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people's VOICE

Free the Cuban Five

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Ontario's McGuinty government and the big corporations are on the offensive against working people. Communists in Ontario are pushing back, with a campaign to put people's needs ahead of profits.

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Temporary migrant workers are exploited and abused, thanks to Canadian laws and policies, not just because of bad bosses.

5 Private spaces?

Despite a famous Supreme Court ruling which allows the use of public spaces to express free speech, many such areas are being arbitrarily defined as "private property" and off-limits.

Fighting to restore free collective bargaining

Special to PV

Teachers and educational workers fighting to restore free collective bargaining - and repeal Ontario's Bill 115 - have found widespread public support, to the shock and mortification of Dalton McGuinty's minority Liberal government.

The government, supported by the Tories, had hoped to win the Sept. 6 by-election in Kitchener Waterloo, by manufacturing a crisis in education (ala Mike Harris in the 1990s) that pitted teachers and educational workers against students and the public.

But KW voters got the picture. The Liberal candidate came in third behind the Tory, while the NDP elected Catharine Fife, Chair of the local School Board and President of the Ontario Public School Boards Association.

Now students in high schools across the province have also figured it out. Many are organizing against Bill 115 and in support of teachers and educational workers. A big protest is being organized September 29th involving schools

from several Boards.

While some students are unhappy that elementary teachers (ETFO) are refusing to volunteer for extra-curricular activities before and after school, most understand that teachers now have no other way to protest Bill 115.

And so students have taken to the streets and podiums to demonstrate their opposition to a Bill that arbitrarily suspends free collective bargaining and the right to strike for two years, freezes wages, attacks sick days and pensions and alters the grid, all of which will effectively reduce

education spending by \$2 billion.

Students know the impact the cuts will have to their education, and that's why they are actively supporting teachers and educational workers represented by the Elementary Teachers Federation of Ontario, the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation, and CUPE.

Labour Councils and unions are also organizing anti-Bill 115 demonstrations, and a resolution from the Action Caucus is making the rounds across the province. As well as calling for repeal of Bill 115, the resolution calls for an end

to public funding of the parallel Catholic school system, and the expansion of a single, secular public school system open to all, regardless of religion or sexual orientation.

In response, the Liberals are preparing a new Bill that would suspend free collective bargaining and impose a wage freeze and other changes to pensions and benefits, across the whole public sector. Expected to be tabled in the Legislature in October with support of the Tories, this Bill could spark even bigger protests, destabilizing the government and possibly forcing an election.

The Communist Party is calling on the OFL and the Common Front to organize broad based, escalating actions across the province.

A petition opposing Bill 115 was circulated by People's Voice at the Sept. 23 Word on the Street festival in Toronto, securing hundreds of signatures in support of free collective bargaining for teachers and educational workers.

The public gets it. But not the minority Liberals or the Tories. Mass action in the streets should help them learn this lesson: back off or face defeat. Mr. Charest learned that too late. ●

Communist campaign against austerity in Ontario

PV Ontario Bureau

Communist Party (Ontario) leader Liz Rowley will be travelling across the province in October, campaigning at public meetings and in the streets against Bill 115 and the austerity measures introduced by the McGuinty government to attack free collective bargaining, cut jobs and wages, erode education and healthcare, and sell off public assets.

Rowley will present the Party's 10 point Prescription for a People's Recovery in Ontario, which would "restore and expand labour, civil, social and democratic rights, raise wages and living standards, create good jobs in manufacturing and secondary industry, and invest in universal quality public healthcare, public and post-secondary education, and public services."

"It's the exact opposite of what the Liberals and Tories - provincial and federal - are imposing on working people in Ontario", Rowley told *People's Voice*.

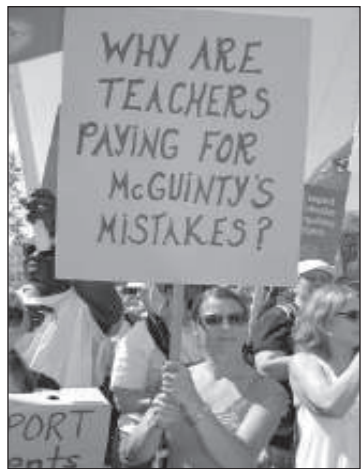
"Politics are very volatile in Ontario today. Mass extra-parliamentary pressure on the Legislature could significantly alter the landscape in favour of working people. The government is politically unstable, vulnerable to pressure from both the conservative right and from the working class and its allies. Mass action - like the Days of Action which almost toppled the Harris government 15 years ago - could force the Liberals to rescind Bill 115 and the attack on free collective bargaining and public education. Otherwise they may face defeat at the polls. This is the lesson of the students' struggle in Quebec.

"Furthermore, Charest's loss in Quebec could be just the first of many Liberal defeats across Canada. But these defeats must also lead to more progressive governments, and to new policies that put people's needs before corporate profits", Rowley said.

People's Voice readers can hear Liz Rowley at public meetings being organized in major cities

from October 14 to 30. The tour starts in Toronto, where she will share the platform with Marianne Breton Fontaine, leader of the

Young Communist League in Quebec and an activist in the student movement that brought down Charest. ●



Thousands rallied against Bill 115 at Queen's Park on Aug. 28 (photo: Ed Bil)

Fighting Austerity campaign tour dates

TORONTO - Sunday, Oct. 14, 2 pm, OISE, Room 5-260. Hear Marianne Breton Fontaine (YCL Quebec leader, activist in the Quebec student movement, candidate for Quebec Solidaire in the Montreal riding of Acadie); and Liz Rowley, Leader, CPC (Ontario); former Public School Trustee; candidate in the Kitchener-Waterloo by-election.

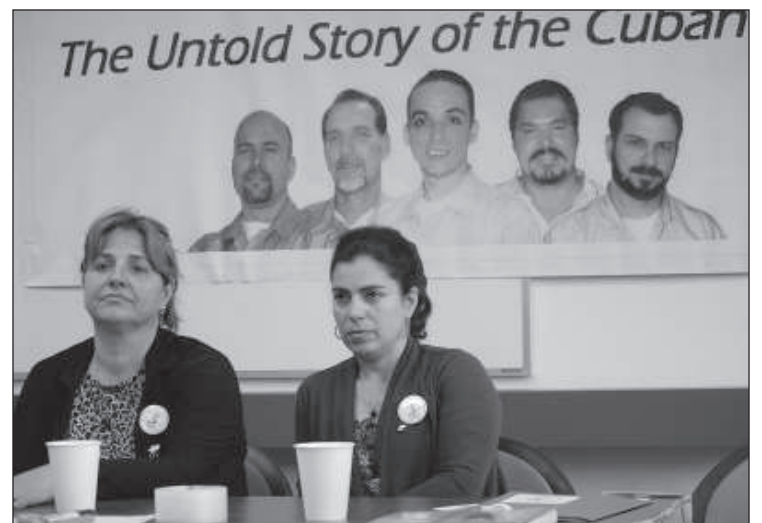
ST. CATHARINES - Tuesday, Oct. 16 - contact Saleh Waziruddin for more info at salehw@yahoo.com

OTTAWA - Thursday, Oct. 18 - Bronson Centre, 211 Bronson Ave., 7 pm. Contact Stuart Ryan at 613-882-7108 for more information

BRAMPTON - Sunday, Oct. 28, 2 pm - Contact Wilf Szczesny at 416-428-9583 for location and details.

Additional dates will appear in the next issue of *People's Voice*.

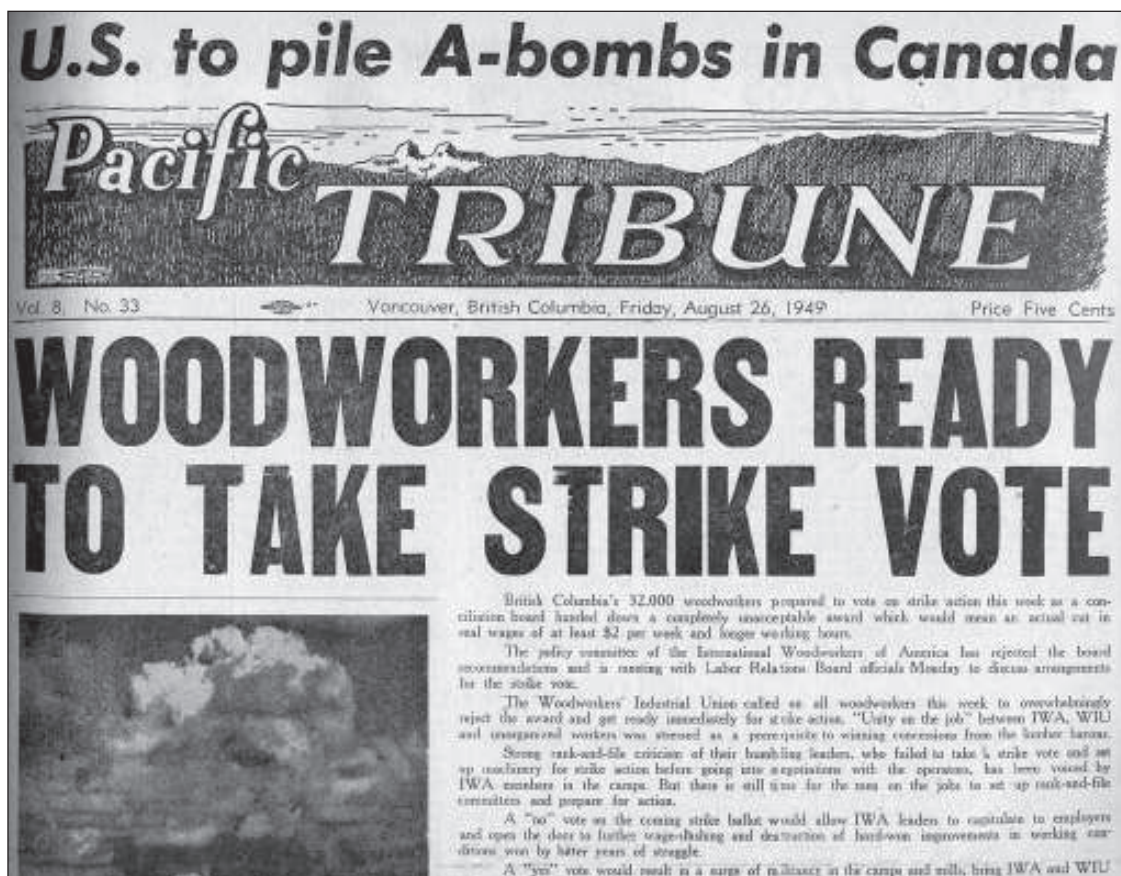
Toronto hosts "Breaking the Silence" tribunal for the Cuban Five



Elizabeth Palmeiro (left) and Adriana Perez (right), the wives of Gerardo Hernandez and Ramon Labanino respectively, two of the five anti-terrorist Cuban fighters held in US prisons, took part in the "Breaking Silence: Freedom to the Cuban Five" event held Sept. 21-23 in Toronto. "Above all, we would like to thank, on behalf of The Cuban Five, as they are known worldwide, their relatives and the Cuban people, the efforts carried out by solidarity groups and figures that have organized this important event, Palmeiro and Perez said in the opening ceremony. The next issue of *People's Voice* will include detailed reporting of this important solidarity conference. Below, delegates held a rally outside the U.S. Consulate. (PV photos by Ed Bil.)



