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people's VOICE

Meet the Communist
Party candidates
Pages 5-6

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The residential schools and cultural genocide...

**How PM
Harper's
"apology"
tried to kill
the story
- see page 3**



In 2008, Stephen Harper issued an apology for the residential school system. But he refuses to accept the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's report that the schools were part of a "cultural genocide" policy. As the TRC final report stated, "Cultural genocide is the destruction of those structures and practices that allow the group to continue as a group. States that engage in cultural genocide set out to destroy the political and social institutions of the targeted group. Land is seized, and populations are forcibly transferred and their movement is restricted. Languages are banned. Spiritual leaders are persecuted, spiritual practices are forbidden, and objects of spiritual value are confiscated and destroyed. And, most significantly to the issue at hand, families are disrupted to prevent the transmission of cultural values and identity from one generation to the next. In its dealing with Aboriginal people, Canada did all these things."



Refugee solidarity rally at Vancouver Art Gallery. Photo by K. Cariou

**Canada helped
to create this
crisis - now we
must welcome
the refugees!**

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Sailors ripped off

Next time you look out at foreign-flagged ships in one of Canada's ports, remember that many of the sailors on these vessels are paid as little as \$2.13/hour, while the Harper government ignores the situation.

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The "Leap" Manifesto

A wide range of progressive activists across the country have endorsed a new statement on how to tackle the crisis facing Canada.

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Palestine policies

The Communist Party of Canada takes a strong position of solidarity with the Palestinian people. But a close reading of the Green Party's policy leaves big questions and reveals major shortcomings.

A Long Time For Killing

By Michael Parenti,
www.michaelparenti.org

Today, across the nation, we witness homicidal violence delivered against unarmed people by law enforcement officers. These beatings and killings are carried out with something close to impunity. The cops almost always get away with murder. Moreover, these crimes are nothing new; they are longstanding in practice.

A study of police brutality in three major cities conducted in 1967 found that all the victims had one thing in common: they were from low-income groups. Other studies however showed that it often was enough just to be Black, even if middle class. Take the case of Carl Newland, an African-American, 48-year-old accountant who happened to be walking by a newsstand that had just been robbed one evening in 1975. He was roughed up by the police, then brought before the newsstand clerk, who emphatically denied that Newland was the stickup man. Nevertheless, because of his "belligerent attitude" he was taken to jail and severely beaten by the police, according to statements by several prisoners. He died in his cell that same night. Consider some other cases.

About a half century ago, a Black man was forced to lie face down in a Detroit motel and a policeman cold-bloodedly pumped a bullet into his head.

At about that same time, a 10-year-old Black boy walking with his foster father in Queens, New York, was killed by a plainclothes policeman who leaped from his unmarked car, firing away without identifying himself, shouting "Hey niggers!"

A White "hippie" (as counter-culture people were called in the late 1960s and 1970s), finding his home suddenly surrounded by unidentified, armed men in Humboldt County, California, fled in terror out the back door only to be shot dead by county police and

narcotic agents surrounding his house, the wrong house. Raiding the wrong house and shooting its frightened inhabitants became a regular pastime decades ago. "Fighting crime" and "fighting the drug war" were the call of the day.

A 12-year-old Chicano boy in Dallas, arrested as a burglary suspect, was shot through his head by a cop.

A Black shell-shocked Vietnam veteran was killed by two police on a Houston street as he reached into his pocket to take out a Bible.

In Champaign, Illinois, in 1970, a frightened African American bookstore employee attempted flight when police menacingly approached his car. He was shot in the back. The culpable officer was indicted for voluntary manslaughter, released on a \$5,000 bond and soon found "not guilty" by an all-White, middle-American jury.

In Cambridge, Massachusetts, an Italian-American, working-class youth was beaten to death by cops in a police van.

A New York policeman shot a 22-year-old Black college student who was standing with his hands in the air. Then the cop planted a toy pistol next to the victim's body.

A Chicano youth in Houston was taken to a secluded spot by cops, beaten until unconscious, then thrown into a bayou to drown.

A Black youth, who was attempting to retrieve a basketball in a schoolyard, was shot through the head by Chicago police. One could go on and on with stories from years past about how the courageous Thin Blue Line repeatedly saved us with their endless killings.

Today, sparked by body-cam videos and social media, people are giving more attention to eyewitness accounts of such frightful events. Our Boys in Blue are being

challenged by groups such as Black Lives Matter. But let us not overlook the many who were victimized by police during the late 1960s and 1970s and who are still with us, not merely in memory but in actuality. That is to say, a substantial number of those unjustly convicted long-ago are still in prison today. We all can name some of them: Mumia Abu-Jamal, Leonard Peltier, Herman Bell, Janine Africa, Hugo Pinell, and others. Consider also the lesser known cases. One that I have in mind is Gary Tyler.



In 1974 in Louisiana, a bus carrying Black children was attacked by a mob of whites, some of whom were armed. According to the bus driver, a gun was fired from the attacking crowd. The shot missed the bus but killed a white youth in the surrounding crowd. The police arrived and forced the Black students out of the bus and to their knees. One of them, Gary Tyler (16 at the time) was arrested for "interfering with an officer." What he actually did was voice his objection to the deputy sheriff's putting a gun to the heads of kneeling Black students.

The police claimed they found a gun on the bus but it curiously turned out to be a police revolver with no fingerprints. Nevertheless Gary was charged with being the possessor of the gun and murderer of the white youth. He was convicted by an all-white jury and sentenced to die in the electric chair.

The prosecution's case rested entirely on two witnesses, both of whom recanted their testimony. Both charged that police had coerced them into fingering Tyler. The police had threatened to take one witness' child away from her and charge her as an accessory to the killing. In any case, the judge refused to grant a new trial. Gary ended up with a life sentence and no chance of parole.

Gary Tyler had attempted to calm a snarling officer who was uttering threats while pointing his loaded weapon at the heads of Black school children. Gary could sense the rage emitting from the trigger-happy cops. Over the years many of us have confronted police in one or another such situation. Nowadays we get numerous same-day recordings of "cops gone wild" with pile-on beatings and shootings of unarmed civilians.

On each occasion the local police department announces, "The incident is under investigation." The killer cop usually is given "administrative leave with pay," or what some of us would call "paid vacation."

The police tell us that the victim was reaching for his waist ban or was holding a cellphone in his hand that looked like a gun - certainly enough like a gun to perforate him with a deluge of

bullets. The public hears the cop's familiar story. When attorneys and media ask for more information, what we get is what the police department decides they want us to see. Before too long, the accused cop is kindly stroked by a White, suburban Grand Jury and an obligingly soft-handed prosecutor who has his own eye on a more elevated juridical or political office, and who therefore does not want to offend his war-against-crime White constituency.

Gary Tyler is now 57 years old. He has been in prison since he was 16. He will likely remain incarcerated for the rest of his life unless the numerous pleas from around the country and from countries around the world should start having some impact. There are scores of prisoners of political note, and hundreds of others like Gary who were just in the wrong place or just speaking up against the potentially lethal behavior of police. They continue to be victimized by a law enforcement system capable of the most venal acts both within the community and in the courtroom, taking away whole lifetimes of innocent people by use of street executions or judicial killings or perpetual incarcerations—an abuse of justice that is beyond measure.

Michael Parenti is a U.S. political scientist, historian, and cultural critic who writes on scholarly and popular subjects. His most recent books are *Waiting for Yesterday: Pages from a Street Kid's Life (an ethnic memoir)*; and *Profit Pathology and Other Indecencies*. ●

Foreign sailors paid a pittance in Canadian waters

PV Vancouver Bureau

The Seafarers International Union of Canada is preparing to take the federal government to court over the use of low-paid foreign sailors on internationally-flagged ships in Canadian waters.

The union, which represents unlicensed sailors in coastal waters, has been critical over the growing refusal of shipping agents to hire Canadian crews, while the federal government turns a blind eye. Now the SIU has asked the Federal Court in Vancouver for a judicial review of the practice of issuing the foreign sailors temporary work permits.

The union points to the 60,000 ton, Greek-owned tanker *Almathea*, which was just in the Port of Montreal and licensed to be transporting crude oil in Canadian waters until Sept. 13.

Fourteen employment contracts, obtained by The Canadian Press, show hourly wages for non-licensed crew members range from \$2.13 to \$8.80, depending upon the job and before overtime.

SIU Canada president Jim Given said such exploitation is common in international shipping, where companies will hire sailors from the Philippines, Indonesia or other poor countries for a tiny fraction of what Canadians would make.

"The Government of Canada is letting foreign ships replace thousands of qualified Canadian workers at a time when 25% of our workforce is unemployed," said Given. "The law is very simple. They're giving work permits to foreign workers on ships in Canadian waters when the law says those jobs should go qualified Canadians first."

Canada Border Services Agency last year issued 142 exemptions to foreign ships so their crews could work legally in Canada, but the union says shipping companies made no attempt to hire Canadian sailors. Another 59 exemptions have been granted so far this year, helping the corporate bottom line of both oil companies and shippers.

More than 800 SIU members are currently looking for work and the temporary foreign worker exemptions are being abused, Given says.

"Those permits are intended for those who are going to open a company and employ people and there is some big economic benefit to Canada," said Given. "There is no economic benefit to Canada to this, other than allowing Suncor to put more money into their pocket."

The Harper government amended the TFWP earlier this year, setting a deadline of April 1st for low-skilled workers to either become permanent residents or leave the country. It also required some employers to provide a labour market impact assessment and demonstrate that no Canadians were available before hiring foreigners. There are loopholes that allow international companies to bypass the assessment, but whether they apply to shipping companies is unclear. ●

Groups speak out against Quebec's anti-Medicare Bill 20

People across the country have expressed their support for Quebec groups opposing Minister Barrette's proposed amendment to Bill 20, which is aimed at legalizing extra billing, according to Canadian Doctors for Medicare.

"The extra billing Minister Barrette's proposes in his amendment to Bill 20 will create a two-tier health-care system that limits care for people who can't afford extra fees. This dangerous precedent would violate the Canada Health Act and jeopardize universal access to health care in every province. Doctors across Canada stand with Quebec organizations in defense of universal health care," said Ryan Meili, Acting Chair of Canadian Doctors for Medicare.

