any other group of nations abiding by International

Law and the observance of the principles and purposes of the United Nations Charter.

"There is a broad and growing consensus within the United States society and the Cuban emigration in that country against the blockade and in favour of a change of policy towards Cuba... 71% of American citizens favour the normalization of relations between Cuba and the United States..."

"The sanctions against Cuba remain intact and are fully implemented. In the course of the year 2010, the economic siege has been tightened and its everyday impact continues to be visible in all aspects of life in Cuba. It has particularly serious consequences in areas so sensitive to the population such as health and food..."

"The direct economic damage caused to the Cuban people by the implementation of the blockade during the last 50 years is worth more than \$751 billion according to the present value of that currency."

(To be continued in our next issue.) •

Venezuelan steel company and housing developments nationalized

By Juan Reardon, Venezuelanalysis.com

Caracas, Nov. 1, 2010 - Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez announced on Oct. 31 the expropriation of Siderurgica del Turbio (Sidetur), a major producer of steel used in the construction of homes, bridges and other infrastructure and public works.

The president also announced government interventions in six large housing developments currently under construction, eight others that are ready for residents to move in, and increased government oversight in an additional 19 privately-run housing projects.

Chavez announced the expropriations during his weekly televised address, "Alo Presidente."

Sidetur manages 40% of Venezuela's steel rod production and is accused by the government of speculating with prices of construction materials. The firm produces a number of steel-based construction materials (rebar, bar, beam, angle and flat), and manages six plants in Venezuela along with 15 collection and recycling centers for scrap metals nationwide.

According to the company's website, Sidetur has an annual production capacity of 835,000 tons, enough to build an estimated 160,000 homes.

"This is not just any company," affirmed Venezuela's Minister of Mining and Basic Industries Jose Khan. "This is a company that must serve to guarantee inputs for housing, infrastructure, and roads," he said.

All of Sidetur's assets and facilities are included in the expropriation decree.

Sidetur's Executive Board expressed its opposition to the expropriation. "There are no objective justifications for the

expropriation of our firm, and we will use all legal mechanisms to oppose the government's decision... Sidetur is a socially responsible company that respects the law and fulfills its objectives," the company affirmed.

The company went on to ask the government "to consider the impact this measure will have on infrastructure and construction plans as well as the impact on the workers and their families."

Elias Bessis, Lara state president of Venezuela's largest business federation (Fedecamaras), called the expropriation "alarming... I don't even want to know how things will look when they [the state] control all of the country's rebar production," he stated.

Alejandro Alvarez, a steelworker at Sidetur's plant in the state of Bolivar, expressed his

support for the expropriation during an interview with the state television channel, Venezolana de Television (VTV).

According to Alvarez, the measure will have a positive impact on the country's development since it will complement other publicly-owned firms in the basic industries, including Siderurgica del Orinoco (Sidor), Industria Venezolana de Aluminio (Venalum), and Aluminio del Caroni (Alcasa).

According to Carlos de Oliveira, the president of the state-owned Siderurgica del Orinoco (Sidor), which is Venezuela's largest steel producer and was nationalized in 2009, the expropriation of Sidetur leaves 87% of rebar production in the hands of the Venezuelan government.

see VENEZUELA, page 11

Protest flawed elections in Haiti

Haiti Solidarity BC has sent the following letter to Members of Parliament about the upcoming Haitian elections, which exclude the largest political party, Fanmi Lavalas.

As members of the Canada Haiti Action Network (CHAN), we are writing to express our deep concern about Canada's support for exclusionary elections to be held in Haiti on November 28, 2010. These elections will arbitrarily exclude 14 political parties, most notably Haiti's largest and most popular political party, the Fanmi Lavalas of exiled former President Jean Bertrand Aristide.

Haiti cannot recover from the devastating January earthquake in a just and sustainable manner if its majority party is excluded from the democratic process. As documented by the September 15, 2010 human rights report *We've Been Forgotten*, basic human rights have been neglected in Haiti's reconstruction, including access to food, shelter, and sanitary conditions. These findings are especially troubling as Haiti grapples with the recent cholera outbreak and the onslaught of Tropical Storm Tomas.