Marking 90th anniversary of the working class press



The sixteenth in our series of historic front pages from the 90 years of the working class press in Canada shows the August 26, 1949 edition of the *Pacific Tribune*. The big news included an impending strike vote by 32,000 British Columbia woodworkers faced with a Labour Relations Board award containing a \$2 weekly pay cut and longer working hours. Also on the front page was coverage of a Montreal Herald report that U.S. atomic bombs might be stockpiled in Newfoundland and Canada's northwest for use in long-range bombing operations. The plan was said to have been raised by U.S. Secretary of Defense Louis Johnson during an official state dinner at "Ottawa's swanky Golf and Country Club".

Canada creating low-wage "guest workforce"

By Kimball Cariou

Canada is well on the way to creating a huge workforce of low-paid, temporary foreign workers. That's the logical conclusion from the facts and figures in a new report issued by the Toronto-based Metcalf Foundation.

As reported by the *Toronto Star's* Nicholas Keung, the Foundation argues that abuse and exploitation of migrants is much more prevalent than anecdotal stories. In reality, Canada's immigration and labour laws mean that mistreatment of such workers is becoming "normalised."

The *Star* gives some typical examples: a live-in caregiver's work permit and passport are seized by her employer, who pays her only \$2100 for two years of work;

promised \$15 an hour by a recruiter to work as a chef in a Toronto restaurant, an Indian migrant is paid just \$8 hourly, sharing accommodation in a cold basement, with no vacation or holidays; the monthly paycheque of a Tanzanian taxidermist is immediately grabbed by his employer.

Other cases have hit the headlines in recent years, including a group of African workers hired to plant trees in British Columbia. Housed in atrocious conditions and given only the most meagre food, about 30 of the workers were ripped off by their employers, and some are still fighting for back wages.

"The exploitation is not isolated and anecdotal. It is endemic. It is systemic," says the report. Titled "Made in Canada: How the Law Constructs Migrant Workers"

Insecurity," the report stresses "a deepening concern that Canada's temporary labour migration programs are entrenching and normalizing a low-wage, low-rights 'guest' workforce."

The number of migrant workers in Canada has tripled in the past decade, to over 300,000. One-third of these are in low-skilled jobs.

For many years, Canada has imported live-in caregivers and seasonal farm workers. But a 10-year-old so-called "pilot project" also recruits workers for agriculture, restaurants, food processing, cleaning, construction,

road building and tourism. This category has risen from 1,304 in 2002 to 28,930 in 2010.

The author, Osgoode Hall Law School professor Fay Faraday, says that such low-skilled migrant workers are more vulnerable to abuse because they have no access to permanent residency, and there is little oversight by Canada or their countries of origin. In effect, governments are creating the conditions which allow any supervision to be increasingly privatized between employer and worker.

As a remedy, the report proposes that migrant workers should be granted permanent

resident status upon arrival. It also recommends stronger legislation to govern worker recruitment, citing regulations in Manitoba as an example, as well as work permits that allow migrants freedom to choose employers and the right to unionize and bargain collectively.

The protections adopted by Manitoba include a ban on charging or passing fees to migrant workers, and a requirement to deposit a \$10,000 credit, which is used to pay back fees owed to a migrant worker if the law is breached. •

October 4: Sisters in Spirit Vigils

The violence experienced by Aboriginal women and girls in Canada has rightly been called a national tragedy. According to research by the Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC) more than 600 Aboriginal women and girls have gone missing or been murdered in Canada, most of them in the past two decades.

Nearly half of murder cases involving Aboriginal women and girls remain unsolved; by contrast, as of 2005 84% of all homicide cases in Canada were cleared by police. While these numbers are startling, statistics alone cannot express the profound impact that violence against women and girls has on Indigenous communities already traumatized by centuries of colonization and racism.

October 4th is a day to honour the lives of missing and murdered Aboriginal women and girls. "Sisters in Spirit" vigils are held in dozens of communities on this date every year, organized by the NWAC and its partners - Amnesty International Canada, KAIROS: Canadian Ecumenical Justice Initiatives, National Association of Friendship Centres, and Canadian Federation of Students.

These organizations craft a Joint Statement as a symbol of partnership and commitment to the issue. Supporters from across the country are invited to add their organization's name to the document to give it strength. Once finalized, the

statement is read at vigils across Canada. The number of SIS Vigils continues to grow, from 11 in 2006 to an impressive 84 in 2011.

Tens of thousands of people have attended vigils in recent years. Together they call for immediate action, standing in solidarity with the families and friends of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls, and with supporters of right relations and reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples.

Through the Sisters in Spirit project, NWAC provided crucial research and support for all those affected by violence against Indigenous women. But funding for this project was cut by the federal government in 2010, making it much harder for the truth of this violence to be known, and thus much harder to take action.

For information about this year's vigil in your community, please see www.nwac.ca/programs/2012-vigil-locations. •

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Saturday, November 10
doors open 6 pm

Peretz Centre, 6184 Ash St.

Tickets \$20 from the CSE, 706 Clark Drive
Call 604-254-9836 to reserve or for information

COPE urges provincial funding for seismic upgrades

PV Vancouver Bureau

The Coalition of Progressive Electors (COPE), Canada's oldest labour-left civic reform party, remains active in Vancouver a year after suffering major losses in the November 2011 municipal election. COPE's annual summer BBQ fundraiser drew a big crowd at the Vancouver Rowing Club on Sept. 19, and the party is working on policy renewal in the coming months. There is also speculation that a byelection for a City Council position may take place next year, which could offer former COPE councillor Ellen Woodsworth a chance to return to City Hall.

COPE continues to be a player at the Vancouver School Board, where trustee Alan Wong is the party's only current elected official. With his strong understanding of facilities issues, Wong has been a powerful voice for seismic upgrading of schools since he was first elected in 1999.

In the latest development on this front, the Board is putting forward a plan to complete seismic upgrades of all 40 remaining High-Risk Vancouver schools within the next seven years. COPE supports the plan, and is encouraging all Vancouver MLAs - NDP and Liberal - to cooperate to achieve the necessary provincial funding.

"Not only is it an issue of safety

and security of our students and staff, but it is also an issue of fiscal responsibility," says Trustee Wong. "The Province and the District must understand the maintenance budget and lifecycle costing of school projects. Left to deteriorate, our schools will cost more to maintain and repair in the future. As it stands the quality of our facilities are deteriorating due to chronic underfunding of the Annual Facilities Grant" from the province.

Last year, the cost to address immediate maintenance requirements of Vancouver schools was an estimated \$468 million. By 2017 these maintenance expenses are expected to climb to \$632 million. •



COPE Trustee Alan Wong

Austerity politicians face People's Court

Stephen Harper, Ontario premier Dalton McGuinty, Ontario opposition leader Tim Hudak, and Toronto Mayor Rob Ford were in the dock on Sept. 15, charged for their austerity agendas and sweeping cuts to public services.

Organized by the Public Service Alliance of Canada-Ontario, the trial took place at the Toronto Court House on University Avenue. The People's Court was part of a National Day of Action called by PSAC across Canada.

As some 200 people observed the proceedings, trade unionists and social justice advocates testified on the damaging effects of austerity policies.

"People are frustrated with our political leaders, who by taking away public and social services, are abandoning families during a very difficult economic time", said Sharon DeSousa, PSAC Regional Executive Vice-President for Ontario. "We are witnessing the

loss of a generation of hard fought social gains, which is making it harder for ordinary people to make it day to day".

The politicians were accused of providing billions of dollars in giveaways and tax cuts to the

corporations, supposedly to help create jobs. Instead, witnesses gave convincing evidence that handouts to big capital and so-called "free trade agreements" have resulted

see PEOPLE'S COURT, p. 11



The accused - Hudak, Harper, Ford, and McGuinty - with a "Moneybags" friend at the People's Court. (Photo by Ed Bil)

EDITORIALS

Oct. 6: Hands off Iran and Syria!

The Canadian Peace Alliance has called for a Day of Action on October 6 to oppose the build-up towards war against Iran. This important initiative deserves strong support, and we urge our readers to take part.

The majority of Canadians still want to end the NATO occupation of Afghanistan, and most oppose the nightmare scenario of war against Iran or Syria. But the anti-war movement faces serious obstacles. With the collusion of the corporate media, the Harper Tories present war-making as "foreign aid," as if bombs and armed occupation were "liberation". Sadly, this narrative goes unchallenged by the NDP and Liberal opposition in Parliament. Similarly, breaking relations with Iran is falsely characterized as a human rights initiative, not a step towards aggression.

Make no mistake: the Harper government's agenda has nothing to do with "protecting" the people of Iran or Syria. Otherwise, why wouldn't Tory cabinet ministers be denouncing the Israeli occupation of Palestine, or human rights abuses in Saudi Arabia and Qatar? Or closer to home, in the United States or Canada?

The barrage of Tory rhetoric has a different purpose. It aims to weaken and divide the anti-war sentiments of Canadians, in preparation for a new round of imperialist interventions in the Middle East and central Asia. This dangerous game has the potential for truly catastrophic consequences. If the U.S. or Israel do launch such a war, it will be too late to hit the streets. Millions could be killed within days, giving a macabre meaning to the imperialist doctrine of "responsibility to protect."

The time to hit the streets is now, not later. Our goal must be to prevent another war, not to lament the tragic death toll after NATO bombs destroy Teheran or Damascus. That means making October 6 a priority, not an afterthought. We'll see you there!

The voter suppression case

Relegated to the back pages by the mainstream corporate media, Canada's 2011 electoral scandal continues to unfold. The Council of Canadians, for example, has given support to a court case challenging the results in seven ridings which saw extensive reports of electoral fraud and voter suppression. This case is scheduled to be heard on December 10, despite desperate attempts to derail the proceedings by lawyers for the seven Conservative candidates.

The information revealed so far makes it clear that this scandal goes far beyond Guelph, pointing to widespread attempts to influence the outcome in other ridings.

As pointed out by democracy activist Christopher Majka, based on information from Ekos Research, there appear to have been greater efforts to manipulate voters in these seven ridings, compared to others across the country. This includes "statistically significant" attempts to misdirect voters to "changed" polling stations - highly suspicious, since only one poll was actually moved in the seven ridings during the campaign. The number of "harassing" phone calls was also higher in the seven ridings. Even more telling, the research indicates that supporters of the NDP, Liberals and Greens were much more likely to be the targeted than Conservative-leaning voters. Our view - shared by many observers - is that this evidence points to a pattern of illegal acts on behalf of the Tories.

Would Stephen Harper have won a majority anyway? Perhaps, but we will never know. A bigger question is whether the 2011 campaign was a test run for U.S.-style voter suppression on a much larger scale in the next election. Unless those who committed these illegal acts are found and punished, right up to the highest levels, electoral fraud could decide the 2015 federal campaign, with tragic long-term results for Canadian working people.



SPEAKING FRANKLY

Peter Lougheed's true legacy

By Darrell Rankin

Peter Lougheed was given a full state funeral, the first ever for a former Alberta premier. The big capitalist media universally praised him. Prime Minister Stephen Harper called Lougheed a visionary and patriot.

"Every single one of us woke up this morning in Peter Lougheed's Alberta," said Alison Redford, Alberta's current premier. These are true words, yet they fail to reassure those of us opposed to the course set by Lougheed.

Before he resigned as premier in 1985, the 1980 recession devastated Alberta's petroleum manufacturing industry, one of the world's largest. Today Alberta is more reliant on resources than ever, especially petroleum, and tar sands development is spurring catastrophic global climate change.

Behind the hoopla, the funeral was a lament that big business can provide no great vision or solutions to get us out of the trouble Lougheed has created for Canada.