As amended, the Bill would enable the government to allow currently illegal fees to be added to health care services by simple

regulation, with no clearly established limits. These fees can be charged during medical office visits, for facilities, services, supplies, equipment, or tests that are associated with an insured service.

User fees are prohibited under the Canada Health Act. Provinces that allow it are subject to sanction in the form of withholding of federal transfers in the amount equal to the fees. Health Canada confirmed in June that the costs related to the provision of insured medical services are user fees, or extra billing, and that the law prohibits such fees, which effectively create a two-tier health care system.

Research shows that mandatory fees are an impediment to care, especially for low income people who often don't access care until they are so sick they can't avoid it, which not only damages their quality of life, but makes them

more expensive to treat.

"The Quebec government's proposed amendment to Bill 20 would erode one of the core principles of medicare, that health care should be based on need and not ability to pay. The extra-billing proposed in Bill 20 is not only unjustifiable, but creates a slippery slope to two-tiered, US style health care where patients suffer. This is not the health that Quebecers expect or deserve," said Michael Butler, Nation Health Campaigner, Council of Canadians.

"What happens in Quebec has serious implications for the rest of Canada. By compromising access through extra billing practices, the proposed amendment to Bill 20 would be a crushing blow to Canada's cherished system of universal health care," said Natalie Mehra, Executive Director, Ontario Health Coalition. ●

Harper apology was “strategic attempt to kill residential school story”

By Jorge Barrera, APTN National News, Sept. 10, 2015, <http://aptn.ca/news>

Prime Minister Stephen Harper's 2008 apology to Indian residential school survivors was a “strategic attempt to kill the story,” according to former speechwriter in the Prime Minister's Office at the time.

Paul Bunner was the head speechwriter in Harper's PMO between 2006 and 2009. His views on the Indian residential school apology and the possible motivation behind it recently surfaced on a blog by Coast Salish Native American writer Robert Jago who outed a series of Conservative candidates, current and former MP staffers, along with Bunner for their comments and views on First Nation people.

Jago, who currently lives in Montreal, is from the Nooksack Tribe in Washington State. His family is registered with the Kwantlen First Nation, in British Columbia.

Earlier this week, Sue MacDonell was fired from her role as director with the Bay of Quinte Conservative riding association after some of her online, racially-charged comments against First Nation people surfaced.

The blog highlights an article by Bunner written in 2013 titled, *The Genocide That Failed*, where the former PMO speechwriter discussed the 2008 apology.

“The best that can be said of Harper's apology is that it was a strategic attempt to kill the story and move on to a better relationship between Natives and Non-Natives,” wrote Bunner, in the C2C Journal. “Unfortunately, it only appears to have deepened the conviction that Church and State conspired not only to ‘kill the Indian in the child,’ but also to physically exterminate the whole race. The Aboriginal grievance and entitlement narrative continues to gather momentum.”

Bunner stood by his writing in an interview with APTN National News. He said they did not reflect the views of the PMO at the time of the apology.

“That was just my opinion long after I left the PMO,” he said. “You know it seemed to me that it in the PM's mind and presumably in the government's mind, it was a sincere apology... My concerns about it were strictly my own and they were not obviously shared by the prime minister or other senior people in the PMO.”

Bunner said he told colleagues at the time he was unhappy with the prime minister's plan to issue an apology for Indian residential schools.

“I was not happy with the apology,” said Bunner, in the interview. “I probably expressed

it to some of my colleagues.”

Bunner said he had “very little input” on Harper's apology speech, but he did read it before it was delivered by the prime minister in the House of Commons to much fanfare.

“I may have seen a draft, I may have commented on it,” said Bunner. “None of my ideas wound up in the final version.”

The Harper government has said it considers the apology to Indian residential school survivors a historic moment. The apology, however, has recently been called hollow.

Truth and Reconciliation Commission Chair Murray Sinclair said during the release of the TRC's

residential school report in June that the prime minister had failed to live up to the promise of the apology. Sinclair said at the time he didn't believe Harper was committed to true reconciliation.

“We believe the current government is not willing to make good on its claim that it wishes to join with Aboriginal people in Canada in a ‘relationship based on the knowledge of our shared history, a respect for each other and a desire to move forward together’ as promised nine years ago,” said Sinclair, at the time. “Words are not enough.”

The Conservative party campaign did not respond to a request for comment.



A Montreal rally protesting the cuts to the Aboriginal Healing Foundation, which funded programs for survivors of residential schools. Photo: Ben Powless, halifax.mediacoop.ca.

Getting Newfoundland and Labrador working: job creation and development from the Communist perspective

By Sean Burton, Communist Party candidate, St. John's East

With the Communist Party of Canada running in St. John's East, it is important to discuss what the Party's platform would mean for the people of Newfoundland and Labrador.

The heart of the platform has been succinctly described as “create jobs and raise wages”. Such a statement is highly relevant across the country. Canadian workers have been ravaged by years of layoffs, closures, and cuts to social programs.

Newfoundland and Labrador is no stranger to the boom and bust cycle of capitalism. This province has seen some recent growth as a result of the oil industry, but that growth has only truly benefited the oil corporations and their representatives in St. John's. Furthermore, as oil prices fluctuate on the market those corporations have no hesitation to eliminate jobs to enhance their profit margins. And though the oil sector employs nearly 10,000 people, that number pales in comparison to the numbers once employed in our fisheries, an industry ruthlessly exploited by corporations leading to the near total destruction of several Atlantic cod stocks. Miners in Labrador West have the constant worry that iron ore mines will cut production or close altogether. Meanwhile it is still difficult to find good, steady work in the rest of the province and our infrastructure is deplorable or limited in many locations.

The Communist Party proposes an alternative to the austerity that many people are resigned to face. An immediate plan for development has as its core substantial expansion and development of infrastructure, industry, and public services.

Road and rail are critical infrastructure concerns for Newfoundland and Labrador. We propose that the island portion of the Trans Canada Highway be four lanes across its entire length, that significant improvements be made to our province's secondary highways, especially with respect

to regular maintenance and higher-quality pavement. We also insist that the Trans Labrador Highway be fully paved and have more frequent service stations along its route.

Newfoundland and Labrador should have a comprehensive, modern railway service, including high speed passenger service. A fixed road and rail link between the island and Labrador should be included. An inter-community bus system should be established to link outlying areas to stations, airports, and with local public transit. Consideration should also be made to building an overland route through the communities of northern Labrador. Existing ferry service in that region should be expanded via larger and faster vessels.

Public transit must be expanded where it exists and established in a few of the other larger communities. Public transit in St. John's should connect directly to the airport as well as to nearby communities. In all cases, wait times between buses should be reduced and service should not end early at any point in the week. Fares should also be eliminated.

The widespread development of alternative, renewable energy sources must also be a priority. The Communist Party would nationalize our natural resources and energy sector to ensure democratic control and environmental sustainability. Corporations that threaten to close plants and mines must face strict legislation that will impose heavy fines upon them or face public seizure of their assets.

Instead of crowding students into “super schools”, we should build more neighbourhood schools that would eliminate or greatly reduce the need to bus students; smaller class sizes would greatly reduce stress and workloads on teachers. Access to hospitals and clinics must be expanded, with priority given to rural areas and isolated communities.

We propose a massive emergency housing construction program to provide affordable housing across the entire country, and a ban on evictions, mortgage

foreclosures, and utility cut offs due to unemployment.

We propose to rebuild Canada's industrial base. Newfoundland and Labrador could be a leader in the ship-building industry. At the very least, we should be designing and building our own ferries for the coastal service and for the link to Nova Scotia. Our agricultural



sector should also be expanded where it is possible.

The construction, maintenance, and operation of the above suggestions would provide thousands of good jobs to people in Newfoundland and Labrador, they would provide tremendous public service, and allow for a more diverse economy. It is not impossible to accomplish such a list of demands. Canada is a very wealthy country, and that wealth should be used for the benefit of its people, not for the bank accounts of an elite few. We must cut wasteful military spending, assume control of our resources, and place the burden of taxation squarely on the rich and corporations. On Oct. 19, put people's needs before corporate greed: Vote Communist! ●

VDLC backs refugee rights

By Peter Marcus, Vancouver

Because the July meeting of the Vancouver and District Labour Council was held after the deadline for the August issue of Peoples' Voice, and since there was no VDLC meeting in August, I could not report on the proceedings. Briefly, VDLC President Joey Hartman reported in July that the proposed sale of the Maritime Labour Centre had been stopped, that the Council's office rent will stay the same until December 31, and that meetings can still be held in the MLC auditorium.

The July meeting adopted a resolution of solidarity with Greek austerity resisters, and heard a report that Vancouver City Council passed a motion in support of the Living Wage initiative. In solidarity with the COPE 378 members locked out by the BC Auto Association, a resolution was passed to refrain from using the BCAA's “Evo” car share service, to call BCAA to get them to settle with an equitable agreement, and to support the union's 24/7 picket line at 5590 Goring St., near the Holdom Skytrain station in Burnaby.

On September 15, VDLC delegates approved donations of \$500 to Lifeline Syria and \$500 to the United Nations High Commission for Refugees as a gesture of solidarity and compassion. The motion called on the Canadian government to expedite refugee applications and approvals, to fund transit and settlement services and programs, and allow access to medical facilities and services and education in the context of the current refugee crisis.

It was reported that the TSSU (Teaching Support Staff Union) dispute with Simon Fraser University has not been settled after 15 months, and may escalate into job action, and also that COPE 378 is still locked out at the BCAA.

Most of the September meeting was taken up with the federal election and support by the labour movement for the NDP. The candidates of the Communist Party in Vancouver East, Vancouver Kingsway, Burnaby North-Seymour and Surrey Centre were announced, along with an invitation to hear CPC leader Miguel Figueroa on Sept. 24 at the Centre for Socialist Education, 706 Clark Drive, Vancouver. ●

For more background:

Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada

www.trc.ca

EDITORIALS

Mr. Harper's racist signals

Occasionally a politician will utter a careless phrase without any deeper intent. But a seemingly unintentional racist or sexist comment often reveals an inherent bias, or it may be crafted to signal a candidate's real intentions in a "deniable" way.