The Government of Canada's decision to provide \$5.8 million for elections that fail to meet basic democratic requirements of being free, fair, and inclusive is counterproductive to Haiti's successful reconstruction. We call on you to make a clear statement that elections in Haiti must include all representative political parties. Voting must be readily accessible for all Haitians, including the displaced. The Canadian government should cease to provide funding for elections that do not meet these minimum, basic democratic requirements. •

Groups rally to free jailed Colombian professor

Education International, a Belgium-based global teachers' federation, has ramped up its protest against the incarceration of Colombian professor and trade unionist Miguel Beltran. An online petition to free Beltran was launched on Sept. 10 at the International Conference on Higher Education and Research in Vancouver, Canada.

Beltran was tried last year by the Colombian government on charges of 'rebellion' and 'breaking the law for terrorist purposes'. There is no evidence to support the allegations, say the organisations that demand his release.

Beltran was deported from Mexico in 2008 by the Colombian government for suspected involvement with the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC).

Education International has repeatedly condemned abuses of teachers' human and trade union rights in Colombia. The organisation has written an open letter to Colombian President Juan Manuel Santos and to the Colombian embassy in Belgium, calling for Beltran's unconditional release.

There has been little evidence to prove Beltran was breaking any law; prosecutors used scholarly articles to make their case.

"Although my academic activities are not criminal, papers written by me are presented as evidence against me," Beltran wrote from prison. "It is easy to echo the calls to war. But studying the roots of the social and armed conflicts is a much more complex and dangerous exercise."

In an open letter to his union, the Association of University Professors (APSU), sent from La Picota prison last February, Beltran wrote: "These violations are reflected in the arbitrary arrests of

students, police raids on university campuses, the murder and disappearance of students, threats against university professors, and widespread accusations of rebellion against university members, followed by hasty trials."

Beltran's case has already garnered hearty support around the world, including petitions organised by the UK-based University and College Union and Justice for Colombia, and Tlaxcala, the international Translators' Network for Linguistic Diversity.

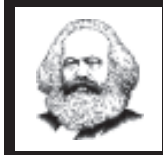
Appeals have also been made by international trade union Labourstart and the Network for Education and Academic Rights, NEAR. Some higher education institutes have also linked into Education International's petition, said its human and trade union rights coordinator Dominique Marlet.

The Beltran appeal is one of Education International's urgent action appeals to mobilise member organisations or individuals through online petitions. The organisation finds technology helps broaden the scope of petitioning, thus facilitating a more immediate answer, Marlet says. She also hopes to reach out to individual grassroots teachers.

In the past teachers would not write letters of protest, she said. The former system of urgent action appeal requested teacher organisations to write institutional letters of protest in the name of their members.

"With online appeals, individuals feel empowered to take action," she said. "The official letters of protest by teacher organisations continue to be processed in addition to individual online requests."

To view the petition to free Beltran, visit www.ei-ie. •



Marxist Theory Today

By David S. Pena, Political Affairs

Capitalism exploits workers. Since the vast majority of people in our capitalist society have to work for a living, it's no exaggeration to say that the majority of people in our country, and throughout the world, are exploited workers.

What does it mean to say that workers are exploited? In Marxist theory, exploitation means that workers are literally robbed by capitalists. Of course the capitalists never admit this. They claim that they pay their workers a fair day's pay for a fair day's work; that you're paid for what you produce, no less and no more. But Marxists say that's not what really happens.

The capitalists have set up a system in which they (the minority) own the machinery, factories, farms and other means of production needed to produce the necessities of life such as food, clothing, and shelter. The workers (the majority) usually have no other way to make a living than to sell but their ability to work. They have to sell this ability (their labour power) to the capitalists in order to earn wages. In other words, they have to get jobs. Wages are then used by workers to buy the products necessary to sustain their lives.

What is the value of your ability to labour? According to Marx, your labour power is worth whatever amount of money (or commodities) is necessary to keep you alive and working. That doesn't sound like much of a life, but let's go with that assumption and see what happens.