Those of us in the left and popular movements in Alberta who grew up when Lougheed was premier have a different memory of his legacy. He was not a liberal or Red Tory, as the many protests

we organized attest.

His party's 1971 victory over Social Credit, which had been in power since 1935, represented the end of any aspiration of the petit-bourgeois for influence in the Alberta state. His victory meant the total take-over of the province by big corporate interests, and Lougheed was their face.

Lougheed's true legacy is serving the large oil and gas corporations, mainly foreign-owned. For them, he won more provincial control over resources at the expense of the rest of Canada, laying the groundwork for the Balkanization of Canada. His approach, such as an elected Senate, rejected the equality of nations in Canada by strengthening provincial rights. This helped regional capitalist interests ready to sell out to U.S. and other foreign corporations.

Accelerating a process started by Social Credit, Lougheed's government enriched the giant transnational corporations by handing over the province's rich natural resources. Lougheed placed these resources even farther from the reach of Aboriginal peoples or the people of Canada. He was patriotic only to money.

Lougheed's provincial rights agenda is a danger to the future of Canada itself. It gave the Reform

Party and its present embodiment in Ottawa, Stephen Harper, a great weapon to dismantle Canada.

The Reform Party's solution to Quebec's demands for increased sovereign powers was to give each province the same powers. In 1997, the growing influence of the Reform party led every non-Quebec premier to sign the Calgary Declaration, which proclaimed that all provinces must have legal equality.

Although Lougheed supported the failed 1992 Charlottetown Accord as a way to "bring Quebec back into Canada" and to achieve a province-based elected Senate, he led Harper and our big business overlords to their present reactionary position. They will now reject any concessions to Quebec unless these further entrench the reactionary, anti-Aboriginal and anti-Quebec federal system imposed by the British in 1867.

It is a vision of federalism that denies the equality of nations and their right to self-determination. It is a vision that continues the inequality of Aboriginal nations and Quebec. It is a vision that divides workers.

Harper gave Lougheed a state funeral for his dedicated service to the oil corporations, not to the people. •

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LETTERS

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

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Who's behind anti-Muslim film?

People's Voice Commentary

As global protests continue against the "Innocence of Muslims" YouTube video, new information has come to light about this 14-minute film. Contrary to false initial reports about "Jewish donors", it appears that the people behind the film include a Nakoula Basseley Nakoula, a right-wing Egyptian American Christian convicted of bank fraud, and Steve Klein, an ex-Marine who has been involved in extremist movements and "Christian" activist groups for decades, according to a report by the Southern Poverty Law Center.

Another person linked to the film is Morris Sadek, whose blog

displays a photo of him with the infamous Pastor Terry Jones at an anti-Islam protest in Washington. Sadek's Facebook page revealed him as a fan of the Republican Party, the right-wing Hudson Institute, far-right pundit Daniel Pipes, and similar groups.

Clearly, "Innocence of Muslims" is more than yet another crude expression of bigotry against Muslims. Like many other forgeries (the so-called "Protocols of the Elders of Zion", for example), this film is a provocation created by reactionary forces to stir up hatred for political purposes. At a time when people across the

see ANTI-MUSLIM, p. 11

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Thousands to sit-in at B.C. Legislature

PV Vancouver Bureau

The tide of public opinion keeps rising against Big Oil's plans for more tar sands tankers and pipelines on the west coast. In the latest development, thousands of people from across Canada have already signed up for a mass sit-in on the lawn of the B.C. legislature in Victoria.

Set for October 22, the peaceful civil disobedience action is patterned on similar protests held last year in Washington, DC, and in Ottawa. More details will be released shortly.

The protest is being pulled together by the "Defend Our Coast" coalition, which is sharply critical of B.C. Premier Christy Clark and PM Stephen Harper.

Over the summer, Clark began a timid retreat from her

government's earlier *de facto* support for the Enbridge Northern Gateway pipeline proposal. The premier is now talking about putting a price on the west coast, saying that B.C. will back the project if the province gets a share of the profits.

Clark's position won some support from British Columbians who wonder why they should accept most of the risk from tar sands pipelines and tankers, while receiving little economic benefit.

But recent polls show that some 60% of B.C. residents oppose the Northern Gateway proposal, and about 50% are now against a plan by Kinder Morgan to twin its existing pipeline, which goes from Alberta through the Fraser Valley to Burnaby.

Opposition has been strongest among First Nations across the



Nearly 200 people rallied against PM Harper in Vancouver on Sept. 6, including opponents of pipeline projects. (Photo: K. Cariou)

province, as well as in communities along the tar sands routes. Now, the deadly consequences of a potential disaster have become widely known in the Lower Mainland, where the Kinder Morgan plan would see tanker shipments jump dramatically.

Public anger has also been fanned by Stephen Harper's Tories, whose clumsy attempts to stifle any voices of opposition against tar sands expansion have backfired in this province.

The Legislature occupation plan was announced on Sept. 12 by over 80 influential leaders from the business, First Nations, environmental, labour, academic, medical and artistic communities

across Canada.

"There are moments in history when it's clear that our elected leaders are failing us and it is necessary to take a stand," said environmentalist Tzaporah Berman. "The risk of oil spills and irreversible harm to our tourism and fishing industries from these pipelines and tankers is just too great."

Other initial endorsers included Stephen Lewis, David Suzuki, Maude Barlow, Naomi Klein, Tom Goldtooth, David Coles, Vandana Shiva, Bill McKibben, John O'Connor, and Tony Clarke.

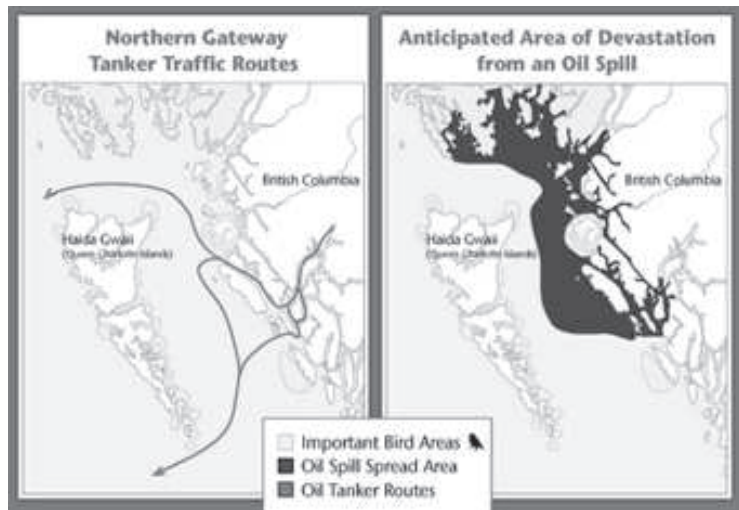
"We're meeting in Victoria to show that you can't gut Canada's environmental legislation and try to put a price tag on the B.C. coast

without a public response," said Maude Barlow, Chairperson for the Council of Canadians. "Canada's iconic coast is far too valuable to risk on tar sands pipelines and tankers and we pledge to defend it."

"This October, we pledge to defend our coast and the mountains, rivers, forests, wildlife and First Nations communities of B.C. against tar sands pipelines and tankers," said Susan Spratt, Western Regional Director of the CAW. "We want long-term green jobs that will take us beyond fossil fuels, not short-term high risk pipelines."

"We hope people from all walks of life and from across the country join us in Victoria and defend the natural beauty and cultural richness of the B.C. coastline," said Chief Jackie Thomas, of the Saik'uz First Nation south of Vanderhoof. "We will be there to show the widespread opposition to tar sands pipelines and tanker proposals and to show the strength of the support for First Nations people's rights to land and title and the internationally protected right to free, prior and informed consent on any development impacting our traditional territories."

(Sign up for Oct. 22 online at www.defendourcoast.ca to participate and become a coastal defender. People's Voice editor Kimball Cariou and other PV supporters will be among those at the Victoria sit-in.) ●



Public vs. private: where can we demonstrate?

By Kimball Cariou

"Private property", with all its implications, sits at the very core of modern life. Every facet of society is viewed through the lens of private ownership, from natural resources and factories, to intellectual research, and even the "nuclear family," with its feudal origins as a relationship based on retaining control of family wealth.

The concepts of private (capitalist) and public (social) property have been at war for centuries. Skirmishes and battles are fought relentlessly, as the ruling class seeks to reap profits by extending the realm of individual ownership, while working people try to expand the limited areas of social ownership.

Examples in recent Canadian history are numerous, from the privatization of PetroCanada, to the attacks against public schools and universal health care by corporations and right-wing governments.

Consider the growing attempts to block the use of public or mixed public-private properties and buildings by political activists. In city after city, politicians and administrators are moving to restrict access to places created and supported by governments (i.e. the taxpayers). The effect is to make it more difficult for progressive and radical movements to make direct contact with the wider public.

In Vancouver, members of the StopWar coalition have been repeatedly blocked by police and security from entering the Canada

Place convention centre and the PNE grounds to hand out anti-war flyers and stickers near Armed Forces displays. Both locations are publicly-owned, but operated by forms of public-private partnerships.

During the Sept. 6 by-election in the Ontario riding of Kitchener-Waterloo, university administrators prevented Communist Party candidate Elizabeth Rowley from campaigning on campuses, even getting police to remove her from so-called "all candidate" forums. These actions against Rowley and other small-party candidates were backed by Elections Ontario, which (unlike Elections Canada) now considers post-secondary campuses to be "private property."

Another recent case involves the distribution of political newspapers inside the Metrotown Skytrain station in Burnaby, BC. Three members of the "Fire This Time" cult were removed from the station by Skytrain cops and the RCMP. While this group's history of physical assaults and threats against others ([see ivandrury.wordpress.com](http://seeivandrury.wordpress.com)) makes it hard to consider them defenders of free speech, the case does raise the question: is a transit station public or private?

Other examples are even more extreme. Earlier this year, Quebec's Law 78 banned street demonstrations of more than 50 people unless organizers obtained permits in advance. Organizers chose to ignore this draconian law, but police charged thousands of Quebecers found wearing the "red

square" symbol, even invading restaurants or retail shops to arrest "offenders."

During the G8/G20 summit in Toronto, the provincial and civic governments banned protests within a specified distance of security fences. Not satisfied with this sweeping edict, police arrested and attacked hundreds of people, often randomly, earning widespread condemnation for their brutality.

These examples are part of an escalating effort to narrow the accepted boundaries for the expression of free speech. In the name of "law and order" or "public safety", more and more locations are being defined as off-limits, especially to groups which oppose the policies of pro-corporate governments.

There is no legal basis for such violations of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. This issue was the subject of a famous legal case, the "Committee for the Commonwealth of Canada v. Canada (1991)", regarding the distribution of leaflets in the Dorval Airport by members of a U.S.-based group.

The Supreme Court of Canada ruled that "the distribution of pamphlets and discussion with certain members of the public are in no way incompatible with the airport's primary function, that of accommodating the needs of the travelling public. An airport is a thoroughfare, which in its open areas or waiting areas can accommodate expression without the effectiveness or function of the place being in any way threatened. There was thus a limitation on the

freedom of expression enjoyed by respondents when the airport manager ordered them to cease their activities."

As a result, organizations are allowed to engage in such activities in airports - and other public facilities - as long as they do not interfere with the effective functioning of such spaces. Groups are not allowed to block the flow of pedestrians, for example. In some cases, the timing of activities must be scheduled with the management of facilities.