Stephen Harper's use of the expression "old-stock Canadians" during the Sept. 17 leaders debate is in the latter category, giving another glimpse into the PM's racist view of history. Recall Harper's absurd claim (at a September 2009 G-20 event in Pittsburgh) that "Canada has no history of colonialism" - even though this country was founded on the theft of indigenous territories, through imposed (and usually broken) treaties, or via outright land grabs (almost the entire land mass of British Columbia). His statement sent the clear message that Aboriginal peoples are "second class."

This message is also behind Harper's latest comment, in the context of his claims that health care is only denied for "bogus" refugee claimants, and that "new and existing and old-stock Canadians" would agree with him. This is a lie: health care coverage has also been cut off for claimants from so-called "safe" countries. But the truth is that the criteria for refugee status have become sharply politicized, as more people are defined as "bogus" on stereotyped racist grounds, i.e. coming from "bad" countries.

The PM's statement set off other alarm bells. Does "old stock" hint at plans to deny social programs on the basis on length of residency in Canada, even for citizens? Is this yet another Tory attempt to turn so-called "deserving" recipients ("us") against others who have not "earned" any rights ("them")?

Unfortunately, the corporate media gave Harper another free pass for his so-called "gaffe". On Oct. 19, the real "us vs. them" has to be the working people of Canada against the big corporations and their political parties, especially the Harper Tories.

Labour can't afford a new Tory majority

The attacks against organized workers have been so consistent over the last decade that many Canadians may consider the situation "normal." But there is nothing ordinary or acceptable about a government which destroys the ability of workers to take collective action to defend their interests.

The Canadian Association of Labour Media has detailed the range of these attacks, which have done much to dismantle rights and protections won through decades of tough labour struggles, advocacy and court victories.

Here are some examples. Buried within Bill C-60, the omnibus budget bill passed in 2013, was a provision to allow the Treasury Board to direct collective bargaining for 48 Crown corporations, gutting the labour rights of tens of thousands of employees.

Bill C-377, a private member's bill backed by the Harper Tories, requires unions to report every nickel they spend. This expensive process makes publicly available the financial information of union federations and labour organizations, and even the personal information of individual union members.

Passed last April, the "Act to amend the Canada Labour Code, the Parliamentary Employment and Staff Relations Act and the Public Service Labour Relations Act" fundamentally changes the process of forming unions in the federal sector by eliminating card check certification.

Relying on "back to work" legislation has been a preferred tactic under Harper, whose former Labour Minister Lisa Raitt argued that workers for Canada Post and Air Canada perform "nearly essential" services. Raitt even suggested that the economy itself is an essential service, threatening to put virtually all labour negotiations at risk.

Enough is enough. The most anti-working class government seen in this country since the days of "Iron Heel" Bennett must be defeated on October 19th!

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Canada Welcomes Refugees

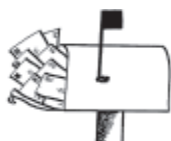


Frederick Blair
None is too many.



Stephen Harper
Some is too many.

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Letters to the Editor

Education in our capitalist Canada

For most parents, solidifying an education fund for their children's future is top on the priority list. Everything and all the stresses that come with that. Work multiple jobs just to be able to put a little away each week or each pay; for many sacrificing much valued time with our children in the pursuit of securing their future. Why becomes the question. What are the conditions that lead parents to engage in this struggle to secure these results? When one begins to examine the conditions that create these circumstances, one recognizes that it is a result of education being commoditized. What does it mean for something to be commoditized? It means it has been secured through ownership and will only be released through sale/purchase. Education in our society will only be released through a sale/purchase relationship. This is not the testament of a society governed by people focussed on the growth and prosperity/productivity/progress of its nation as a whole. This is clearly the testament of a society governed by a parasitic hierarchy focussed on exploiting and siphoning capital from the working class in any and all possible ventures, including education.

Clearly, any society that is concerned with the progress/prosperity/productivity of its nation as a whole, would make it a top priority to educate said society. A country as rich in resources/technology/ability as Canada has no need to burden Canadians with the heavy stresses of either A) solidifying the enormous cost of future education for their children, or B) entering into adulthood and life with 10's of thousands of dollars worth of debt hanging over them.

How can Canada afford to educate its citizens for free? By declaring Canada a sovereign nation equal among all peoples in Canada and nationalizing the important, key sectors of our economy/society. We nationalize

the banks, natural resources and key energy sectors. We no longer allow private owners/corporations to own and control the fundamental necessities to Canadian lives/the Canadian economy and Canadian society.

To provide just a small amount of context to what I mean through one small example (though its not so small).

In Canada we used to use the Bank of Canada as the issuer of loans to the government of Canada. The BoC is owned by the Canadian people and was designed to issue loans to the government at low % interest. In this manner, when Canadian tax dollars were used to pay back these loans to the bank of Canada, we were essentially repaying ourselves and cycling the money perpetually into Canadian society to meet the needs of Canadian society. We no longer do this.

Since the late 70's, the government of Canada now takes loans out from private banks instead of the bank of Canada (of which there is currently a lawsuit against the BoC for their role). Now instead of Canadian tax dollars being used to improve Canadian society through the issuance/repayments of these loans, now the private banks, privately owned, loan the government money at compound %. That is interest upon interest upon interest upon interest, perpetually and unending. At this point in time Canadians are paying these compound interest payments, through our taxes, to the tune of 160 million \$/day. None of this money is circulated into the Canadian society; it all becomes the accumulated capital of the private banks to use or withhold as they please. Canadian tax dollars, private pockets.

So, we nationalize the banks and we put an end to the robbery of the Canadian people. Instead of a never ending perpetual debt system that our children and their children will inherit under the current paradigm, we have a real

opportunity to shift the paradigm to a much less parasitic and a much more human one.

Nationalization is the first step in the direction of human well-being over individual or corporate gain. Nationalization says that WE as a united people in Canada, have decided that we choose Community over Corporation. That we choose People over Profit. And that the exploitation of our children, of our parents, of our families and friends through perpetual indebtedness is not in favor of Canadian society as a whole and is no longer the direction that Canada chooses to proceed in. Nationalization says that we have given the hoarders of capital long enough to prove themselves 'for the people' and time after time they fail. Nationalization says NO More!! We know a better way. A truer way to benefit society as a whole. Nationalization says Yes to free education. A nation that commodotizes education when the ability to provide it for free is there, is not a nation that is "for the people"; no matter what they say.

Blunkey McGrues, Sudbury, ON

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Who are the Communist Party candidates?

During this federal election campaign the mainstream media is largely ignoring the smaller political parties, including the Communist Party of Canada - the only such party which has elected candidates during its history. Here is a look at some of the 28 Communist candidates on the ballot in this election.

HOCHELAGA Marianne Breton Fontaine



Hochelaga is a poor riding in the east of Montreal including the Olympic stadium. Once a working class area home to the famous Quebec folk singer La Bolduc, the riding was hit hard by de-industrialization and factory closings. It has been held by the Bloc and, most recently, the NDP; provincially, the Quebec Solidaire party is a serious contender.

Marianne Breton Fontaine grew up in the riding. She is a student activist, studying law, and outspoken for women's rights and feminism. "Although the neighbourhood is changing, poverty is widespread. Nationalization of industry, such as the automotive industry which has completely left Quebec, and expanding public services is going to create jobs and help a lot of the families here looking for work," she says.

"Many people in the riding work on minimum wages, not least women. Raising the minimum wage to \$20, of course it is the federal wage, but it will have an impact - a much needed push towards the general raise in wages," she adds.

"The Communist Party also has an elaborate platform on the environment, with big ideas like public ownership of wind power and green energy to move away from Hydrocarbons. We are close to the St. Lawrence river and this area is all owned by the Montreal Port Authority. Although this is a federal agency, it operates just for the big corporations. There is not even public access to the river, nor a policy to make this potentially beautiful area usable by the community-- which must change."

TORONTO CENTRE

Mariam Ahmad

Toronto Centre has significantly changed riding boun-



daries since the last election, losing the affluent community of Rosedale, as well as Bloor-Yorkville and the Esplanade, but retaining many working class and poor neighbourhoods like the very densely populated St. Jamestown and student housing. The riding is traditionally Liberal with the NDP challenging them in second place.

"My riding includes Ryerson University which is attended by thousands of students. Education is very important to me as I have also struggled to pay my tuition and feed myself and pay housing fees. The Communist Party of Canada wants to increase federal supports for universal public education at all levels, eliminate tuition fees for post secondary, shift from loans to grants and build more schools and colleges," she says.

An author, artist, and the organizer of Toronto's Young Communist League, Marianne became politically active in youth organizations struggling for LGBTI* equality rights. "I am running because politics is too often thought to be a game for white older men and sometimes women. I am trying to show people, especially youth, that we can collectively change things and that young people are politically aware and understand that politics does not end nor start at the electoral system. A prime example of youth being politically aware and active is the Young Communist League."

SUDBURY Elizabeth Rowley



The riding of Sudbury covers most of the nickel mining town and has been held by Liberals and most recently the NDP, although the seat is vacant after the federal MP resigned to run for the provincial Liberals in a by-election. Candidate Elizabeth Rowley is Ontario leader of the Communist Party and a former Public School Trustee.

An outspoken advocate for quality public education, public childcare, universal social programs and better pensions, Rowley fights for stronger labour, civil and democratic rights. This election she's raising the issue of raising wages and creating jobs, including ending the sell-out of manufacturing and secondary industry and strengthen the value-added manufacturing sector, but her campaign has been in a fight just to uphold the Elections Act.

Rowley was stopped by campus security in September and told she could not hand out leaflets or speak

to students on the grounds of the campus, meaning that Laurentian University was essentially refusing to uphold the Canada Elections Act and allow her to meet students and other voters. Rowley's campaign team has also been told by the police to stop leafleting outside a major chain store.

"Sudbury voters have a right to expect that the election rules will be upheld and enforced. This is about democracy," she said. "This is in direct contravention of the law".

Rowley notes that Sudbury Returning Officer Ellen Kerr has also refused to uphold the Elections Act. "The University claims to be a centre of rigorous inquiry, open debate, discussion and learning, but their refusal to allow the Communist party candidate access to discuss the issues with students is alarming. It's also illegal."