Imagine that you need to make \$50 per day in order to feed, house, and clothe yourself. You find a job at an auto parts factory owned by a capitalist who agrees to pay you \$50 per 8-hour day, or \$6.25 an hour. Your day is spent making parts that the capitalist sells to one of the big automakers for \$100 a piece, and you manage to produce 100 parts per day.

Think about it - you are producing \$1,250 worth of product per hour, \$10,000 worth per day and \$80,000 worth in a 40-hour week! Amazing isn't it? You, the worker, have the ability to create a tremendous amount of value where there was none before. And it's in the capitalist's interest to get you to produce as much as humanly possible either by forcing you to work more hours in a day or making you work faster - preferably, for the capitalist, both.

But we need to get clear about something you might not have noticed. Remember that you are

You might be a Marxist if... you want to end the exploitation of workers

producing \$1,250 worth of value every hour, which boils down to about \$20.83 per minute. Is it really

important to know that? Absolutely.

Here's why it's important. At

\$20.83 per minute, it takes about 2 minutes and 40 seconds for you to produce \$50 worth of value. In other words, you have to work less than 3 minutes to produce the \$50 that covers your salary. At this point, everything seems fair and square. You do \$50 worth of work, and that's exactly what you're going to be paid. But don't forget that you have to work 8 hours to get the \$50 that it takes you less than 3 minutes to produce. That's the catch, and that's how you get robbed. In order for the privilege of working in that capitalist's factory to get a measly \$50, you have to agree to stay 8 hours and produce over \$10,000 worth of value, value that is stolen from you by the capitalist - literally stolen because the capitalist takes it without paying for it.

Capitalists constantly tell you that you're getting paid for what you produce, that you're compensated fairly for the time you put in, but in reality the capitalist can pay you for less than 3 minutes of work and force you to work over 7 hours of unpaid labour just to get that tiny paycheck. In our example, if you had been paid for what you produced, you would have made \$1,250 that day. Think about your own situation at work and how it fits this example.

That 7-plus hours of unpaid labour time is called surplus labour, and it produced \$1,200 in surplus value - surplus for the capitalist, not the worker! It's as if you are paying the capitalist more than the capitalist is paying you. You are giving him un-paid labour time. The entire capitalist society is set up to make this look normal and fair, and the police, courts, and army set up to enforce capitalists' ability to exploit labour. Surplus labour, and the surplus value that it produces, is the source of capitalist profit. Thus the wealth of capitalist societies is based on the robbery of workers through forced, surplus labour.

Here's a brief look at how exploitation was explained in some of the Marxist classics, which are still the best sources to read for a deeper understanding of this issue and other aspects of the conflict between capitalism and socialism.

In chapter II of *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific*, Frederick Engels wrote: "The appropriation of unpaid labour is the basis of the capitalist mode of production and of the exploitation of the worker that occurs under it; that even if the capitalist buys the labour power of his labourer at its full value as a commodity on the market, he yet extracts more value from it than he paid for; and that in the ultimate analysis this surplus value forms those sums of value from which are heaped up the constantly increasing masses of capital in the hands of the possessing classes."

Karl Marx's *Capital* is the best source for an in-depth, technical explanation of labour exploitation under capitalism. In *Capital* v. 1, chapter 9, Marx used the term "necessary labour-time" to designate the part of day during which workers labour to cover their own wages. He called the rest of the day, "the second period of the



The infinite economic growth myth

By Ed Finn/CCPA Monitor/CALM

Goldman Sachs, the Wall Street firm whose scams mainly triggered the 2008 financial collapse, was fined \$550 million, about as much as it makes in trading revenue every week. *Harper's Magazine* says it was Goldman and other banking and investment companies that jacked up the price of food by turning it into a tradeable commodity. The article is titled "How Wall Street starved millions and got away with it."

Thanks to lavish government handouts and stimulus spending, the U.S. financial firms and big corporations have regained their highly profitable status. But not so the taxpayers who were forced to

bail them out. Only about 13 per cent of the eight million jobs wiped by the recession in the U.S. have been replaced, mostly with low-paid temporary work.