But using the "private property" argument to simply deny the right to free expression is clearly a dangerous reversal of the SCC ruling. How can an airport be considered a public facility, but not a convention centre, a fairground, or a university campus operated by a quasi-government agency?

The ideological underpinning for this trend is disturbing. At a

time when the ruling class seeks to privatize all public assets, the re-definition of social forms of property is a very useful political tool. The sub-text of this argument is that any building or facility which can be used to generate a profit for a corporation should be operated purely by and for private owners. Obviously, the presence of people handing out Communist election flyers or stickers opposing the war in Afghanistan undermines this concept - thus the move to explicitly classify such spaces as private property, regardless of Supreme Court rulings.

The denial of access to many public spaces creates enormous new problems for progressive movements trying to get out their message. It will likely take a combination of mass political campaigns and new legal challenges to reverse this insidious attack on democratic freedoms. ●



StopWar coalition activists have been blocked from entering Canada Place and the PNE. (PV file photo)

Taking liberties: Canada's growing torture infrastructure

By Matthew Behrens,
September 20, 2012

The ease with which self-described democratic states embroil themselves in torture continues to be illustrated by the manner in which agencies of the Canadian state, from spies to judges, have wedged open a door to legitimize complicity in a practice that both domestic and international law ban outright.

Before dismissing that paragraph as preposterous, it is worth considering that two federal inquiries into the torture of Abdullah Almalki, Maher Arar, Ahmad El Maati, and Muayyed Nureddin revealed a sinister level of Canadian complicity in torture, from which no accountability or systemic changes have emerged. Further, damning documents reveal Canadian knowledge of and culpability in the renditions and torture of Benamar Benatta and Abofian Abdelrazik.

Meanwhile, the Federal Court, while accepting CSIS memos acknowledging that secret trial "security certificate" cases are based largely on torture, continues with hearings that could result in deportations to torture. That latter possibility is courtesy of a 2002 Supreme Court of Canada decision that left open the possibility of such complicity in torture under "exceptional circumstances."

Outrage over Canadian involvement in torture remains fairly muted, especially as each new revelation of deepening complicity is met by government officials not so much with shamefaced promises to keep our hands clean, but rather bald-faced justifications in the name of security. Indeed, as in the U.S., there appears a growing Canadian effort to justify as legal and legitimate that which is neither.

Part of that process of legitimization - accepting torture as a normal course of social and political events in much the same mundane way we would assess price drops in overseas markets - is now firmly fixed at the Canadian Security Intelligence Service. As we learned last month in a declassified memo, CSIS runs a thinly disguised torture committee, using the more group hug-like moniker of the Information Sharing Evaluation Committee.

According to a formerly secret August 2011 memo from CSIS Deputy Director of Operations

Michel Coulombe, a group of six people sit around the table and shoot the breeze about information coming across their desks that may have come from torture (or, to use their preferred term, "mistreatment"). Their task is to decide whether to act on the fruits of torture and whether to share information that could lead to the torture of someone else.

This may sound familiar, because it's exactly what CSIS and the RCMP were already found to be up to in the decade following 9/11. Rather than ending such practices, they've developed an Orwellian process whereby they justify doing what they are not supposed to do, with subsequent Public Safety memos from Vic Toews to the Canadian Border Services Agency and the RCMP outlining the same process.

All of these documents clearly state that the "Government of Canada does not condone the use of torture," but then proceed to justify involvement in torture.

By choosing to be part of the torture chain, and using lawyers at Canada's Department of Justice for cover... it appears that the Canadian government seeks not to hide its involvement, but rather to sanction it under the cover of law.

So what does the Gang of Six do when they decide whether they have to defy the law by getting down and dirty with torture? Their list of sources to consult starts with "CSIS databases," a less than objective or reassuring source of information which the departed Inspector General of CSIS, Eva Plunkett, slammed in her November 2011 report as "unreliable."

CSIS is then to look at their "foreign arrangements" as well as



"Gitmo" image from www.bloggingcanadians.ca

"assurances" that have been received by the foreign entity. In deciding whether to turn someone over to the Gestapo or to share information with those who turn the screws, CSIS must decide whether the Gestapo's promise not to torture someone can be taken at face value (this practice of "diplomatic assurances" has long been condemned as another disgrace that erodes further the outright ban on torture).

CSIS can also check the human rights reports from DFAIT (the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade). DFAIT was found to be complicit in torture by two federal inquiries (and their memos with respect to the torture of Abdelrazik, detained in Sudan for years, illustrated similar culpability as well). DFAIT human rights reports are not made public, according to the Arar Inquiry, because "there is some concern about the impact public reports may have on Canadian commercial interests with these countries." In addition, the reliability of DFAIT reports is far from certain.

The Arar Inquiry pointed out that while a DFAIT report on torture in Syria in 2001 referenced "credible evidence of torture" and the use of torture to extract confessions, the 2002 report qualifies the use of torture as "allegations" and omits mention of the use of torture to extract confessions. Notably, while Canadians like Maher Arar, Ahmad El Maati and Abdullah Almalki were detained and tortured in Syria, the DFAIT annual report failed to make any mention of them.

And when a perhaps junior staffer at DFAIT has the gall to report the truth, it is rewritten. Indeed, we learned in 2008 that an 89-page PowerPoint DFAIT training manual listed, among countries using torture, the U.S. and Israel (both of which are well-documented facts). Former foreign affairs minister Maxime Bernier reacted by declaring "It contains a list that wrongly includes some of our closest allies. I have directed that the manual be reviewed and rewritten."

The other items checked include "open source information" (code word for the *National Post* and other right-wing publications and websites from which CSIS builds its cases). To cover their derrieres,

they throw a sop about consulting Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, and U.S. State Department reports, but they likely carry no weight given that CSIS and DFAIT officials have repeatedly refused to acknowledge that torture has been systematic in countries like Syria and Egypt.

By choosing to be part of the torture chain, and using lawyers at Canada's Department of Justice for cover (as they were during the torture of Canadians in Syria and Egypt), it appears that the Canadian government seeks not to hide its involvement, but rather to sanction it under the cover of law.

Skeptics might ask whether this is blowing things out of proportion. Yet this is precisely what happens when the door to torture has been opened. U.S. lawyer Alan Dershowitz famously said that Americans should be able to obtain torture warrants for "extreme" cases, yet if one is to open that door, who does the torture? How is it practiced to ensure a torture team will be available and ready to roll when it is mandated by a torture warrant?

Thus we enter the world of "torture controls and limitations," in much the same twisted way in which we have global holocaust controls with nuclear weapons limitations.

Richard Matthews of Mount Allison University, in his excellent book *The Absolute Violation*, notes that just as fighter pilots need to train so they can drop their bombs, "at some points torturers have to practice on victims if they are going to be any good. The spread of state torture is not merely a risk but is in fact inevitable once the state decides that torture serves a state interest."

In this instance, CSIS has clearly defined its state interest in torture by declaring there will be times when it is necessary to engage in the odious practice.

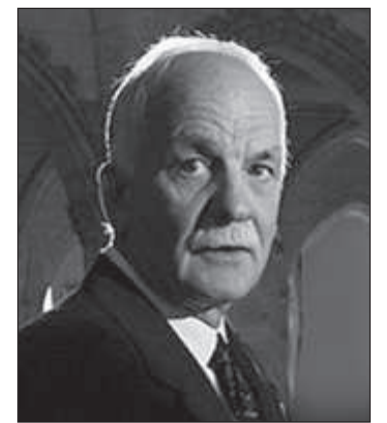
Matthews notes that "defenders of torture typically accept that every human being has a right not to be tortured, and they agree that this should be enshrined in international law. The debate is not about whether there is such a right but about whether such rights may ever be overridden."

Matthews, whose book was published in 2008, has clearly hit the nail on the head, since this is exactly how the CSIS memos are structured. What follows from this rationale, he notes, is a concerted effort to incorporate such processes within the framework of the law, so that any decision that leads to blood on the hands will be seen as lawful.

This is made possible because in the UN Convention Against Torture, its early definition includes a dangerous exception in

Article 1, when it states torture "does not include pain or suffering arising only from, inherent in or incidental to lawful sanctions." From this definition, one can see the emerging legal and moral calisthenics engaged in by the Bush administration as well as Canada's Justice Department and associated government agencies when they try and bend the definitions, use temperate language, and wrap their procedures in the soothing gauze of international law and respect for human rights. Indeed, in the CSIS memo and related documents, torture becomes mistreatment, and an interrogation session with electric shock or genital crushing gets reduced to a "detention interview."

Furthermore, CSIS declares that it will not "knowingly rely upon information" derived from torture, a convenient construction given the willful blindness with which it



Harper's "Public Safety" minister Vic Toews



U.S. lawyer Alan Dershowitz, who frequently justifies the use of torture.

operates with its foreign partners. If CSIS does not knowingly acknowledge that Syria engages in torture, then how can it be knowingly relying on the fruits of torture when it receives information from Syria? With such reasoning CSIS maintains it is "essential" to nurture these relationships because, in their eyes, they're doing nothing wrong.

As Canada continually refuses to apologize to and provide compensation for the numerous returnees from overseas torture whose lives the government has ruined, it becomes even clearer how high the stakes have become in these cases: any acknowledgement that what was done in these situations was wrong, illegal, or unethical, would bump Canada from its comfortable position in the global torture chain.

(Behrens is a freelance writer and social justice advocate who co-ordinates the *Homes not Bombs non-violent direct action network*. For a link to this article, including citations, visit <http://rabble.ca>.)



Rally in solidarity with Abofian Abdelrazik, who suffered rendition and torture with the knowledge of the Canadian government.

October 6 Day of Action: No to War Against Iran!

Communist & Workers' parties: We are totally opposed to any military action against Iran!

We the undersigned Communist and Workers Parties express our grave concerns and strong condemnation of the recent statements by the Israeli policy makers, about attacking Iran. We believe the statements of Benjamin Netanyahu, the Israeli Prime Minister, signalling that Israel is prepared to wage a pre-emptive military attack on Iran before the US election, could drag the region into a new war with unimaginable consequences. There are important indications that the Israeli plans are coordinated with powerful officials in the US administration and certain governments of the EU.

We simultaneously condemn the position of the US and EU in the form of the consenting silence with regards to the actions of the state of Israel. We believe that the policies of US imperialism and its allies with regards to the nations of Middle East have encouraged the Israeli leadership to feel free to promote openly aggressive and belligerent policies whose consequences would be to inflame the entire region of the Middle East and jeopardize global peace. We believe that the key to removing tensions in the region and securing peace is to denounce military interventions, overt and covert, in the countries of the Middle East. All conflicts and disputes in the region should be resolved through negotiation based on preserving peace and the Charter of the UN and respect for the sovereignty of nations.

We declare our solidarity with the struggle of the Iranian people for peace, human and democratic rights and social justice. We strongly believe that the destiny of Iran and its social-political structure is only for the Iranian people to decide. We believe heightening the tension by declaring irresponsible positions such as annihilation of the state of Israel and military gestures regarding the closure of Strait of Hormouz, by some of the Iranian regimes leaders, only serves Imperialist plans for military intervention in the region. We once again declare our support for the struggle of the Iranian working class and its Party, the Tudeh Party of Iran and all the progressive and democratic forces fighting for democracy, independence, social justice and a region free from Imperialist military presence and intervention.