WINNIPEG NORTH

Frank Komarniski



Winnipeg North is carved out of previous ridings and communities including parts of the historic Red River settlement. The Communist Party has been running (and has elected provincially and municipally) in this area since the 1920s. Over 20% of residents are Aboriginal, the second highest percentage in an urban area in Canada, and it also has a significant number of new Canadians. According to the *Winnipeg Free Press*, over a quarter of the population lives below the poverty line including two in five kids. The riding has been NDP for many years but went Liberal in 2011.

Komarniski is a City of Winnipeg outside worker, CUPE Local 500. He is a fighter for Aboriginal people's rights, including implementing the Truth and Reconciliation Commission recommendations.

"I am running to stop the war being waged against the poor and working class!" he says. "The second reason is that we have to get rid of Harper! At my work, everyone wants to get rid of Harper."

For the municipal outside workers, pensions are the number one issue in this election, Komarniski says. He is also raising the issue of the elimination of the right to vote for many people with the changes to the Election Act, which particularly disenfranchises Aboriginal peoples.



"It is people who don't have a current address, people who are homeless, people living with friends or family that don't acknowledge them - it targets everyone but affects most Aboriginals, and this is another reason to get rid of Harper," he says.

EDMONTON MILL WOODS

Naomi Rankin



Naomi Rankin is a retired computer programmer who sings in a progressive choir. She has been a peace and feminist activist since her teens and was a founding member of the Women's Studies Centre at the U of A, and of Edmonton Working Women. She currently lives in Edmonton with the younger of her two daughters. Her riding has slightly changed boundaries since the last election, losing everything south of Anthony Henday Drive, which might favour the Conservatives, according to the *Edmonton Journal*. But the area has also elected Liberals occasionally over the years, and the NDP in the last provincial election.

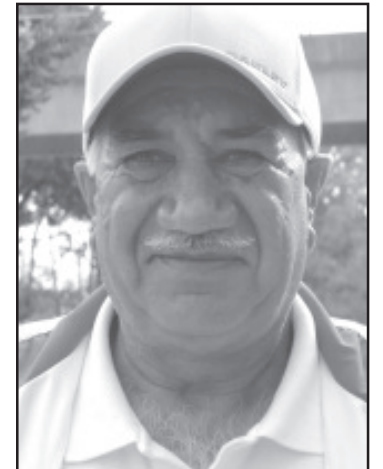
"The working class needs all the tools it can lay hands on to combat the economic and ideological power of capital - elections are one of those tools," Rankin says, explaining why she is running.

"Alberta is the part of the country most dependent on oil, gas and coal extraction and most subservient to the ideology promoted by the corporations that plunder the resources," she notes. "This is the place we most need to emphasize that neo-liberalism's social cuts and trade pacts are the

job-killers, and that environmental stewardship under public ownership and democratic control will create jobs, improve living standards and conditions and save the natural world."

SURREY CENTRE

Iqbal Kahlon



A long-time Surrey resident, Iqbal Kahlon has been active in the labour and peace movements for many years. He is a strong supporter of human rights and anti-racism, and is fluent in Hindi, Punjabi and English. A welder by profession and a former trade union member, Iqbal is currently manager of a welding shop and married with two children.

"The question of `environment or jobs' has become one of the central debates of the 21st century, including in Canada," Kahlon says, noting that the Communist Party believes we can create jobs and save the environment.

Kahlon is also talking about the Temporary Foreign Worker Program. "This is one expression of the global drive by big capital to treat workers as disposable profit producers rather than human beings, and to drive down the wages of all workers [and giving] right-wing forces an opportunity to divide the working class by promoting anti-immigrant, racist views at a time of economic crisis and high unemployment," he said in a recent community survey. "We join with others in the labour and immigrant rights movements to say that the entire TFWP must be scrapped, not just `adjusted'. We support the demands to grant immediate access to the immigration stream for all current temporary foreign workers, to shut down the low-wage categories, and to allow those who come to work in Canada the ability to settle as permanent residents, with access to citizenship and the same rights and protections of all workers."

See more Communist Party candidates on page 6...

Check out the 2015 election platform of the CPC:
www.comunist-party.ca

Who are the Communist Party candidates?

continued from page 5

ESQUIMALT-SAANICH-SOOKE

Tyson Strandlund



This riding, on the southern tip of Vancouver Island, is another electoral district which has seen changes to its boundaries. The NDP and Green Party are both contenders for the seat. Tyson Strandlund grew up in the riding and is Métis, supporting indigenous sovereignty.

Currently studying history at the University of Victoria, which

is in an adjacent riding, he is the organizer of the local Young Communist League.

"I'm running because I believe there's an urgent need for socialism in light of the economic and environmental crisis," Tyson says, arguing that Canadians need to work less and make higher wages, contrary to the claims by the big parties.

"I'm also trying to engage youth in politics, and get people talking about alternatives to austerity. For example, I'm talking most about the environment, education, and democratic nationalisation."

So far Tyson has made a splash, with community TV interviews on Citizen's Forum as well as print media. "I'm getting a mixed response from students, but some people think that it is great that we are running. Lots of students have said they would like to see free, quality education, as well as wiping student debts," Tyson adds, welcoming the Green Party's call to eliminate fees and noting that the Communist platform has long called for this position and goes significantly further.

SOUTH SHORE-ST. MARGARETS

Ryan Barry



Ryan Barry grew up in a working class family in Bridgewater, on the South Shore of Nova Scotia. He graduated from Bridgewater High School and studied at Saint Thomas University in Fredericton. He has worked in farming, construction, and as a scallop fisherman and is campaigning for full employment and higher wages for all Nova Scotians.

Ryan Barry strongly supports reversing privatization of health care and expanding Medicare. He is currently employed as a residential rehabilitation worker with children on the autism spectrum. He also has experience in health care with adults with special challenges and as a rehabilitation educator, providing physiotherapy for adults with brain injuries.

Ryan has struggled to reclaim his native heritage and is a member of the Qalipu Mi'kmaq First Nation band. He is raising the call for Aboriginal sovereignty as well as the rights of the Acadian peoples.

His campaign has prioritized several points which are vital to voters in South Shore-St. Margarets.

The first is to recognize First Nations and Aboriginal rights and land claims, implement the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, including a full public inquiry into the murdered and mission Aboriginal women and girls across Canada. Emergency action is needed to improve living conditions, employment, health and housing for First Nations.

Second, work to expand and improve universal social programs to end poverty through introducing a \$20/hour minimum wage, expanding EI and social assistance benefits, and ensuring affordable child care.

Post-secondary education should become free and accessible to all, with improved resources for those with special needs.

Access to good quality public health care must also include eye care, pharmaceutical, dental and loss of hearing, as well as better attention to seniors' needs in public care, including home care. A substantially improved CPP benefit

will vastly improve the quality of workers' retirement.

In South Shore-St. Margarets, there is also a vital need for expanded addiction abuse programs and improved employment programs.

Ryan Barry supports the ABC movement of Canada's veterans and deplores the closing of Veterans Affairs Offices at a time when veterans are in great need.

He promises if elected that he will strongly represent the needs of the constituents and to listen to their concerns.

BURNABY-NORTH SEYMOUR

Brent Jantzen



Burnaby North-Seymour is one of the glaring examples of Harper's gerrymandering. The old riding of Burnaby North, which includes Simon Fraser University and has long been an NDP seat, is linked to the community of Seymour, to which it has no geographical connection other than a bridge stretching over the wide Burrard Inlet.

Brent Jantzen is a young longshore worker as well as the Vancouver secretary of the Young Communist League. "I am running in order to discuss a true alternative for the working class. The Liberals and Conservative parties work in the interest of the big corporations, and the NDP and Greens don't consistently focus on issues that affect working people of Canada," Brent says. "Capitalism and systems of oppression enforce inequality and create a constant state of war," he adds, noting that the Communist Party is fighting for fundamental change. "It is important for there to be a candidate in this riding to voice these demands."

"I am talking about job creation in Canada and raising the minimum wage in order to provide a more comfortable living standard for the working class of Canada," Brent says. "In addition, I strongly oppose the expansion of the pipelines."

Brent joined in the actions on Burnaby mountain where indigenous and environmental activists were arrested for blocking the development of the pipeline route.

Another key issue for Brent is Canada's participation in US wars and aggression. "I strongly oppose our involvement in NATO, the bombing of Iraq and Syria, and the Harper government's support for the ultra-right government in Ukraine as well as apartheid Israel."

BRAMPTON NORTH

Harinder Hundal



Brampton North is another new riding and has a large south Asian immigrant community. CPC candidate Harinder Hundal is a certified teacher working in the transportation sector.

"This election is taking place in a period when economic crisis is deepening, the income gap between the vast majority of working people and the handful of super rich is continuously widening, racism and intolerance are spreading, social programs and services are facing deep cuts, and the environment is under serious threat," Harinder says. "I am running because people in this riding are really worried about the changes the Harper government has done, particularly to immigration and citizenship laws."

He notes that Bill C-24 threatens dual citizens and creates a tier of "second class citizens." The bill also makes citizenship more difficult and expensive to achieve.

"The majority of people in this riding are new immigrants and a lot of young people are employed in the transport industry where we work very long hours," he says. "We are raising the issue of a higher minimum wage of \$20 per hour and shorter work hours. People want higher taxes for the very rich and major tax breaks for the working people. People support our demand for quality public health and to expand universal public Medicare to include universal pharmacare, dental and eye care. Brampton has only one P3 privatized hospital, which has failed to address the growing health needs of the people who want another public hospital in the city. People want a university in Brampton as students have to travel far for education. In recent local elections, this was a very hot issue. We will raise these issues in the election and will continue the fight after this campaign."