Meanwhile, corporate profits bounced back. Canadian corporations made \$219 billion in profits last year. Both here and in the U.S., the corporations seem to be sitting on all that cash instead of creating jobs with it.

Oil spills, tax evasion, financial fraud, usurious interest rates, job cuts and outsourcing - are all seen as aberrant misdeeds by a few unethical CEOs rather than what they really are: symptoms of destructive disorder of the entire economic system. Capitalism has morphed into a monster that is making our

civilization unsustainable.

Environmentalists have been pointing out for some time that an economy based on infinite growth on a finite planet won't work. Capitalism depends on the expectation of permanent and continual growth.

CEOs can't help but be shaken by the warnings of most of the world's climatologists and other scientists. But they won't admit that uncontrolled industrial production, pollution, and consumption are ravaging the planet. But even if they admitted it, they would be unable to stop the runaway economic bus from falling into the abyss. Why? Because their corporate mandates oblige them to make the maximization of profits and shareholder dividends their only objective.

When Henry Ford dared to defy his board of directors a hundred years ago, he lowered the price of his Model-T Ford so workers could afford to buy them. It was a shrewd business move because it increased sales, but in the short term it reduced profits and dividends. So two of Ford's directors, the Dodge brothers, sued him for violating his duty to keep profits as high as possible. The judge who heard the case found Ford guilty as charged and awarded the Dodge brothers a multi-million-dollar settlement, which they then used to set up their own car company. The same enshrinement of profit maximization is built into Canada's corporate charters and business legislation.

Any CEO or board of directors foolish enough to deviate from the pursuit of profits for any reason - for the benefit of their workers, customers or even the planet - will be punished.

The main reason a government wouldn't dare try to hamper a corporation's operation in any way is because of those corporations' formidable power of retaliation. In a globalized economy, corporations could stage a capital strike, shifting more investment and jobs abroad or, with exception of resource industries, move all their operations to another country.

Federal governments that dare to threaten corporate profit-making are as vulnerable to economic takeovers by other countries as corporations are to takeovers by ruthless business sharks. Only if all major governments came together to tackle the rampaging corporate Goliath is any such restraint likely to happen.

- Ed Finn is senior editor of the CCPA Monitor, website URL www.policyalternatives.ca



Venezuela nationalizations...

continued from page 9

"Today we feel strengthened by the decision, which is neither accidental nor isolated. This decision is taken in a context in which the president has taken the problem of housing personally," affirmed Oliveria.

Rada Gumuluch, President of the Venezuelan Aluminum Industry (Venalum), explained that Siderur's nationalization is part of government efforts to create a national construction industry to better serve what he called "the public good."

"The integration of the two iron-steel and aluminum industries is strategic for the country and for the construction of socialism... To guarantee socialism, the means of production must be at the service of the people," stated Gumuluch.

Siderur's expropriation was discussed on VTV within the context of Plan Guayana Socialista 2019 - launched by Chavez in 2009 - in which the national government seeks to play a majority role in the aluminum, iron, and steel

industries.

A key component of Plan Guayana Socialista is to establish worker control of production, which according to Gumuluch strengthens and democratizes these basic industries. "This conglomerate of industries [steel, iron, aluminum] will respond to the people's needs. We are moving towards a social, collective, indirect form of property. The state will administer the industry, but the workers are the fundamental actors, in association with society," affirmed Gumuluch.

"We've been waiting a while for this to happen. It is part of securing dignity for us workers. We have finally removed the heel, the boot of the bosses," stated Tirso Garcia, steelworker at Siderur's plant in Antimano, Caracas.

"Private interests, the speculators, they don't want us to mass produce housing for the people. They operate on the capitalist notion of supply and demand. The less housing available, the higher the demand, and higher earnings for them,"

affirmed Chavez.

The interventions in the housing sector include the full expropriation and culmination of six housing construction projects, four of which are found near the nation's capital; the temporary occupation of eight housing projects (temporary because they are ready to be handed over to residents); and close supervision by government agencies of another 19 housing developments.

"To all the families who have paid into these projects, the government guarantees your deposits and your apartments, we will not allow you to become victims of the bourgeoisie. We are returning them [the apartments] to their rightful owners," stated Chavez.