- Co-signed by over 40 parties, including the Communist Party of Canada. For the full list, visit <http://solidnet.org>. ●

Don't Attack Iran! We need diplomacy, not sabre-rattling

From the *Canadian Peace Alliance*, Sept. 7, 2012

The decision by the Harper government to sever diplomatic ties with Iran and to expel all Iranian diplomats from Canada is a dangerous and unwanted escalation of the current crisis. The



Canadian Peace Alliance condemns this decision and calls on the government of Canada to normalize relations and to call for a peaceful and negotiated settlement.

This is not the first time that the government of Canada has led the drive to war with Iran. Prime Minister Stephen Harper has stated publicly that Iran is the "greatest threat to world peace." The severing of diplomatic ties shows that, in fact, the Harper government is the real threat to peace and stability.

"The global community is calling for negotiation and dialogue to avert war," said Sid Lacombe, coordinator of the Canadian Peace Alliance. "Keeping diplomatic channels open for that discussion is an absolute prerequisite to finding a peaceful solution to the conflict. The Harper government has just told the world that they don't care for peace and are instead paving the way to war."

Iranian-Canadians also spoke out against the decision to sever ties.

"We are worried that these actions by the Harper government are a sign of imminent attack," said Niaz Salimi, president of the Iranian Canadian Community Council. "We are opposed to any actions which brings us closer to war."

A war with Iran would cause untold civilian deaths and could escalate into a much larger regional conflict. There is no credible evidence that Iran is using nuclear technology to create a weapon, yet the Canadian public is being asked, once again, to put its faith in fictitious claims about Weapons of

Mass Destruction. The fact that no weapons were ever found in Iraq - and that the evidence of such a program was deliberately fabricated - renders any accusations against Iran extremely questionable.

This October 6th, Canadians will demonstrate their opposition to the possibility of war against Iran by joining anti-war events across Canada. For more information, visit the CPA website, www.acp-cpa.ca. ●

Canada's
largest
peace
group calls
anti-war
rallies on
Oct. 6



Scenes from March 2012 anti-war rally in Toronto, by PV photographer Ed Bil

Stop Stoking the Flames of War

The September 6 decision of the Harper government to cut all diplomatic relations between Canada and Iran is a dangerous and irresponsible act. The reasons given by Foreign Affairs Minister John Baird for this brazen move do not stand up to scrutiny. There is no evidence that Iran's nuclear program includes plans to produce nuclear weapons, nor is there any evidence that Canadian diplomatic personnel face any imminent

danger. And while Tehran no doubt supports political movements and formations in other countries in the region, the same can be said of most other states, including Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Israel itself.

Mr. Baird's accusations over Iran's alleged nuclear weapons plans is especially hypocritical, given that the Canadian government has never uttered a single word of concern over, let alone condemnation of Israel's

nuclear weapons cache - something which has been an open secret for many years - in complete defiance of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

Canada's unilateral action is hardly an isolated or misconceived act. It is part of an orchestrated campaign, the real purpose of which is to increase tensions in this already enflamed region and provide the appearance of international justification for a military strike against Iran - most likely by Israel with tacit U.S. and NATO support, even without UN approval. The fact that this announcement came only days after the conclusion of the 16th Summit of the Non-Aligned

Movement, hosted by Iran and attended by over 120 countries, shows that the Harper government has shifted Canada's foreign policy into the camp of the most aggressive circles of imperialism.

This move should be a wake-up call for the peace movement across Canada and for all peace-loving Canadians to speak out and mobilize to oppose foreign aggression against both Syria and Iran, and the Harper government's complicity in fomenting war. It is a call to action! In this context, the Communist Party of Canada welcomes the call for an International day of Action on October 6th to prevent foreign aggression on Iran, and urges anti-

war activists to organize broad and united peace actions in cities and towns across Canada on that day.

The Communist Party of Canada unreservedly condemns the decision to sever diplomatic ties with Iran as a most irresponsible and reprehensible act. We join with many other voices in demanding that this move be immediately rescinded and that the respective embassies be reopened, and in telling all the parties in Parliament that Canada should instead act to find peaceful political solutions to the problems in the region.

- Central Executive Committee,
Communist Party of Canada,
September 13, 2012 ●



GLOBAL CLASS STRUGGLE

Massive "hartal" across India

A country-wide "hartal" protest day across India on September 20 was backed by eight major political parties (including allies of the government) and most trade union federations. Millions of people took part in pickets and rallies against a steep rise in diesel fuel prices, new limits on the number of gas cylinders supplied to families, and moves to open the retail trade sector to foreign investment. Some burned effigies of Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, while others carried signs reading: "Go Back WalMart," a reference to the US retail giant that hopes to enter the Indian market.

In West Bengal, there was a total strike. Vehicles were off the roads, shops and markets were closed, workers in the industrial establishments and tea gardens were on strike, and schools and colleges were closed, despite attacks on Left Front activists by goons from the government Trinamool Congress in some areas.

In Tripura, all offices, markets and educational institutions were closed. In Kerala, the hartal was observed several days earlier, so the Sept. 20 action consisted of protest marches in all the state's 140 constituencies under the banner of the Left and Democratic Front.

In Delhi, leaders of the eight parties courted arrest at Parliament Street.

In Tamilnadu, Left leaders and cadres conducted picketing in 200 places. More than 50,000 protestors were arrested.

The widespread support for the hartal is seen as an indication of deepening anger against the anti-people measures taken by the UPA central government. The Communist parties which played a key role in the demonstrations say that the struggle around these issues will be intensified in the coming days.

New mass strikes in Greece

Public transport workers, metalworkers and tourism operators in Greece joined a growing wave of strikes on Sept. 20 against new austerity measures that European Union creditors are demanding in return for rescue loans. Underground, tram and trolley-bus services stopped for 24 hours in Athens. Tax workers walked out the next day. The week began with a strike by doctors, leaving many hospitals running with skeleton staff.

As the strikes escalated, Greece's coalition government failed again to agree on the details of more salary and pension cuts in an "austerity package" to reduce government spending by at least 11.5 billion euros over the next two years. Finance Minister Yannis Stourmaras confirmed the three-party talks had failed, describing negotiations as "very difficult."

An auditors' report on Greece was initially expected to be ready in time for a eurozone finance

ministers' meeting on October 8, but a Reuters report - later denied by Greek officials - suggested it could be pushed back until after the US presidential elections to avoid anything that could "rock the global economy".

The Greek finance ministry has reported that for the first time in years, the country has a budget surplus. But with 25 per cent unemployment, experts warn that the succession of austerity measures have only compounded



the deep recession, now in its fifth year. Over a quarter of the population are living below the poverty line.

Vassiliki Thanou, president of the Union of Judges and Prosecutors, said her colleagues had previously agreed to salary reductions, "but the new planned cuts mean our wages could drop by up to 60 per cent and that means we're stripped of a dignified living."

The protracted negotiations have added pressure on the fragile coalition government, as MPs from the ruling parties threaten to vote against the cuts. Unions have called for yet another general strike in late September.

Settlement at Lonmin, but problems remain

Striking South African platinum miners have won a wage increase of over 20 per cent, ending a five-week strike at Lonmin's Marikana mine, the site of the Aug. 16 killing of 34 striking workers by police.

Officials of three unions and representatives of non-union workers signed the deal with the company late on Sept. 18. Lonmin also agreed to make a one-off payment of about \$240 Canadian to all miners.

The workers returned to work on Sept. 20, with full production to resume in a matter of weeks. The strike had spread to gold and chrome mines, costing the country at least \$475 million according to President Jacob Zuma.

As labour strife continued, the president of South Africa's largest labour federation warned that failure to tackle poverty could bring down the African National Congress government.

Sidumo Dlamini said that 30 million South Africans still survive on less than 10 rand a day, which is just \$1.20 Canadian. "Workers are simply saying that 'we produce the wealth and we want our reasonable share' and they expect to be given a fair share," said the leader of COSATU, which is a

member of the tri-partite alliance together with the ANC and the South African Communist Party.

Mexico pipeline explosion kills 29

The death toll in a Mexican pipeline fire has risen to 29, Mexico's state-owned oil company says. At least 46 others were injured at a distribution plant near the US border, and several other had not been seen since the blast.

Mexican President Felipe Calderon said the quick reaction of emergency teams prevented a "real catastrophe" by controlling the fire before it reached the huge tanks of a neighbouring gas processing plant.

Pemex officials said the blast appeared to have been caused by an accidental leak, and there was no sign so far of sabotage. The Mexican Attorney General's Office has sent more than 20 investigators to the site.

Labour unrest builds in Egypt

The beginning of the academic year in Egypt was inaugurated with strikes by bus drivers, teachers and administrative educational employees, university workers, students and industrial workers, followed by violent police attacks, arrests and harassment against the labour movement.

An independent group called the Popular Front for a Civil State issued a statement calling on authorities to hold security forces accountable for "forcibly breaking up a sit-in occupation at Nile University while threatening and terrorizing striking [Public Transport Authority] workers." A number of human rights NGOs have issued similar statements.

Independent workers' organizations including the Egyptian Democratic Labour Congress and the Egyptian Federation of Independent Trade Unions have also issued statements denouncing the crackdowns.

The trade union federation's online statement, declared: "The government of Hesham Qandil and presidency of Mohamed Morsy have clearly displayed their enmity toward labor," as shown by "the arrest of striking workers and assaults on female workers at the hands of security services."

The media denounced the "failed" and "unrealistic" strikes for allegedly harming Egypt's economy, transportation and education system.

Fiji police cancel pro-worker march

The Fiji Police Force cancelled a Sept. 21 march by the Ecumenical Centre for Research, Education and Advocacy citing it as a "national threat". The march was to be part of ECREA's celebration for the International Day of Peace. Father Kevin Barr of ECREA said they had prepared placards, posters and banners but were told that they could not go ahead. "We had been issued with a permit but I don't know why our march was

cancelled," he said.

Later on the same day, another march took place at Battery Road in Suva, where more than 200 people wore T-shirts with "Just Peace-Just Wages for All" printed on them.

A Constitution Commission appointed by the country's military government is currently hearing submissions from citizens. According to a collective submission presented two days later by four non-governmental organisations, the record of coups and economic injustices in the country are connected.

Speaking on behalf of the Peace Justice Center, Social Education Empowerment Program, Young Labor, and People's Community Network, Father Barr said the voices of workers must be heard, their rights must be protected, and wages must be adequate to meet basic needs and the cost of living. The four NGOs testified that 60 to 70% of workers are in full time employment but earning wages below the poverty line.

Protect human rights in W. Sahara

The President of Trade Union Confederation of Saharawi Workers, Sidamed Edia, has called for the establishment of an international mechanism for the protection of human rights in Western Sahara.

The labour leader met Sept. 17 with the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture, Juan Mendez. The meeting focused on the situation of human rights in Western Sahara and the rights of workers since the era of Spanish colonialism. Edia denounced the plundering of natural resources of Western

Sahara, calling it another form of colonization by Morocco since its illegal invasion of Western Sahara.

The UN special rapporteur also met with the Collective of Saharawi Human Rights Defenders (CODESA), which provided a file on the violations of human rights by the Moroccan authorities in Western Sahara, including the testimonies of citizens of all ages who have been victims of violence. CODESA has published a series of reports confirming these inhuman practices.

COSATU affiliates with WFTU

At the 11th National Congress of the South African Congress of Trade Unions, delegates heard speeches by World Federation of Trade Unions General Secretary George Mavrikos, and the General Secretary of the International Trade Union Confederation, Sharan Burrow. In the end, delegates decided that COSATU would shift its affiliation to the WFTU.