Communist Party of Canada federal election candidates and ridings

British Columbia

- BURNABY NORTH-SEYMOUR - Brent Jantzen
- CARIBOO-PRINCE GEORGE - Darcy Robinson
- ESQUIMALT-SAANICH-SOOKE - Tyson Strandlund
- SURREY CENTRE - Iqbal Kahlon
- VANCOUVER EAST - Peter Marcus
- VANCOUVER KINGSWAY - Kimball Cariou

Alberta

- CALGARY FOREST LAWN - Jason Devine
- EDMONTON-MILL WOODS - Naomi Rankin

Manitoba

- WINNIPEG CENTRE - Darrell Rankin
- WINNIPEG NORTH - Frank Komarniski

Ontario

- BRAMPTON NORTH - Harinderpal Hundal
- DAVENPORT - Miguel Figueroa
- DON VALLEY WEST - Elizabeth Hill
- GUELPH - Tristan Dineen
- HAMILTON EAST-STONEY CREEK - Bob Mann
- LONDON WEST - Michael Lewis
- OTTAWA CENTRE - Stuart Ryan
- OTTAWA SOUTH - Larry Wasslen
- ST. CATHARINES - Saleh Waziruddin
- SUDBURY - Elizabeth Rowley
- TORONTO CENTRE - Mariam Ahmad
- UNIVERSITY ROSEDALE - Drew Garvie

Quebec

- HOCHELAGA - Marianne Breton Fontaine
- LAURIER-SAINTE MARIE - Pierre Fontaine
- OUTREMONT - Adrien Welsh
- VILLE-MARIE-LE SUD-OUEST-ILE-DES-SOEURS - William Sloan

Nova Scotia

- SOUTH SHORE-ST. MARGARETS - Barry Ryan
- Newfoundland & Labrador**
- ST. JOHN'S EAST - Sean Burton

www.communist-party.ca

Visit the Communist Party website at www.communist-party.ca

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Authorised by Chief Agent CPC

The Leap Manifesto: a call for a Canada based on caring for the earth and for one another

the leap manifesto

A Call for a Canada Based on Caring For the Earth and One Another.



Released in the midst of the federal election, the "Leap Manifesto" reprinted here, and endorsed by many prominent activists, is a welcome contribution to the debates over the future of this country.

We start from the premise that Canada is facing the deepest crisis in recent memory.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission has acknowledged shocking details about the violence of Canada's near past. Deepening poverty and inequality are a scar on the country's present. And Canada's record on climate change is a crime against humanity's future.

These facts are all the more jarring because they depart so dramatically from our stated values: respect for Indigenous rights, internationalism, human rights, diversity, and environmental stewardship.

Canada is not this place today—but it could be.

We could live in a country powered entirely by truly just renewable energy, woven together by accessible public transit, in which the jobs and opportunities of this transition are designed to systematically eliminate racial and gender inequality. Caring for one another and caring for the planet could be the economy's fastest growing sectors. Many more people could have higher wage jobs with fewer work hours, leaving us ample time to enjoy our loved ones and flourish in our communities.

We know that the time for this great transition is short. Climate scientists have told us that this is the decade to take decisive action to prevent catastrophic global warming. That means small steps will no longer get us where we need to go.

So we need to leap.

This leap must begin by respecting the inherent rights and title of the original caretakers of this land. Indigenous communities have been at the forefront of protecting rivers, coasts, forests and lands from out-of-control

industrial activity. We can bolster this role, and reset our relationship, by fully implementing the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

"Small steps will no longer get us to where we need to go. So we need to leap". Moved by the treaties that form the legal basis of this country and bind us to share the land "for as long as the sun shines, the grass grows and the rivers flow," we want energy sources that will last for time immemorial and never run out or poison the land. Technological breakthroughs have brought this dream within reach. The latest research shows it is feasible for Canada to get 100% of its electricity from renewable resources within two decades; by 2050 we could have a 100% clean economy.

We demand that this shift begin now.

There is no longer an excuse for building new infrastructure projects that lock us into increased extraction decades into the future. The new iron law of energy development must be: if you wouldn't want it in your backyard, then it doesn't belong in anyone's backyard. That applies equally to oil and gas pipelines; fracking in New Brunswick, Quebec and British Columbia; increased tanker traffic off our coasts; and to Canadian-owned mining projects the world over.

The time for energy democracy has come: we believe not just in changes to our energy sources, but that wherever possible communities should collectively control these new energy systems.

As an alternative to the profit-gouging of private companies and the remote bureaucracy of some centralized state ones, we can create innovative ownership structures: democratically run,

paying living wages and keeping much-needed revenue in communities. And Indigenous Peoples should be first to receive public support for their own clean energy projects. So should communities currently dealing with heavy health impacts of polluting industrial activity.

Power generated this way will not merely light our homes but redistribute wealth, deepen our democracy, strengthen our economy and start to heal the wounds that date back to this country's founding.

A leap to a non-polluting economy creates countless openings for similar multiple "wins." We want a universal program to build energy efficient homes, and retrofit existing housing, ensuring that the lowest income communities and neighbourhoods will benefit first and receive job training and opportunities that reduce poverty over the long term. We want training and other resources for workers in carbon-intensive jobs, ensuring they are fully able to take part in the clean energy economy. This transition should involve the democratic participation of workers themselves. High-speed rail powered by just renewables and affordable public transit can unite every community in this country – in place of more cars, pipelines and exploding trains that endanger and divide us.

And since we know this leap is beginning late, we need to invest in our decaying public infrastructure so that it can withstand increasingly frequent extreme weather events.

Moving to a far more localized and ecologically-based agricultural system would reduce reliance on fossil fuels, capture carbon in the soil, and absorb sudden shocks in the global supply – as well as produce healthier and more affordable food for everyone.

We call for an end to all trade deals that interfere with our attempts to rebuild local economies, regulate corporations and stop damaging extractive projects. Rebalancing the scales of justice, we should ensure immigration status and full protection for all workers. Recognizing Canada's contributions to military conflicts and climate change – primary drivers of the global refugee crisis – we must welcome refugees and migrants seeking safety and a better life.

Shifting to an economy in balance with the earth's limits also means expanding the sectors of our economy that are already low carbon: caregiving, teaching, social work, the arts and public-interest media. Following on Quebec's lead, a national childcare program is long past due. All this work, much of it performed by women, is the glue that builds humane, resilient communities – and we will need our communities to be as strong as possible in the face of the rocky future we have already locked in.

Since so much of the labour of caretaking – whether of people or the planet – is currently unpaid, we call for a vigorous debate about the introduction of a universal basic annual income. Pioneered in Manitoba in the 1970's, this sturdy safety net could help ensure that no one is forced to take work that threatens their children's tomorrow, just to feed those children today.

We declare that "austerity" – which has systematically attacked low-carbon sectors like education and healthcare, while starving public transit and forcing reckless energy privatizations – is a fossilized form of thinking that has become a threat to life on earth.

The money we need to pay for this great transformation is available – we just need the right

policies to release it. Like an end to fossil fuel subsidies. Financial transaction taxes. Increased resource royalties. Higher income taxes on corporations and wealthy people. A progressive carbon tax. Cuts to military spending. All of these are based on a simple "polluter pays" principle and hold enormous promise.

One thing is clear: public scarcity in times of unprecedented private wealth is a manufactured crisis, designed to extinguish our dreams before they have a chance to be born.

Those dreams go well beyond this document. We call for town hall meetings across the country where residents can gather to democratically define what a genuine leap to the next economy means in their communities.

Inevitably, this bottom-up revival will lead to a renewal of democracy at every level of government, working swiftly towards a system in which every vote counts and corporate money is removed from political campaigns.

This is a great deal to take on all at once, but such are the times in which we live.

The drop in oil prices has temporarily relieved the pressure to dig up fossil fuels as rapidly as high-risk technologies will allow. This pause in frenetic expansion should not be viewed as a crisis, but as a gift.

It has given us a rare moment to look at what we have become – and decide to change.

And so we call on all those seeking political office to seize this opportunity and embrace the urgent need for transformation. This is our sacred duty to those this country harmed in the past, to those suffering needlessly in the present, and to all who have a right to a bright and safe future.

Now is the time for boldness. Now is the time to leap. ●

The Leap Manifesto and the Communist platform - some parallels and differences

PV Commentary

Not surprisingly, the "Leap Manifesto" has been arrogantly dismissed by the right-wing talking heads, and ignored by the NDP leadership which avoids any serious critique of neoliberal austerity politics. But the document has stirred wide discussion among left-minded activists involved in struggles around labour, indigenous, environmental and social equality issues. Having little confidence in the NDP (at least under Thomas Mulcair) or the market-oriented Greens, many activists are searching for strategies to inject the demands of mass movements into the electoral arena.

The overall merits and shortcomings of the Leap Manifesto will be the subject of further debate, during and after the election. We note, for example, that the manifesto calls for cuts in military spending (unlike any of the Parliamentary parties!),

but does not explicitly oppose imperialist wars. The manifesto is powerful in its call for indigenous sovereignty, but not about the national rights of the Quebec and the Acadians. Oddly, it says little about labour rights, or about Bill C-51 and the dangerous growth of the corporate police state apparatus in Canada.

The platform of the Communist Party of Canada does address these issues, and it goes in a more radical direction, projecting the goal of replacing capitalism with a socialist economy. The CPC platform also has many parallels with the policies advocated in "the Leap" document.

For example, the Leap Manifesto calls for "truly just renewable energy, woven together by accessible public transit", along with opposition to oil and gas pipelines, fracking, and increased tanker traffic.

The CPC calls for closing the tar sands industry within five years (with job guarantees for the current

workforce), and rejecting the Northern Gateway, Kinder Morgan, Energy East and Line 9 pipeline projects. The party's platform advocates high-speed rail, free urban transit, massive investment in renewable energy programs, nationalization of energy resources under democratic control, phasing out coal and nuclear power, banning biofuels, etc.

The manifesto says that "wherever possible communities should collectively control these new energy systems", and that "as an alternative to the profit-gouging of private companies and the remote bureaucracy of some centralized state ones, we can create innovative ownership structures: democratically run, paying living wages and keeping much-needed revenue in communities." The Communist Party calls for a People's Energy Plan, including public ownership

see PARALLELS, page 9



GLOBAL CLASS STRUGGLE

4,679 US workers killed on job

The number of workers who died on the job in the U.S. rose 2 percent last year, according to new data released by the Labour Department. The Bureau of Labour Statistics reported 4,679 fatal work injuries last year, up from 4,585 the year before. The figures released were preliminary and will be finalized at a later date; the number of deaths is typically revised upward.

Despite the higher number of deaths, the rate at which workers died on the job was essentially unchanged from the previous year, at 3.3 deaths per 100,000 full-time workers. That's because U.S. workers are logging more hours in the improved economy.

Labour Secretary Tom Perez said that the rate at which workers die is still much too high. "Far too many people are still killed on the job - 13 workers every day taken from their families tragically and unnecessarily," Perez said. "These numbers underscore the urgent need for employers to provide a safe workplace for their employees as the law requires."