Public housing has been in Venezuelan news recently, as heavy rains left hundreds of families dependent on government shelters. Also, President Chavez signed agreements with Russia, Iran, Belarus and Portugal to build or buy roughly 35,000 homes during his October eight-nation diplomatic tour. ●

Western Canada tour for Abousfian Abdelrazik

Between November 17-23, Abousfian Abdelrazik will speak at public events in five cities across Western Canada, following up on the "Breaking the Silence" tour which took him from Halifax to Winnipeg last year.

Abdelrazik is another victim of the racist "national security" agenda that has gained ground in Canada over the past decade. On the recommendation of the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS), Abdelrazik was jailed and imprisoned while on a visit to Sudan in 2003. Never charged, he was beaten, threatened and tortured during two periods of detention. Prevented by the Harper government from returning home, he went public with his story and took refuge in the Canadian Embassy in Khartoum, where he remained for more than a year. It took a groundswell from people across Canada, as well legal action, to bring about his return and reunion with his children in Montreal on June 27, 2009.

But this struggle is not over. In 2006, without his knowledge and with no opportunity to respond,

his name was placed on the UN's "1267 List", which imposes a travel ban and total asset freeze on listed individuals.

Abdelrazik will speak about his experiences and his ongoing struggle for justice, as he seeks to re-establish a normal life in Canada.

Tour dates include:

Saskatoon: Wed., Nov. 17, 7:30 pm, Augustana Church Hall, 7th Street and Broadway

Regina: Thursday, Nov. 18, 7:30 pm, U of R Classroom Building 130

Edmonton: Sat., Nov. 20, 7 pm, U of A Law Centre 201

Calgary: Sunday, Nov. 21, 7 pm, Unitarian Church, 1703 1st St NW

Vancouver: Tue., Nov. 23, 6 pm, Maritime Labour Centre, 1880 Triumph St.

The tour is sponsored by the Canadian Labour Congress, Canadian Union of Public Employees (Saskatchewan), Canadian Union of Postal Workers, and Canadian Auto Workers, plus a wide range of local organizations. ●

Labour Film Month

November is the second annual Canadian Labour International Film Festival (CLiFF), with free films screened in over 50 locations across Canada about workers and the conditions under which they live and work.

Twenty-two Canadian and international films have been selected from the dozens submitted. Nine are Canadian, four U.S., two British, and one each from Australia, Egypt, India, Pakistan, Singapore, Turkey and the Netherlands. CLiFF continues to partnership with the National Film Board, recognizing the valuable contributions to labour films made by the NFB over the decades.

"CLiFF hopes to bring about social awareness and action by bringing the issues that matter to workers to a broader audience and hopefully help to spur positive change in Canada," said Frank Saptel, Festival Founder. "We want to encourage the making of films by workers and to help them get their stories shown across the country."

Highlights from Canada include *The Curious Case of the Missing Recovery*, with "Stanfordo" trying to find out how the federal government and Bank of Canada can proclaim an economic recovery when hundreds of thousands of workers are still jobless? *The Nanny Business* presents the stories of nannies brave enough to go public about their experiences in the hope of forcing change.

Among the international films is *REplace*, "a documentary about African immigrants to Europe - if they make it." *Angadi Theru* is a milestone in Tamil film about working conditions. *Schmatta: From Riches to Rags* looks at the vibrant history of the garment district, the former soul of midtown Manhattan, but now in danger of disappearing.

Check www.labourfilms.ca to find a screening near you. ●

Exploitation....

continued from page 10

labour process," in which the worker produces surplus-value which, for the capitalist, has all the charms of something created out of nothing.

"This part of the working day I call surplus labourtime, and to the labour expended during that time I give the name of surplus labour.... What distinguishes the various economic formations of society - the distinction between for example a society based on slave-labour and a society based on wage-labour - is the form in which this surplus labour is in each case extorted from the immediate producer, the worker."