Militant trade unionists, including cadres of the South African Communist Party, supported the need for COSATU to join its class-oriented brothers and sisters in the whole world. Saluting the decision, the Athens-based WFTU thanked the delegates and militants who worked for the last seven years to prepare the momentum for this important resolution.

With this resolution, said the WFTU Secretariat, COSATU comes back to the family of trade unions which openly struggle against capitalist exploitation and imperialist barbarity, helping to strengthen the international class-oriented labour movement.

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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Austerity is bad for your health

By **Debora MacKenzie**,
www.equaltimes.org

Austerity is bad for your health. That is the warning from a team of public health experts based in Britain, who have studied European health statistics since the global financial crisis started in 2007.

Since then, governments have responded either by spending lots more money on their economies, or lots less: so-called stimulus programmes, versus austerity.

Now there is evidence that in countries that went with austerity, suicide rates are soaring. Moreover, other health threats are looming, as health care systems wither under austerity regimes. Malaria might even re-invade Europe.

Martin McKee of the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, David Stuckler of Oxford University, and colleagues study the impact of economic policies on health. Stuckler found in 2009 that economic depressions cause suicide and murder rates to soar.

The team have now extended that analysis to the impact of

austerity in Europe. In an analysis published in August in the research journal *Clinical Medicine*, they explain that since 2007, some governments have invested in industries to maintain jobs and consumer spending, keeping economies turning over despite the risk of inflation.

Others, the team says, have blamed expensive welfare states - rather than deregulation of banks - for their problems, and therefore cut government spending, despite soaring unemployment.

The European Union has favoured austerity. Until 2007, suicide rates in the EU had been falling slowly since 2000.

Using data from the World Health Organisation, McKee and colleagues found that in the twelve western countries that have been in the EU since 1993, the suicide decline reversed sharply in 2007.

No more recent statistics are available, as health data take years to be collected - "in marked contrast," the researchers observe, to financial and economic data.

But similar data from the US, which rejected austerity, shows a

slightly rising suicide rate since 2000 - but no sharp upturn in 2007, despite similar struggles with economic crisis and unemployment.

In fact, research on economic fluctuations in western Europe over the past three decades, they say, shows countries with strong systems of social protection were able to maintain long-term declines in suicide rates despite rapid increases in unemployment.

"In general, suicides rise in recessions," McKee told *Equal Times*. "But the rise is attenuated - or even abolished - where there are strong social protection schemes

and, especially, active labour market programmes to give people hope they will get back into work."

That means such things as youth training, rapid information exchanges on job vacancies and support for disabled workers. These are precisely the programmes now being cut under austerity policies.

Little data is yet available on other effects of austerity on health. But the team documents worrying declines in government support for health care systems in the southern EU countries most affected, Greece, Spain and Italy.

This means, they predict, that people suffering from chronic

disorders such as diabetes and heart disease - conditions which are increasing explosively worldwide - will inevitably get less medical care, meaning more illness and death.

Meanwhile, these southern countries are gateways between Europe, with its relatively low rates of infectious disease, and Asia and Africa, with higher rates. Greece especially is a front line for multiple health threats, including a resurgence of malaria. Its public health agency normally watches for invading infections and quells outbreaks, but with a falling budget, may not be able to. ●

Sham development at the cost of workers' safety

By **Gurpreet Singh**

The recent deaths of workers in India, Pakistan and China have not only sent shock waves across the working class around the world, but have clearly exposed the so called development claims in the South Asian region.

Over 300 workers died in Pakistani factory fires, around the same time as half a dozen workers died in an industrial disaster in Punjab, India. People had not recovered from the shock when a crane accident killed 19 people at a construction site in China. Although it was purely coincidental that these incidents happened in quick succession, the poor state of workers' safety in that region is not a matter of chance.

Not a year has passed when we do not hear about workers dying in Chinese mines, despite continued economic growth in that country. Ironically, hundreds of mine workers get killed in communist China, which has become an important player in the international market economy. Most of these mines operated illegally or provided unsafe working environments. The disasters take place in the form of flooding or gas leakage. The aisles full of goods made in China greet shoppers both in US and Canadian malls, but the condition of Chinese workers generates little interest in the western media.

Likewise, India sees itself as an emerging super power, but has failed to obscure the ugly reality of unsafe working environments which its industries provide to the labourers. In September about 50 workers died in a blast at a fireworks factory in Tamil Nadu. In April, over 20 workers died in a factory collapse in the industrial city of Jalandhar in Punjab.

Time and again, in spite of full-fledged labour offices in almost all the major cities and district headquarters of India, corrupt authorities have turned a blind eye to the continued exploitation of workers and the unsafe environments under which they are forced to work. That the so-called "untouchables" continue the manual scavenging of human waste, despite a ban on this practice, is sufficient to prove this laxity.

Though Pakistan has not claimed to be a big economic

power, it boasts a nuclear arsenal. Conditions there are no different from its neighbour next door (read India). Corruption, laxity of authorities, and connivance between officials and industrial houses have remained a part of this theocratic society.

The tall claims of growth, progress and power by these three countries mean nothing for workers who continue to face similar

challenges due to lack of safety measures, which have been compromised because of profit considerations and inhuman cost cutting tactics. It's a shame that the workers, who should be credited for bringing what little development has come to these countries, are actually being treated as disposables. Instead of getting their dues in a dignified way, all they are getting is deaths and injuries. ●



Spanish public employees demonstrate against austerity cuts.



Crowds watch outside the burnt-out garment factory where over 200 workers died in Karachi.

U.S. arms sales triple

Weapons exports from the United States tripled in 2011 to a record high, driven by arms sales to Persian Gulf allies, according to a new study for Congress.

The *New York Times* reports that overseas weapons sales by the U.S. totalled \$66.3 billion last year, or nearly 78 percent of the global arms market, valued at \$85.3 billion in 2011. Russia was a distant second, with \$4.8 billion in deals.

The sales total was an "extraordinary increase," the study found, more than triple the \$21.4 billion in deals for 2010. The previous single-year record for U.S. arms exports was in 2009, when the figure totalled nearly \$31 billion. (All figures are in U.S. dollars, adjusted for inflation to 2011 levels.)

A worldwide economic decline had suppressed arms sales over recent years. But several Persian Gulf nations - Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Oman - boosted their purchases last year, especially expensive warplanes and complex missile defence systems.

The report was prepared by the Congressional Research Service, a division of the Library of Congress. The annual study is considered the most detailed collection of unclassified arms sales data available to the public.

The agreements with Saudi Arabia included the purchase of 84 advanced F-15 fighters, a variety of ammunition, missiles and logistics support and upgrades of 70 of the F-15 fighters in the fleet. Sales to Saudi Arabia also included dozens of Apache and Black Hawk helicopters, adding up to a total of \$33.4 billion.

The UAE purchased a Terminal High Altitude Area Defence, an advanced anti-missile shield valued at \$3.49 billion, as well as 16 Chinook helicopters for \$939 million.

Oman bought 18 F-16 fighter aircraft for \$1.4 billion.

The U.S. has stated a policy goal of working with allies in the Persian Gulf to build a regional missile defence system to protect cities, oil refineries, pipelines and military bases from an Iranian attack.

But the massive arms build-up is viewed with suspicion by Iran, which faces frequent military threats from the U.S. and Israel. Despite attempts to portray Iran as an aggressor, no war has been launched by Iran against a neighbouring country since 1798, when Persia invaded the Iraqi city of Basra.



The Fifth of the Month to Free the Five

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

E-mail: president@whitehouse.gov

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

Phone 1-202-456-1111

Fax 1-202-456-2461

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

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

REDS ON THE WEB

www.comunist-party.ca

www.peoplesvoice.ca

www.ycl-ljc.ca

www.solidnet.org

Colombian prisoners demand justice

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

Popular momentum is building to ensure that any settlement coming out of upcoming Colombian government peace negotiations with insurgents promotes social justice.

New prisoner resistance and recent documentation of abuses in Colombian prisons serve as reminders that, ideally, a peaceful and just Colombian society should promote prisoner rights. Indeed, said the Beyond the Walls group, "Our people and a bit of our country are in prison. No other place reflects as well their misery, tragedy, and powerlessness." The Colombian group said this in launching its 2005 campaign to build solidarity among prisoners and inform Colombians about prison conditions.

The Colombian prison system has gained considerable international scrutiny, especially as detention rates have skyrocketed recently and political prisoners have come to make up almost eight percent of Colombia's total prison population. Numbering 10,000, they are labour, Indigenous, and human rights activists targeted for their political involvement and often victimised through blatantly false accusations. Political prisoners also include captured guerrilla insurgents.

With prisons serving as a tool of repression directed at political dissenters, observers see this situation as a fit topic for peace negotiators, especially if social justice is on the agenda. Prisoner rebellions in 21 prisons beginning on August 2 strengthen that case. Prisoners are engaged in hunger strikes, defying prison routines, and hanging themselves outside prison windows. A nationwide mobilisation of prisoners, their families, and supporters set for September 28 in Bogota will bring attention to the prison issue.

Striking prisoners are demanding establishment of a "National Board of Consultation" that includes prisoner representatives, declaration of a social and humanitarian emergency in jails, relocation of prisoners to prisons near their homes, reduction of sentences, use of alternative sentencing, an end to overcrowding, improved health care and sanitation, and an end to extraditions to foreign countries.

Prison hunger strikes occurred in April and May of 2012. Prisoner mobilisations are an old story in Colombian jails, and ongoing abuse and violation of prisoner rights have long been documented by Colombian and international prisoner solidarity groups. Such reports have recently gained new currency with stories cropping up of prisoner deaths due to lack of medical care, prisoners discovered to be harbouring tuberculosis, and prisoner suicides.

The record is of generalised lack of sanitary facilities, serious shortages of water for drinking and personal hygiene, faecal contamination of food, and filthy kitchens and living quarters. Above all else, prisoners resent isolation from families and friends

due to long distances between prisons and homes and families' inability to pay for transportation.

One-third of prisoners have never been tried. Lawyers are often unable to confer with their clients. Prisoners report physical and mental torture. Political prisoners are often housed with jailed former paramilitaries, their former enemies.

Doubling of the prison population after 2002 has led to severe overcrowding. Beginning in 2000, 16 new prisons were built with US funding, and soon Colombian prisons could accommodate 78,000 prisoners. Yet the current prison population is estimated at 130,000.

The Alliance for Global Justice website www.afgj.org includes a compendium of information on prisoners' misery. It documents US support for what apologists call Colombia's "new penitentiary culture". In addition to new prisons, the US government supplied experts to redesign maximum security prisons and provide advice and oversight. Build-up of prison capabilities came as part of US Plan Colombia, the multi-billion-

dollar aid package aimed at support for military and police operations in Colombia.

There is, however, the sobering realisation that whatever concern prisoner suffering evokes today, it's an old story. "You don't have to look for a hell anywhere else, because hell is here," UN human rights official Anders Kompass told a press conference after surveying Colombian prisons in 2001. His report condemning overcrowding, filth, and incarcerations without benefit of sentencing rings true now.

Colombia's prison problem thus shares longevity with other Colombian social disasters like inequalities in wealth and land ownership and terror imposed through murders, disappearances, displacement from land, judicial montages, and militarisation. Persistence of them all, prison troubles included, seem to validate their status as fixtures within the institutional framework of Colombian society. That consideration alone is a big factor pushing those negotiating peace with justice to take up the prison issue. ●



Political prisoners in the Buen Pastor women's jail in Bogota, their spirits unbroken by the Colombian regime. Photo: www.inspp.org/from-the-prisoners.