Rebecca Reindel, a health and safety specialist at the AFL-CIO labour federation, told The Huffington Post it was disappointing that the death rate held steady and may be revised higher.

The preliminary data showed a sharp uptick in deaths in the oil and gas industry. In 2014, 142 workers died in that field, compared to 112 in 2013, marking a 27 percent jump. In April, a report from the AFL-CIO labour federation found that the state with the highest workplace death rate was North Dakota, home of the Bakken oil boom. The report pegged the death rate in North Dakota's mining and oil and gas operations at "an alarming 84.7 per 100,000," or seven times the national rate for the industry.

Reversing a trend of recent years, the number of Hispanic or Latino workers who died on the job last year apparently edged down, going from 817 in 2013 to 789 in 2014.

Hispanic and Latino workers are still at greater risk of death on the job than other workers. Many work in more dangerous fields like construction and oil and gas —

and, particularly in the case of those who are undocumented or don't speak English, because they may be less likely to speak out about dangers. Nearly two-thirds of the Hispanic and Latino workers who were killed last year were born outside the United States.

One group that did not fare well was older workers. The preliminary number of workers ages 55 and older who died on the job was "the highest total ever reported" by the bureau's census. The number jumped from 1,490 in 2013 to 1,621 in 2014, a 9 percent rise. One likely reason for that rise



is the fact that retirement is coming later for many Americans than it used to.

Protest anti-union Qatar Airways

A masked and gagged cabin crew member protested outside a global airline show in London on Sept. 18 ahead of an address by a Qatar Airways executive. The protest, during day two of the World Low Cost Airlines Congress, was part of the ongoing International Transport Federation (ITF) campaign against the airline, which denies its workers the right to join a union. They could also face punishment if they speak publicly about their treatment by management.

Gabriel Mocho, secretary of the ITF civil aviation section said: "The powerful image of this cabin crew member with her mouth taped up says it all. Crew who work for Qatar Airways have no voice because they aren't allowed to organise and they are put in a position where they are scared to speak up about their experiences

of working for the airline."

The ITF welcomed major developments in the campaign on staff rights at Qatar Airways in August when the airline admitted that it had removed prohibitions on pregnancy and marriage from workers' contracts. Previous contracts required employees to notify management of a pregnancy, at which point they were likely to lose their job. Staff were also banned from getting married for their first five years at the airline, and even after that point they still had to ask permission. The ITF will be monitoring how these contractual changes are implemented in practice to bring about real improvements for workers.

Taxi drivers hit back at Uber

Taxi drivers from across Europe caused huge tailbacks and blocked off Brussels airport as they descended on the EU capital on Sept. 16 to oppose the rise of Uber, the controversial ride-sharing app. The international convoy of around 300 taxis with horns beeping crawled into the city's busy European quarter in hopes of meeting Belgian and EU officials, bringing traffic on main roads to a standstill. Air travellers were forced to end their journey escorted on foot by police after drivers blocked the motorway exit to the airport, a distance of around a kilometre.

"We come from Madrid, Barcelona, to defend a Europe free from Uber," said Concha Guardado, a cab driver from Spain, with taxis from France and Britain also present. "Today it is the taxi drivers protesting, but soon it will be other professions," a Brussels taxi driver told AFP.

Across the globe, Uber has angered traditional taxi operators who say it represents unfair competition because Uber drivers can flout the rules and restrictions that regulate the professionals. Their anger has often boiled over, notably in Paris where rioting by taxi drivers and the arrest of two Uber executives in June led the company to suspend its lower cost Uberpop service.

Uber awaits a French court decision it hopes will strike down a law passed by the French government that sharply restricts its activities.

Meanwhile, a Spanish court has asked the EU's top court to decide whether Uber is a technology application or an old-fashioned transport company that would require far stricter regulation. Anticipating these court decisions, Uber has launched an upmarket alternative service called Uber X in several European markets which requires professionally licensed drivers.

Historic general strike in Finland

Finnish trade unions have held a national one-day strike across the country, protesting against austerity measures. Some 30,000 people took to the streets of Helsinki on Sept. 18, rallying against the government's plans to aid

corporations at the expense of workers. All railroad and bus lines, as well as servicing of aircrafts at the airports, was halted for 12 hours.

The protesters condemned the government's plans to boost the competitive advantage of the Finnish economy by 5 percent in three years by cutting payments and compensation to working people. Finland's three largest trade unions: Akava, SAK and SKKT organized their 2.2 million members to strike in protest against the government's reduction in expenditure plans at national level.

The general strike is unprecedented in nearly 100 years. The last time anything similar was witnessed in Helsinki was in 1917, when Finland gained independence from Russia.

Earlier in September, the Finnish cabinet announced plans to cut holidays to state employees by 8 days (to 30 days), to cut pay for working holidays, as well as other payments and compensations.

"The strike is going on not only at Helsinki's landside area. All of the country is on strike. This must become a strong message to the government," Paavo Arhinmaki, a Finnish MP from the Left Alliance, told TASS.

Although government representatives have attended and addressed the meeting in Helsinki, the leaders of the three ruling parties have not shown up, the organizers of the meeting noted.

Journalists beaten at Hungary border

The International Federation of Journalists (IFJ)'s organisation, the European Federation of Journalists (EFJ), has denounced attacks and arrests of journalists reporting the refugee crisis on the border between Hungary and Serbia. Six journalists were reportedly beaten on Sept. 16 by Hungarian border police.

According to local media reports, Warren Richardson, an Australian photographer, and

Jacek Tacik, a Polish reporter together with a Slovakian journalist were accused of crossing the border between Hungary and Serbia illegally. They were beaten before they were arrested by the border police. The journalists had been working in the Serbian village of Horgos and followed a group of refugees who entered Hungary.

On the same day, a TV crew of Radio-Television of Serbia covering the crisis was brutally beaten by the police. According to the RTS management, journalist Jovana Durovic, cameraman Vladan Hadzi Mijailovic and sound recordist Miroslav Durasinovic were brutally beaten by the police with truncheons at the Horgos border crossing in Serbia. RTS has written to the Hungarian Government and demanded that the police officers who attacked the journalists shall be punished.

Tea workers kidnap manager

About 300 women workers of a tea plantation factory in the southern Indian state of Kerala have escalated their agitation against the management by holding its manager hostage on the first day of a strike which began on Sept. 19. The person who is facing the wrath of the women workers is the manager of Ambanad TR and Tea Company at Aryanad Arandal division.

The labour dispute intensified as AITUC and CITU union leaders arrived to learn more about the situation at the plantation. The protesters have demanded a wage hike, medical help and proper maintenance of the factory. The workers have said that they were not ready for any compromise until their demands are met.

As the situation developed, the estate office that was opened in the morning was closed soon after. A huge posse of policemen is camping at the place, and the manager has been consulting with the company management.

Join the Communist Party of Canada



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

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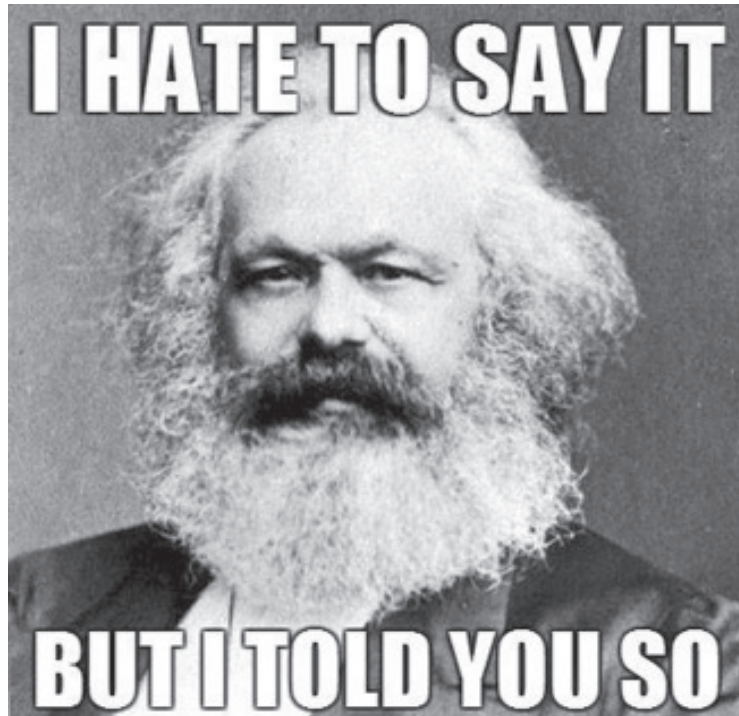
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Canada helped create the crisis - now we must welcome refugees

Statement from the Central Executive Committee, Communist Party of Canada

The refugee issue has become a major factor in the federal election, after the tragic deaths of young Alan Kurdi and his brother and mother. But the so-called "refugee crisis" is the predictable result of western imperialist policies of internal intervention and wars in the Middle East, central Asia and North Africa. Millions have died

as a result of the military debacles from Iraq to Afghanistan to Libya and now Syria. Homes, cities and economic infrastructure have been demolished across huge areas, and now over 50 million people have been displaced.

Canada has been an important player in most of these US-led military campaigns of the last two decades, and our country therefore bears considerable responsibility for the deaths of Alan Kurdi and many others. Recent reports

indicate that Canada has sent over \$700 million in arms to anti-government forces in Syria since 2011, which is more than all the EU countries combined in that period.

The Communist Party of Canada has strongly opposed these imperialist policies, and we demand an end to the deadly strategy of militarization and war-making. Canada must withdraw from the NATO alliance, and end all participation in foreign wars

and so-called "humanitarian military interventions." Now that the death and destruction across these regions has left tens of millions of people homeless, unemployed and displaced, Canada must open its doors to accept refugees from Syria, Iraq,

and so-called "humanitarian military interventions." Now that the death and destruction across these regions has left tens of millions of people homeless, unemployed and displaced, Canada must open its doors to accept refugees from Syria, Iraq,

ment's barriers to sponsoring refugees made it impossible for the aunt to bring the whole family. The truth is that the Harper government is hurting migrants and refugees, not helping them. "Canadians are coming forward to help refugees, but are being blocked by the policies Stephen Harper imposed," says Waziruddin. "The Conservatives cut refugee healthcare, not because they want to save money, but to appeal to racist sentiments among some voters. Canada has an international treaty obligation to help refugees, and we must make the government accept its responsibility."