Outraged by this extortion and want to put an end to it? Sounds like you're a Marxist. ●

REDS ON THE WEB

www.communist-party.ca

www.peoplesvoice.ca

www.ycl-ljc.ca

www.solidnet.org

What's Left

Burnaby, BC

Evening of Labour Songs, a tribute to Rod Doran & Gary Campbell. Sat., Dec. 11, 6:30 pm, dinner & program to follow, \$15/person; \$20/solidarity price. Seating limited at 5435 Kincaid St. Call for reservations: Anna 604-294-6775. Auspices Burnaby Club.

Vancouver, BC

Socialist Revolution Celebration, Sat., Nov. 13, doors open 6 pm, Peretz Centre, 6184 Ash St. Guest speaker Roger Keeran, co-author of "Socialism Betrayed." Sponsored by Centre for Socialist Education, tickets \$20, call 604-254-9836.

Howard Zinn's Marx in Soho, Sat., Nov. 20, 7 pm at The Cultch (1895 Venables), performed by Brian Jones, with special guest David Barsamian, all proceeds to benefit People's Co-op Bookstore. Tickets \$20 at the store, 1391 Commercial.

Winnipeg, MB

Manitoba-Cuba Solidarity Committee, monthly meeting, Tue., Nov. 23, 7 pm, Workers Organizing Resource Centre, 280 Smith St.

Why is there poverty? conference, Sun., Dec. 5. To help plan or register, contact Four Directions Committee at 792-3371 or fourdirectionswalk@mts.net.

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

Toronto, ON

Cuban Revolution Today, Cafe Cuba guest speaker Manuel Yepe, Mon., Nov. 15, 7:30 pm, AUUC Cultural Centre, 1604 Bloor W. Free admission, sponsored by CCFA Toronto, 416-654-7105.

Blair lied, Iraqis died. Anti-war rally at Tony Blair/Christopher Hitchens debate, Friday, Nov. 26, assemble 5:30 pm, rally 6-7, Roy Thompson Hall, 60 Simcoe St., (south of King St. West). Organized by Toronto Coalition to Stop the War.

Youth Festival fundraiser, Sat., Nov. 27, 6:30 pm, Greek Hall, 290 Danforth (Chester subway). Support the Canadian delegation to 17th World Festival of Youth and Students in South Africa. Delicious food, good company, cash bar, live music!

Annual Jose Marti Dinner and Dance, Jan. 29, 2011, 7 pm, Bloor Street United, 300 Bloor St. West. Advance prepaid tickets \$30, or \$40 at the Door. Sponsored by Canadian-Cuban Friendship Association Toronto.

Montreal, QC

Palestinians And Jews United, vigil against the occupation, every Friday at noon, Sainte-Catherine and Union (near Metro McGill).

GEORGE GALLOWAY TOUR

George Galloway's cross-country speaking tour is sponsored by Canadian Peace Alliance, Canadian Boat to Gaza, Canadian Arab Federation, Independent Jewish Voices, and the Defend Free Speech Campaign. For details, contact Free Speech Campaign at 416-795-5863, or local anti-war and solidarity groups.

MONTREAL: Wed., Nov. 17, 6:30 pm (doors 6 pm), Salle Marie-Gerain-Lajoie, Pavillon Judith-Jasmin, 405 rue Ste-Catherine Est, Local J-M400 (niveau Metro), Metro Berri-UQAM.

HALIFAX: Thur., Nov. 18, 7 pm (doors 6:30), Saint Mary's University, Room TBA, for info and tickets, contact: tonimacafee@hotmail.com

TORONTO: Sat., Nov. 20, 5:30 pm (doors 5 pm). Islamic Society of York Region, 1380 Stouffville Road, Richmond Hill, tickets: www.nowar.ca.

HAMILTON: Sun., Nov. 21, 1:00 pm (doors 12:30), McMaster University, 1280 Main St. West, MDCL 1305. tickets: <http://gallowaymcmaster.eventsbot.com>.

VANCOUVER: Mon., Nov. 22, 7:30 pm (doors 6:30), St. Andrews-Wesley Church (Burrard & Nelson), for tickets call 604-737-1299.