Paash's daughter proud of her dad

By Gurpreet Singh

The daughter of Paash, the revolutionary Punjabi poet who was assassinated by Sikh separatists, says she is proud of what her father stood for. Winkle told this correspondent on Paash's Sept. 9 birth anniversary that his killers may have murdered him physically but his ideas will remain alive forever. Winkle questioned what the assassins achieved by killing a man who stood for the betterment of society. "I have learnt that they are now regretting their action, but it is too late."

She recalled that her mother had to single-handedly raise her after Paash's murder: "it was a very long struggle for her."

The only daughter of Paash, Winkle was around eight when he was shot to death. "I only have vivid memories of him. He used to play hide and seek with me. He once accidentally cut my finger while clipping my nails and he tried to suck it as it bled."

She understood Paash more through his poetry and written work as she grew. "He was opposed to orthodoxy and supported new ideas. I learnt from my mother that he not only challenged age old caste oppression of those considered untouchables in his writings but also in his real life."



Paash, the revolutionary poet

Paash was a supporter of an ultra-leftist Naxalite movement. His poetry generated interest in progressive circles throughout India. He edited *Anti 47*, a newsletter that opposed repetition of the religious partition of India and Pakistan in 1947. He was highly critical of Hindu and Sikh fundamentalists who were endangering peoples' unity. He opposed state repression, and violence by the militants seeking a theocratic Sikh homeland. As a result, he was gunned down by members of the Khalistan Commando Force in March 1988. The leader of the group, Labh Singh, later regretted the action in his diary. ●



MUSIC NOTES

By Wally Brooker

David Rovics touring Canada

Indie singer-songwriter David Rovics has criss-crossed North America and Western Europe over the past two decades. The roving troubadour has witnessed scores of local struggles against the capitalist system, and he's documented and celebrated many of them with finely-crafted topical songs. This fall Rovics is touring Canada, with concerts in Quebec City (Oct. 12), Ottawa (Oct. 13), Montreal (Oct. 14), Toronto (Oct. 16), Brandon (Nov. 9), Winnipeg (Nov. 10), Victoria (Nov. 23), and Vancouver (Nov. 24). David's new rock-oriented album "Meanwhile in Afghanistan" will be released in December. Guest artists include lefty guitar hero Tom Morello. Readers can download an acoustic version by making a donation of any size to David's publicity fundraising campaign. For more info: <http://davidrovics.com/>.

Lollapalooza defies BDS campaign

The cultural boycott of Israel faces a challenge with the announcement that the 2013 Lollapalooza rock festival will be staged in Tel Aviv next August. The three-day festival's founder and producer, Perry Farrell, lead-singer of rock band Jane's Addiction, will be joining his hosts in an attempt to portray the apartheid state as a paragon of diversity. The "alternative" festival, which attracts major musical acts and draws crowds of up to 150,000, is a corporate franchise run by Texas-based Capital Sports Entertainment and the William Morris Agency (run by the brother of Chicago mayor Rahm Emanuel). Farrell, a fervent supporter of Zionism, raised funds for Israeli soldiers during the Gaza massacre in the winter of 2008-09. While the Lollapalooza announcement is a challenge, the cultural boycott continues to grow. For an update visit: www.bdsmovement.net/.

Common Thread launches kids choir

The motto of Toronto's Common Thread Community Chorus is "changing the world one song at a time." The secular 80-voice choir believes that social justice and community can be built through music. Last year it initiated a series of informal rehearsals with children, with the kids performing a few songs at one of their concerts. Now the Common Thread Community Kids Chorus has been officially launched, with weekly rehearsals under the baton of former CT assistant conductor Lynn McMurray. The goal is for kids to have fun singing empowering songs that build a sense of belonging, respect for diversity and positive social change. Like its parent, the kids chorus is non-audition, and fees are quite modest. Common Thread holds its annual fundraising event on Nov. 3 at St. Simon's Anglican Church. It's a "Phil Ochs Song Night," hosted by the legendary troubadour's sister Sonny Ochs, and featuring a line-up of talented performers. For info visit <http://commonthreadchorus.ca/>.

Musicians abandon Obama bandwagon

The U.S. election season is in full swing, and the candidates hope that endorsements from famous musicians will give them a competitive edge. While Mitt Romney relies upon a few right-wing rockers like gun-control opponent Ted Nugent and Kiss vocalist Gene Simmons, Barack Obama is endorsed by best-selling contemporary musicians like Lady Gaga, Beyoncé and Alicia Keys. The President's list of supporters is impressive, but many disappointed 2008 supporters have backed off. Notable defectors include Arcade Fire, Bruce Springsteen, Patti Smith, Pearl Jam, The Decembrists and Joan Baez. The sense of dread that hangs over the U.S. elections is eloquently captured by Ry Cooder's latest album "Election Special." The master guitarist and singer has released a broadside that evokes comparison with Depression era icons like Woody Guthrie and Robert Johnson. It's definitely to the left of the spineless Democrats. Asked about his hopes for the election, Cooder quotes a recent statement from Pete Seeger: "I have no hope. But I could be wrong."

Arlene Mantle: 1939-2012

Singer-songwriter and social activist Arlene Mantle was a prominent voice of the left in Ontario in the eighties and nineties. In a statement released after her death on Sept. 10, the Ontario Federation of Labour described her as "a sister whose voice was on every picket line, rally or demo." Arlene was a labour activist who came from the ranks of the poor, a feminist, a single mother, a lesbian, and a staunch member of AFM Local 149 (the Toronto Musicians Association). Many of her songs of resistance and struggle were collaborations with trade unionists and members of grassroots groups. The collective song writing workshop was one of her specialties. Arlene's ability to listen and empathize allowed her to give voice to marginalized and oppressed peoples. Let's hope that her recordings will be re-released, especially her memorable 1980's cassette "On the Line" with its delightful accompanying songbook. Arlene Mantle will be deeply missed. Thankfully, a memorial concert is in the works. Her stature must be celebrated. A statement from her family was posted at the OFL's website: <http://ofl.ca/>.

Ontario students show solidarity with teachers

PV Ontario Bureau

Ontario high school students answered the passing of the McGuinty Liberal's "Put Student's First Act" or Bill 115 with a wave of walk-outs and protests across the province.

Students in multiple high schools have walked out in large and small communities. Reports have been filed from Toronto, Richmond Hill, Mississauga, Brampton, Bluewater, Georgian Bay, Owen Sound, Goderich, Wingham, Flesherton, Clarington, Kingston, the Kwartha Lakes, the Quinte region, and Ottawa - easily totalling over ten thousand students.

The actions overwhelmingly appear to have been in support of the teachers, with students waving signs like "Your child's future was the first to go with budget cuts," "Putting students first means putting teachers first," and "Democracy Last Act, Bill 115." In some cases the students headed down to the local office of their Member of Provincial Parliament and staged rallies.

Many of the actions have been organized by social media.

"The students are walking in support of teachers who are upset about their right to bargain and the withdrawal of extracurricular activities. The support and effort teachers give to students through education and especially their dedication to extracurriculars is beyond that call of duty, and that's why students are walking out in support of teachers," one pro-walkout Facebook group description said.

Speaking at a meeting of the Toronto Young Communist League, Ontario YCL organizer Drew Garvie held up a newspaper report on the student protests and pointed out that the photo - which showed Stop Bill 115 signs - was the opposite from the anti-teacher message of the accompanying article.

High school students are already getting in touch with student unions and other progressive organizations including the YCL, he said. "This is an attack on the entire education system and it is important for college and university students, and young workers in general, to be in support of these actions," Garvie said.

The Ontario YCL has issued a statement, available on the YCL's website and Rebel Youth blog, calling for "high school and elementary students to rise up in support of our teachers" and force the repeal of Bill 115.

"Teachers working conditions are students learning conditions," the statement says. "Education is not a business opportunity to make profit, it is the right of the youth, and a keystone in securing our future. Another vital necessity for quality education is the right of teachers to form, participate, and be represented by their labour unions.

"The government is telling everyone a Big Lie. They say there is no money, and no alternative to Bill 115's anti-union measures. But Ontario is a province with tremendous natural wealth, a surplus of the super-rich, and many giant corporations and banks - controlling all of the wealth. In

their shadow stand our hospitals, transit system, and schools that remain underfunded and neglected by the government. Who made the crisis in education? It wasn't the teachers or the students - it was government policies which pay no serious regard to people's needs, only corporate greed," the statement says.

The YCL is fully supporting the student walk-outs and calling for them to spread. "When injustice becomes the law, resistance becomes a duty [...]. Organizing a walk out can be done quickly and successfully using social media, word of mouth, defiance, courage and unity. Convince your friends. Convince your class. March through the halls and hit the streets! You can suspend one student, but you cannot suspend hundreds."

So far there have been no reports of students being disciplined because they participated in protests. ●

QUEBEC...

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broader CLASSE alliance are heading to convention to determine strategy, and if the CLASSE formation should continue. One proposal is for a cross-Canada campaign against the Harper Conservative policy on education and youth issues.

Marois' new cabinet members say they will scrap a loan to revive Quebec's last asbestos mine, raise royalties on mining, re-draw the Plan Nord, close the widely criticized Gently-2 nuclear station, and continue the moratorium on shale gas and hydraulic fracturing.

"I don't foresee a day when there will be technology that will allow safe exploitation [of shale gas]," Natural Resources Minister Martine Ouellet told CTV News, adding: "Our position is very clear: we want a complete moratorium, not only on exploitation but also on exploration of shale gas."

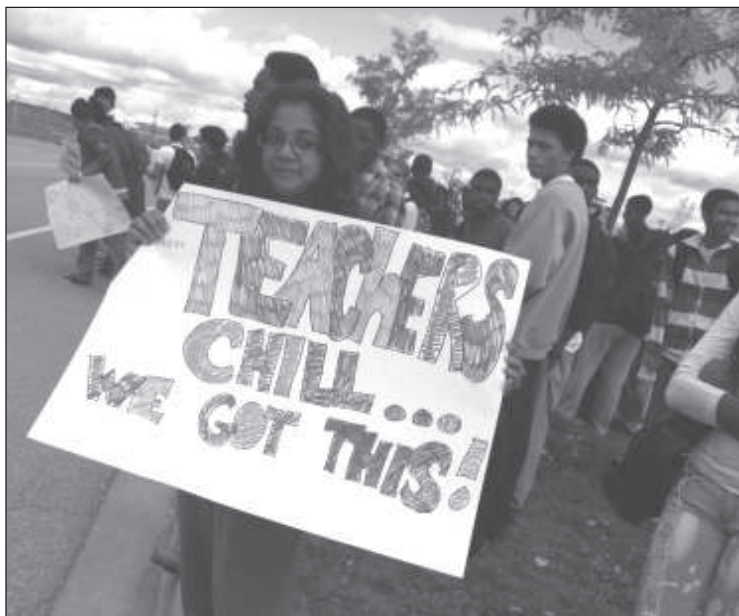
Marois distanced herself from Ouellet's remarks but said she would close down Gently-2. Located close to Trois-Rivieres, Gently-2 is the only nuclear station in Quebec and generates less than 4% of provincial electric power. Environmentalists point to studies showing higher rates of cancer, up to 70 km away. ●

Who's behind anti-Muslim film...

continued from page 4

world are seeking to build unity for peace, disarmament, environmental justice, social equality, and an end to poverty, such vile propaganda deliberately aims to sow divisions and mistrust.