Instead, PM Stephen Harper wants to increase Canada's military involvement, fuelling the crisis by escalating the bombing and violence in Syria and Iraq, and spreading the lie that refugees pose a terrorist threat to Canada. Mr. Harper must be defeated, and Canada must adopt the only humanitarian option, by opening our doors to the refugees of 21st century wars and environmental catastrophes, and stop its involvement in the wars and aggression that has produced this crisis and many others.

In this campaign, the Communist Party of Canada calls for a democratic immigration policy: stop criminalizing refugees; give priority to refugees not to capitalist investors; abolish the racist quota system and two-tier citizenship; create a clear and accessible path to permanent residency and citizenship for all foreign and migrant workers in Canada. ●



Afghanistan, Libya and other countries. To help make this possible, we call for a 75% cut in Canada's bloated \$20 billion-plus annual military budget, and use these funds to support refugees and to provide urgently needed humanitarian aid to the victims of war.

Earlier this week, at a rally in front outside the campaign office of Ontario Conservative MP Rick Dykstra, St. Catharines Communist candidate Saleh Waziruddin said, "The tragic deaths in the Kurdi family have exposed the Conservative lies about refugees and migrants. The Conservatives are trying to wash their hands of responsibility, saying they only got an application from the uncle, but the aunt wrote a letter to them about the whole family and got no response. The Harper govern-

Assad: West caused refugee exodus

From the Morning Star, www.morningstaronline.co.uk/

Syrian President Bashar al-Assad has warned Western powers that the refugee crisis is the result of their support for terrorists fighting his government. In an interview with Russia Today broadcast on Sept. 16, Assad accused Europe of "double standards" and said that his government's priority was the fight against terrorism.

He denounced EU leaders for providing "protection for terrorists, calling them moderates, (for) dividing them into groups, when they are in fact the terrorist groups in Syria.

"If you are worried about (refugees), stop supporting terrorists," he said.

Assad paid tribute to toddler Alan Kurdi, who drowned with his brother and mother en route to Europe, but cautioned against overreaction.

"We all mourn these innocent victims," the president said. "But is one life lost drowned at sea more valuable than those who have died in Syria? How can one be indignant about a drowned child and remain silent about the death of thousands of children, elderly people, women and men killed by terrorists in Syria? These European double standards are unacceptable."

He called on other parties to join his Ba'ath party in the formation of a united front against Islamic State (ISIS).

His comments came as Australian Defence Minister Kevin Andrews said that Canberra had bombed ISIS targets in Syria and France announced that it too would begin bombing in weeks.

A spokesperson for the US State Department repeated that there could be no role for Damascus in fighting ISIS, despite the Syrian army bearing the brunt of the fighting in the four-year civil war.

In a phone call on Sept. 15, US Secretary of State John Kerry threatened Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov with a protracted war in Syria if Moscow did not halt arms sales to Syria and instead support regime change.

Meanwhile, South African president Jacob Zuma echoed his Syrian and Russian counterparts in rejecting external military interference in Syria in violation of the UN charter.

"To achieve lasting peace in Syria, the international community must reject all calls for regime change in that country," he said at a briefing for foreign ambassadors. "Support for non-state actors and terrorist organisations that seek to effect a regime change in Syria is unacceptable."

South Korea in breach of Olympic charter over 2018 Winter Games

The Gariwang was considered a royal, forbidden mountain and has been under state protection for centuries. Now its ancient forest is being bulldozed to make room for a ski slope. Writing in the Morning Star (www.morningstaronline.co.uk), Peter Frost calls this an environmental crime

As you are reading this South Korea Olympic organisers and their bulldozers are tearing down a 500-year-old forest to make room for new ski facilities. Trees, some centuries old, are being ripped from the ground and four dangerously threatened animal species that make their home here are being persecuted into extinction.

The four animals under serious threat are the eurasian otter, the leopard cat, the marten and the flying squirrel. All four along with rare and threatened insects and plants are at severe risk from the policy decision that will see the forest cut down entirely. Across the mountainside a huge bare-earth scar has appeared where South Koreans are building a ski course for the 2018 Winter Olympics.

Any building or development for Olympic games should—in accordance with the International Olympic Committee rules—conform to green Olympics rules and be built and operated on principles of environmental sustainability. In fact the Korean devel-

opments fly directly in the face of world opinion and the views of the wider Olympic movement.

The Korean government has a hidden agenda. It is clear that when the Games are over the site will be further developed as a profitable winter sports tourist resort despite lame assurances that the site can be returned to pristine forest after the 2018 winter games.

The country's most beloved mountain will disappear under a huge and tacky tourist infrastructure where profit and quick money replace a sustainable ancient forest and a tranquil landscape close to the heart of Koreans.

The site is on the sacred Mount

Gariwang, a mountain that features in much of the rich cultural history of Korea. It has long been a protected area covered by an ancient forest rich in rare flora and fauna. A place of peace and home to many local folktales and legends.

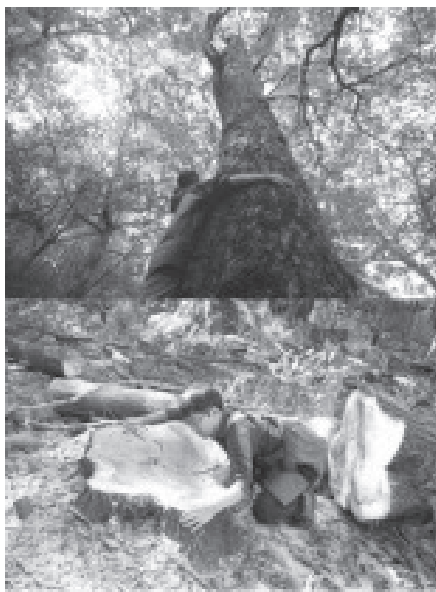
As well as the above mentioned threatened species it is also home to many unique plant species, including the rare yew, the Wangsasre tree, which is only found on the Korean peninsula. Also growing in the forest is what is believed to be the oldest oak in the country. The felling and clearing of this ancient woodland can only be seen as an act of wanton vandalism.

During the late 14th century under the Chosun dynasty the Gariwang mountain was considered a royal, forbidden mountain and has been under state protection ever since.

Now that centuries-old special protective status has been swept away — first to secure the Olympic bid success and when that was won to make way for the construction of a ski course.

This environmental vandalism is short sighted, illogical and, worst of all, irreversible. Once this precious forest is gone, it's gone forever and with it will go the threatened animals and plants that made it their home.

An online petition to the Korean government organised by Avaaz has attracted over a million signatures.



**What's more precious?
3 Days of Ski Games vs
500-year-old Primitive Forests**

Parallels between Leap, Communist platform...

continued from page 7

and democratic control of energy and natural resources.

The Leap urges higher wage jobs with fewer work hours, similar to the Communist platform for higher wages, job creation, and a 32-hour week with no loss in take home pay.

The Leap calls for full implementing the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, as does the CPC.

The Leap advocates "a universal program to build energy efficient homes, and retrofit existing housing, ensuring that the lowest income communities and neighbourhoods will benefit first and receive job training and opportunities that reduce poverty over the long term." The Communist platform calls housing "a basic human right," and demands emergency action to build one million units of affordable social housing.

Unlike the NDP, the Leap

Manifesto calls for "an end to all trade deals that interfere with our attempts to rebuild local economies, regulate corporations and stop damaging extractive projects." The Communist Party demands withdrawal from all current and pending pro-corporate trade pacts.

Both the Leap and the Communist platform call for higher taxes on corporations and wealthy people, and for cuts to military spending.

We invite readers to check out both documents and share your views. The Communist platform is online at www. communist-party.ca. The Leap Manifesto is at <https://leapmanifesto.org>.

65th birthday of "Indian Pablo Neruda" celebrated in Brampton

By Shamshad Elahee Shams

On September 12, People's Voice Forum-Brampton celebrated the 65th birthday of the highly revered poet of Punjab, Avtar Singh Pash, who was gunned down by Khalistani extremists on March 23, 1988.

Pash was only 37 when he took his last breath, but his glory continues to grow each passing year. Most of his poetry has been translated in all major languages of India, including English.

At least three people who addressed the informal memorial meeting had been directly associated with the legendary poet.

Kulwinder Khehra, representing "Kalama Da Kafila," shared his memories of Pash, and gave details of his time spent with the poet. He recited the poem which he wrote after hearing the news of the brutal murder of Pash. He connected March 23, 1931, the martyrdom day of Indian independence fighter Bhagat Singh, to the mindless murder of Pash, narrating details that nothing has changed since then. Khehra underlined the relevance of thoughts propagated by Pash, which will continue to gain attraction as long as the economic divide remains in society.

A long associate of Pash, Lal Singh Bains, shared his political experiences with the poet. We hardly see such a level of political commitment as Pash, he said, noting the poet's deep understanding of Marxism and his tremendous analysis of the local



Participants in the Sept. 12 celebration of Pash's 65th birthday.

and international political situation. "That was the real key to understand his poetry. He fought fearlessly for the landless peasants and workers and faced indiscriminate torture of the state head on."

Navkiran Sidhu from the North American Rationalist Society shared his meeting with Pash at a function at Deshbhakt Yadgaar Hal, Jalandhar. He was astonished to see his simplicity and said, "Are you Pash?" And Pash replied in his own funny way, "Why, Pash would have a tail on his back?"

Navkiran Sidhu said that he considered Pash sitting next to Bhagat Singh when the question arises about study, commitment and dedication for the Indian socialist revolution.

Poet Onkar Singh Preet defined Pash's poem on dreams, and explained why dreams are important for any living society. A dreamless society or dreamless

youths are nothing but dead.

Harparminder Gadri shared his college hostel time memories, when Pash along with his friend would arrive at his room in the middle of the night and start reciting poems, using kitchen utensils as his musical instruments. Pash's name and his work, he said, will always be a source of inspiration for the working class and their struggle against capitalism and imperialism.

Surprisingly, People's Voice Forum found out that this was first birthday celebration ever conducted in GTA in the memory of Pash. The Forum later resolved to carry on this event every year.