CALGARY: Tue., Nov. 23, 7 pm (doors 6:30), for location and details, email gallowayincalgary@gmail.com.

YELLOWKNIFE: Wed., Nov. 24, 7:30 pm (doors 7), Northern United Place, 5403 Franklin Ave.

EDMONTON: Thur., Nov. 25, 7 pm (doors 6:30), U of A Centennial Centre for Interdisciplinary Science, Rm. 1-430, tickets at the door \$7 and up, sliding scale.

WINNIPEG: Fri., Nov. 26, 7:30 pm (doors 7), Broadway Disciples United Church, 396 Broadway, tickets 586-6057.

OTTAWA: Sat., Nov. 27, 2:00 pm (doors 1:30), Bronson Centre, 211 Bronson Ave., for info and tickets, email: ottawa.peace.assembly@gmail.com

LEFT FILM NIGHT RETURNS IN JANUARY!

Fans of the monthly Left Film Night at the CSE in Vancouver will have to be patient. Look for details in our Jan. 1 issue.

People's Voice deadlines:

DECEMBER 1-31 issue: Thursday, Nov. 18

JANUARY 1-15 issue: Thursday, Dec. 9

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

"Cuba's reforms are based on socialist principles"

What is the nature of the economic problems Cuba is currently experiencing?

In the context of our other problems, the US economic and financial blockade is hurting our economy more now. The blockade has been the main obstacle to our social and economic development over 48 years. With the collapse of the Soviet Union and the socialist bloc, we lost our main trading partners. It was a severe blow from which we have not yet recovered. The 2008 global economic crisis also hit us hard. The price of nickel, a major export earner, has gone down. And we have had huge losses with the hurricanes. But also our productivity is too low. We need greater efficiency and more saving to ensure economic growth. We are a small country with limited resources. We need better organize our production, improve discipline, and update our economic model. We are importing far too much, especially food, and need to be more self-sufficient. We need to focus far more on agriculture. Food production has now become an issue of national security.

Isn't the US blockade easing?

In practical terms, no. The main aspects remain and overall the blockade has even got worse. Since 2009 there have been more prohibitions on companies doing business with Cuba. Yet 187 countries voted against the blockade in the UN General Assembly. Direct economic damages to Cuba since the blockade began in 1962 until December 2009, according to conservative estimates, surpass 15,4 billion US dollars. If this was calculated according to the present value of the US dollar, it would be about 23,9 billion dollars.

But if you have economic problems how does it follow that you have to retrench half a million state workers? Especially since you're a socialist state?

We are not retrenching. That's a capitalist term. We are not putting people out in the street. We are not going to leave them without social assistance. We are re-organising

the workforce, not firing workers. We are directing them to other areas of work vital for the economy, mainly food production. We are

Umsebenzi, the publication of the South African Communist Party, recently interviewed Oscar Martinez, Deputy Head of the International Relations Department of the Cuban Communist Party, regarding the economic changes taking place in Cuba.

making these changes as part of updating our economic model in order to ensure that our socialist system is sustainable on the basis of the rational and effective use of the workforce. The first phase will be concluded by the first quarter of 2011.

As part of the process, we are giving people land, and helping them to make productive use of it. A significant section of this land is near the urban areas, where 80% of the working population lives. If this land is used to produce food, it will also reduce the fuel and transport costs because it's near the urban areas. We have too many bureaucrats and professionals, not enough artisans. We want to move people from just producing paper to areas of the economy in which they can be productive and contribute to the economy. We are trying to find new areas of

government directs them to, they can be self-employed. We have opened up 178 areas in which they can work. Over 2 years, the

state will have to give up about a million workers.

Are you going to re-skill the workers? And what areas are you opening up?

Yes, we are going to fully support the workers to get new skills and other means to get started. Our higher educational institutions are also going to assist. Banks will help with loans. Our main priority, of course, is food production, with the emphasis on substitution of imports, but we also want to increase imports in certain areas. The new areas being opened are in tourism, trade and services, mainly. We are to allow more people to be self-employed as transport providers, bricklayers, stonemasons, plumbers, electricians, panel-beaters, shoe-repairers, hairdressers, shoe-makers, accountants and so on. We are also to allow people to have

restriction on the profits of the restaurant owners and others?