This attempt to inflame religious hatred benefits only those who want to stoke up the arms race and maintain imperialist domination of global resource wealth - the military-industrial complex and the most reactionary ruling circles in the United States and its allies. The real source of "Innocence of Muslims" - the vast web of fascist forces linked to the far-right sections of the U.S. Republican Party - must be exposed and defeated. ●



High school students rally in Peel, Ontario.

People's Court...

continued from page 3

in staggering job losses.

The anti-worker agenda, they pointed out, is also seen by the Harper government's repeated back-to-work legislation against unions, and the McGuinty government's Bill 115 which denies bargaining rights and civil liberties to some 200,000 Ontario citizens.

Andrea McCormack from the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists-Ontario, testified that

"This so called austerity agenda is twice as dangerous to racialized communities. Communities that need the most supports will find it difficult to access them."

OCAP's John Clarke described austerity as an "inhuman and brutal" agenda to solve the financial crisis on the backs of working and poor people.

The accused denied any wrongdoing, but the jury rejected this feeble defence, bringing in a guilty verdict. ●

What's Left

White Rock, BC

Social Justice Films, Friday, Oct. 26, 7 pm, at First United, 15385 Semiahmoo Ave., screening "The Hemp Solution" documentary.

Victoria, BC

Mass Sit-In Against Pipeline Expansion, Monday, Oct. 22, at the Legislature. Sign up at www.defendourcoast.ca.

Vancouver, BC

Don't Attack Iran, International Day of Action, Sat., October 6, 12 noon at Peace Flame Park, south end of Burrard Bridge. Rally organized by StopWar, Vancouver's peace coalition.

Freedom Sailors, launch of book on Free Gaza movement with author Greta Berlin, Wed., Oct. 24, 7:30 pm, SFU Harbour Centre, 515 W. Hastings

La Trova Nuestra, Latin American Pena, 7:30 pm, Oct. 26, and last Friday each month, 706 Clark Drive, \$10 admission, all welcome.

Left Film Night, Sunday, Sept. 30 and Oct. 28, 7 pm, Centre for Socialist Education, 706 Clark Drive. Donations welcome, 604-255-2041 for details.

Winnipeg, MB

Spreading the Maple Spring, lessons from Quebec's student strike, Wed., Oct. 3, 7 pm. Panel includes Gabriel Nadeau-Dubois and others, Univ. of Winnipeg, Room 4m47.

Marxism course, begins in November. To register, contact Communist Party of Canada-Manitoba, 586-7824 or cpc-mb@changetheworldmb.ca

Toronto, ON

Fighting Austerity in Quebec and Ontario, Sunday, Oct. 14, 2 pm, OISE, Room 5-260. Hear Marianne Breton Fontaine (YCL

Quebec leader, activist in the Quebec student movement, candidate for Quebec Solidaire in the Montreal riding of Acadie); and Liz Rowley, Leader, CPC (Ontario); former Public School Trustee; candidate in the Kitchener-Waterloo by-election.

St. Catharines, ON

Fighting Austerity in Ontario, Tuesday, Oct. 16, speaker Liz Rowley, CPC (Ontario) leader, contact Saleh Waziruddin for more information at salehw@yahoo.com

Ottawa, ON

Fighting Austerity in Ontario, speaker Liz Rowley, CPC (Ontario) leader, Thursday, Oct. 18, 7 pm, Bronson Centre, 211 Bronson Ave. Contact Stuart Ryan at 613-882-7108 for more information.

Brampton, ON

Fighting Austerity in Ontario, speaker Liz Rowley, CPC (Ontario) leader, Sunday, Oct. 28, 2 pm. Contact Wilf at 416-428-9583 for location & details.

Montreal, QC

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

Cross-Canada

Don't Attack Iran, International Day of Action, Sat., October 6, for information on local events, visit Canadian Peace Alliance, www.acp-cpa.ca.

David Rovics Tour, see Music Notes on p. 10 for info on upcoming concerts across Canada.

People's Voice deadlines

October 16-30 issue: Thursday, Oct. 4

November 1-15 issue: Thursday, Oct. 18

Send submissions to PV Editorial Office,

706 Clark Drive, Vancouver, V5L 3J1

<pvoice@telus.net>



La Trova Nuestra

Friday, Oct. 26, 7:30 pm

"La Peña Nuestra"

Centre For Socialist Education, Vancouver

706 Clark Drive (Clark and Georgia st)

\$10 Entry

About Vancouver's "La Trova Nuestra"

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

Two Lockouts, A Strike, and a Pizza

This is a column about rules. It's about rules we are expected to follow and rules that the rulers - call them the new aristocracy, the 1%, the Masters of the Universe - don't deign to notice. It's about hypocrisy, double standards and twisted logic. But it's really about a strike and two lockouts that on basic principle demand our support.

The Chicago teachers' strike has more angles than Cecil Cooper's swing. But there is one criminally under discussed aspect of it. It would be so helpful if just one of the many politicians and newspaper editorial boards lining up to lambast the teachers union can explain why Mayor Rahm Emanuel's vision for a model Chicago public school is so at odds with the education he is providing for his own children.

Mayor Rahm is fighting to create a school system dominated by high-pressured standardized testing. Everyone and everything must bow to the test. Cut art, cut music, cut physical education, extend the school day, and create an educational environment that revolves around filling in a bubble.

Yet Rahm sends his own children to the University of Chicago Lab School. As labour journalist Mike Elk reported, "The Lab School has seven full-time art

teachers to serve a student population of 1,700. By contrast, only 25% of Chicago's

By Dave Zirin, whose weekly column is online at www.edgeofsports.com.

This commentary was posted just before the NHL owners locked out the players, a move which also leaves thousands of arena employees without jobs and paycheques.

neighbourhood elementary schools' have both a full-time art and music instructor. The Lab School has three different libraries, while 160 Chicago public elementary schools do not have a library."

Rahm wants less art and more standardized testing for Chicago's children while he wants more art and less high-stakes testing for his own children. One set of rules for him and one for the rest of us.

Then there is the ongoing lockout of 119 National Football League referees. NFL owners, led by their flak-catching Commissioner Roger Goodell, don't care that for the cost of several dozen Peyton Manning autographed footballs, they could rehire their highly trained officials. This is a league that secretes money but the billionaires in the owner's box can't stand the thought of

paying for competent officiating when there are replacements willing to work for less pounding at the doors.

The connective tissue with the teachers of Chicago isn't the greed. It's the gap. It's the gap between the rules Commissioner Goodell and the owners expect others to follow and their own moral code. Goodell has decided to make the "health and safety" of players, golden buzzwords that justify all decisions. "Health and safety" are why players should be fined \$50,000 for "helmet to helmet contact."

"Health and safety" are why the league levelled reckless "bounty" allegations against four members of the New Orleans Saints despite what's now been deemed an absence of evidence. And Roger Goodell's care for the "health and safety" of players is why the league just donated \$30 million to the National Institute of Health to study brain disease.

Yet here are the NFL referees, uniquely charged and trained to protect the health and safety of players and they can't get on the field. The very people called "the first responders" by the league, comparing them to emergency medical technicians, have been locked out. I don't want to argue just how embarrassing their scab, lingerie football league replacements have been. The point is that Roger Goodell has one set of standards of safeguarding "health and safety" for players and another for himself, just as Rahm Emanuel feels that there is a kind of school good enough for his children, but not anyone else's.

Lastly, the owners of the National Hockey League are going to lock out their players this weekend. This will be the league's fourth work stoppage since 1992. Rather than negotiate, their commissioner Gary Bettman has left the players with a "take-it-or-leave-it" proposal.

Since the league cancelled their 2004 season in the last lockout, revenue has grown from \$2.1 billion to \$3.3 billion. Despite this growth, or perhaps because of this growth, owners wanted players to

cut their piece of the pie from 57 to 43 percent. But the issue isn't the revenue. It's the existing contracts. As one official said to me, "This isn't about revenue as much as it is that they don't want to have to pay the contracts offered over the last year. They want to be able to rip up and renegotiate all existing contracts. They want us to save them from themselves."

And here once again we encounter the problem of rules. A contract is supposed to be an inviolate, legally binding agreement. That's what working families were told when they signed onto the predatory loans that eventually claimed their homes. That's what we are told when our cars are repossessed. That's what the union autoworkers in the United States were told only to see their wages slashed in half in the much-ballyhooed auto-

bailout. Instead not only NHL players but also all of us get sent a message that a contract is only worth a damn if those in power choose to honour it.

There is no winning a game when the rules have been rigged but there is power in numbers. There is power in struggle. And there is power in pizza. The easiest way to support Chicago teachers is to order them a piping hot pizza pie. You can get food to the picket lines by calling Gus or Daisy at Primo's Pizza at (312)243-1052. When pizza shows up to the tired picketers, everyone's spirits are lifted. It's read to them from which part of the country a pie was ordered and it makes them feel that much less alone. We don't have the power of a Rahm Emanuel or Roger Goodell. But we do have numbers and perhaps we can even the score one pizza at a time. ●



Two of the rallies against the deportation of Kim Rivera took place in Toronto (above, photo by Ed Bill) and Winnipeg (photo by Darrell Rankin)



Harper's deportation of war resisters

By Darrell Rankin

On September 20, the Harper government deported Kimberly Rivera to face a charge of desertion in a U.S. court martial. A Iraq war veteran, Kimberly came to Canada in 2007 to seek refuge. She was deported despite cross-Canada protests, a supportive letter from Nobel Peace laureate Desmond Tutu, and a *Globe and Mail* editorial asking the government reconsider its decision.

Rivera will likely serve time in a military prison for the "crime" of objecting to the unjust and illegal Iraq war. She will be separated from her four children and husband except for brief visits, a devastating blow to her family.

There is a strong sense that the Harper government will soon deport more resisters. It is important to strengthen the campaign against these deportations and to examine their full meaning.

Immigration minister Jason Kenney could have stopped the deportation at any time. In fact, he was forced to reply to the tens of thousands of people who protested during the three week deadline Kimberly was given to voluntarily cross the border. His reply emphasized that the "crime" of desertion outweighed any other factor, including humanitarian concerns.

The source of international law that ought to protect war resisters is the trial of Hitler's top generals at Nuremburg, where several were condemned to hang. That outcome should point out that the government is not your boss when you sign up to the military, as argued by the Harper government. Your real boss is your conscience.

Nuremburg established that it is not a legal defence to just "follow orders". Kimberly chose to do the right thing by refusing to be associated with war crimes. The Harper government showed its pro-crime, anti-family side by punishing her for doing so.

It is Harper's government which refuses to respect the Nuremburg trials. What kind of military does Stephen Harper want Canada to have? Which side won the Second World War?

PQ government yields to popular demands

By Johan Boyden, Montreal

The newly elected Parti Québécois (PQ) minority government led Pauline Marois has swept away key austerity and anti-environmental policies of the Charest Liberals.

The PQ government has cancelled the massive tuition fee hikes; repealed Bill 78 which put severe restrictions on civil, labour and democratic rights; and cancelled (and reimbursed) the new \$200 health tax. This satisfied three out of four main demands of the student-labour "Red Hand" Coalition at the core of the student

strike mobilizations last spring.

An announcement on the Coalition's fourth major demand, stopping the increase in Hydro fees, is expected soon.

The PQ is also proposing retroactive taxation on high-income earners and businesses, drawing opposition from pro-corporate forces.

Student organizations hailed the announcements, but noted that the PQ is planning a mass-consultation with the people of Quebec, so it may advocate for an increase at a slower rate. The ASSE and its

see QUEBEC, page 11

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