Yes, there will be a minimum wage. These will be limited enterprises and they won't be able to make huge profits. We are introducing new redistributive taxes. In fact, new regulations related to this, including the modification of the tax system, have already been published in a special edition of the government gazette.

But ultimately you will be introducing a further measure of private enterprise?

But we're not opening the door to capitalism. No way! Our economic reforms are based on socialist principles. In any case, we have always had self-employed workers. We are just increasing their numbers. Self-employed workers may be able to accumulate more in certain cases, but that'll be based on their hard work, not through exploiting others.

But in the context of the joint ventures with the private sector and other economic reforms since the early 1990s aren't you gradually drifting away from socialism?

No, no! We are consolidating socialism in new difficult global conditions. We are not expanding the private sector significantly, and the fundamental means of production remain in state hands.

of the people. The changes we are making are under the control of the Cuban Communist Party, with the support of the people. After 51 years of our revolution, we cannot afford now to make major strategic mistakes.

Have there not been increasing inequalities within Cuban society since the economic reforms of the early 1990s? And with the reforms, a change of values? And what about corruption?

Yes, there are inequalities, and we are addressing this to prevent the gap growing. But the major distortions come from the money sent to Cubans by their relatives from the US and elsewhere. For example, one US dollar is equivalent to the entire ration card we give to our people. So those who get money from outside are better off. Over time, we want to do away with the two currency system we introduced after collapse of the Soviet Union. (Cubans use the Cuban peso which is weak compared to the US dollar, but US dollars are exchanged into the convertible peso which is closer in value to the US dollar).

But to do this, we have to increase the productivity of our workforce, to have a strong economy. We can then raise the salaries of workers. And, yes, we are also aware that the values of people can change. We are addressing this in various ways, including through new and more intensive ideological programmes in our schools, the Young Communist League, the mass organizations, workplaces and elsewhere. We have open debates about this issue. That's the best way to deal with it. We are also getting stronger against corruption through prevention measures and prosecutions of offenders. Any process of change will have challenges. Our economic reforms will be managed gradually and progressively to try to prevent distortions. Of course, this is not the first time we've introduced reforms, but we are aware of the far-reaching consequences, and we are working towards avoiding possible negative effects.

So what is the response of workers to your new economic reforms?

We have spent long hours with the trade unions and workers. We discuss our problems. We make them public. That's how we can solve them. If we are open to people they will support us, as they did during the 'Special Period' after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the socialist bloc. We have also been given lots of ideas by the public and are including these in our plans. But the workers are worried. You see, until now the state has been doing everything for them. They have become too dependent on the state, on the excesses of government paternalism. Now they have to adjust. It won't be easy, but we will do it. In a situation like this, the government has to be part of the solution. We are not going to leave the workers alone. We are going to assist them in their new work. We have to make these changes. If we don't make them we will burden future generations. We are doing this for us but mainly for our children. ●



work for them.

As President Raul Castro says, 'we have to remove once and for all the notion that Cuba is the only country in the world where you can live without working'. If they do not accept work that the

restaurants with up to 20 seats. Labour must be got from the owners' families, but they can also employ a limited number of people.

Will there be a minimum wage for those employed and any

Even where people work on the land, the product will be theirs, but the state will retain ownership of the land. We are not privatizing the land. And if people do not make productive use of the land, we will take it back from them as part of our leasing agreement and allocate it to others.

It's impossible to seriously build socialism with our low productivity. We must have a strong economy, especially to ensure our free health and education systems. You must understand we are shaping our own Cuban model of socialism. Ours is an authentic Cuban revolution. It's not been imported from anywhere. It's based on our history, our culture, the nature of the Cuban personality, the psyche of the Cuban people, our natural resources, our climate, our position as a small island, our location in the Caribbean, and our specific problems now.

We are not perfect but we are working very hard to make socialism work. We have to make these changes to preserve socialism in the context of the economic and financial crisis and the anachronistic US blockade. The changes we are making are under the control of the Cuban Communist Party, with the support

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