CPC Brampton North candidate Harinder Pal Hundal, Prof. Chanan Cheema, Sukhchain Dhillon, Pushpender Singh Mundi, and Sumeet Bains were amongst those present, and famous singer Baljit Bains sang a Pash poem to enlighten the audience. ●

NCCM welcomes court ruling on citizenship oaths

The National Council of Canadian Muslims (NCCM) has welcomed the Sept. 15 decision by the Federal Court of Appeal to uphold a federal judge's earlier decision to strike down a policy that prevented women wearing niqab (face veil) from taking the oath of Canadian citizenship.

Last February, the Federal Court ruled that an arbitrary regulation implemented by Citizenship and Immigration Canada, at the behest of then-Minister of Immigration and Citizenship Jason Kenney, to ban women wearing niqab from taking the oath was "unlawful" as it interfered with the discretion given to citizenship judges under the Citizenship Act.

In dismissing the government's subsequent appeal, the Federal

Court of Appeal said it wanted the complainant, Zunera Ishaq, to be able to obtain her Canadian citizenship quickly in order to vote in the upcoming federal election.

"We welcome today's ruling as consistent with our country's democratic principles. Although the niqab is clearly unpopular, misunderstood by many, and deeply controversial even among Muslims, equality before the law as articulated by the Charter and not popularity contests are what determines the values Canadians wish to uphold and cherish," says NCCM Communications Director Amira Elghawaby.

"We have seen and heard from a variety of women, legal and civil liberties groups and individuals, who have stood in support of

Zunera Ishaq and other women who choose to wear the face veil. This ruling reflects what Canada is about: accommodating differences that harm no one in order to preserve and protect individual freedom. So long as women show their identity for security and identification purposes, they should be permitted to practice their faith as freely as anyone else," says Elghawaby.

Research shows that only a small minority of Muslim women wear the niqab and have no issue removing it for security and identification purposes. In a 2012 ruling on wearing a niqab while testifying in court, the Supreme Court articulated the need to balance fundamental rights and freedoms. ●

The Greens on Israel/Palestine...

continued from page 12

Palestinians driven out by Israeli ethnic cleansing in 1948 and afterwards? Will the Greens support the call by Palestinians for "boycott, disinvestment and sanctions (BDS)" against Israel? And will they join the growing international recognition that Israel's anti-Palestinian policies constitute a modern day form of racist apartheid? Or will the Greens remain silent on these crucial questions, allowing the Netanyahu regime a free pass to continue its murderous tactics?

In conclusion, it seems that despite its "balanced" language,

"unpacking" the Green Party policy contains an inherent bias in favour of protecting the Israeli occupation state, at the expense of the Palestinian people. Among the registered political parties taking part in this federal election, only one - the Communist Party of Canada - stands in full solidarity with the Palestinian people and in support of the BDS campaign.

We urge PV readers to use every opportunity in this campaign to pressure the parliamentary parties on this issue, including the right to express solidarity with Palestine without being treated as a terrorist or a "threat to the security of Canada". ●



PV photo by Ed Bil



MUSIC NOTES

By Wally Brooker

"Harperman, it's time for you to go"

By now it's safe to say that millions of Canadians have heard of Tony Turner's "Harperman" song. The video of the anti-Harper anthem, composed and sung by the Environment Canada scientist, and accompanied by a community choir, has gone viral. By mid-September, more than 600,000 views had been logged on YouTube. The "Harperman" singalongs, held on September 17 in more than 39 cities have amplified the message. If polls are any indication, the majority of Canadians are in agreement with the song's chorus: "Harperman, it's time for you to go." The instigator of the uprising is a scientist with one of the public institutions muzzled by the Harperites, so he knows what he's talking about. Turner was set to retire this fall, but instead, he's been put on administrative leave pending an investigation on whether he's contravened the public sector ethics code. His union, the Professional Institute of the Public Service of Canada, is representing him in the investigation. Meanwhile, Tony Turner is encouraging people to get together to sing the song, add verses of their own, make videos and spread the word among their friends. For more info: www.harperman.ca.

"There's Always Money For a War"

It is probably no coincidence that several great anti-Harper songs have sprung from the nation's capital during this election season. Ian Robb and Shelley Posen, two of Ottawa's most distinguished traditional musicians, have entered the political fray with "There's Always Money for a War", a song that skewers what lyricist Posen calls "Mr. Harper's rending of the Canadian social, scientific, and cultural fabric", and gleefully parodies the PM's militarism and jingoism. Lead vocalist and music composer is Ian Robb, co-founder of the Canadian folk group Friends of Fiddlers Green. Robb's singing, concertina playing, and brass and drum arrangements evoke old-time U.K. working-class protest music. His musical contribution fits well with Posen's lyrics. Both mock Harper's evident nostalgia for imperialist pomp and circumstance. Clever video and animation work by folklorist Ian Bell and added harmony by vocalist Ann Downey round out a production that is not only topical but built to last. Download the song and lyrics and view the video at www.ianrobb.com.

Steve Earle challenges Mississippi

American roots musician Steve Earle has joined with the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) in a campaign to remove the last Confederate flag from a Southern statehouse. On September 11, Earle released "Mississippi, It's Time" on iTunes. After the killing of nine black church-goers in Charleston, SC in June by a young white man who photographed himself with the Confederate flag, the legislatures of South Carolina and Alabama removed the hateful symbol from their respective statehouses, leaving only Mississippi as the last holdout. The state incorporates the Confederate insignia into its flag. Earle, a native Texan, calls the Confederate flag "a form of terrorism" and completely rejects all sentimentality over the Confederacy. "I lived all my life in the South until I was 50 years old," he says, "and I don't believe Southern culture is the Civil War. To me Southern culture is Faulkner, Tennessee Williams, the blues, and jazz. The most powerful people have a vested interest in fostering hate because it keeps working people neutralized." "Mississippi, It's Time" drives the point home in a way that disarms reactionary cultural nostalgia. Proceeds from sales will go to the SPLC. For info: www.steveearle.com.

David Rovics: The Other Side

The release of a new album by David Rovics is always an event, offering an opportunity to reflect upon the tumultuous times in which we live. Rovics is a radical singer-songwriter with a rare ability to respond with eloquence to the daily news cycle of imperialist wars, financial meltdowns, ecological disasters, racist police killings, and sociopathic massacres. His analysis is sharp and critical, but always tempered by compassion for the innocent victims of capitalism and imperialism. The Other Side offers 16 new songs, most of which reflect upon contemporary headlines. "Angry White American Man" and "The State House Lawn" remind us of recent racially-inspired killing sprees in North and South Carolina. "Kobane" tells of the heroic defense of the Kurdish city of Kobane in Northern Syria against ISIS. "Before the War Came Home" reflects on the Charlie Hebdo shootings in Paris. "I Can't Breathe" is for Eric Garner, the African-American man who was choked to death by a New York policeman in 2014. The past is present in Rovics as well. The Other Side contains several original songs set in World War II Europe. "Denmark 1943" tells the story of a successful boat-lift of Danish Jews to Sweden. It couldn't be more timely. There's also a Joe Hill tribute to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the working-class bard's death. Stream it for free or download it from <http://davidrovics.bandcamp.com/>.

Protests spread across Iraq

By Tim Pelzer, Vancouver

The wave of protests washing across Iraq constitutes a popular revolt against neo-liberal measures being imposed by rightwing religious parties, according to Akram Nadir, a Vancouver-based international representative for the Federation of Workers Councils and Unions in Iraq (FWCUI).

Protests have spread like wildfire. Hundreds of thousands of demonstrators have taken to the streets in Al Basra, Baghdad and other large cities. On August 9th, over a half million workers protested in Baghdad.

The demonstrations were kick-started by electrical workers demanding an end to government efforts to privatize the state electrical company in northern Iraq, Nadir told the PV in a recent interview. From there, people began taking to the streets, protesting electrical black-outs in a country where it can get as hot as 60 degrees and air conditioning and fans are essential items of life.

Since then, new demands have emerged among protestors, such as measures to tackle the country's severe economic crisis as well as an end to privatization.

"Many workers are still not being paid for months on end in many state and private companies," said Nadir. "The official unemployment rate is 30 percent but is probably more. Many young people, especially those finishing university, are leaving the country because they cannot find a job."

Life in Iraq today is worse than it was under US sanctions before the US invasion in 2003, he added.

The rightwing Shiite United Iraqi Alliance coalition government of Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi plans to privatize 168 state companies at the urging of the World Bank and US, stated Nadir. State companies still dominate over 60% of the economy, especially strategic industries. The Ba'ath Party during the 1970s and '80s created a large state sector to develop the country's economic base that is largely still intact, despite ongoing privatization.

Nadir called this "organized looting" because managers are deliberately running state companies into the ground to create support for privatization.

"They are sabotaging production to weaken the state sector, hiding or destroying production, creating artificial electricity blackouts and water shortages to undermine the credibility of state companies," he said. "They don't want to pay the work force to demoralize workers."

The al-Abadi government is even underfunding the public healthcare system - once touted as the best in the Middle East - to force people to use private clinics.

Many leaders of the religious and nationalist parties that the US placed in power after the American invasion of Iraq in 2003 are now billionaire business people.

"What they did was steal state assets indirectly by selling state companies to relatives and family members for next to nothing. Privatization is killing the working class", charged Nadir. "Workers cannot survive and are demanding an end to privatization".

People are demanding an end to widespread corruption where government officials and military

officers, from top to bottom, are primarily interested in filling their bank accounts through bribes and theft, explained Nadir, who keeps his mobile phone open on the table to receive incoming calls from Iraq. "Corruption is worse today than under Saddam Hussein."

Ahmad al Chalaby Hesya, a member of a parliamentary committee investigating corruption, announced recently that \$525 billion (US) in state revenue has disappeared since 2003 and no one knows where it went.

Even the president of Iraq's Kurdish region was widely condemned for wearing an \$80,000 (US) luxury watch while giving a TV speech recently telling people that there is no money to provide basic public services. "People are asking, where did he get \$80,000 to buy a luxury watch when people are starving?" Nadir remarked.

Another demand being made by protestors is for the end of religious sectarianism and the separation of religion and state. The ruling Shiite United Iraqi Alliance coalition - consisting of the Dawa party and the Supreme Islamic Iraqi Council - are closely linked to Iran's government and want to impose a theocratic state. Iraq has a secular history, and most people do not want conservative Islamic leaders telling them how they should conduct their personal lives or, in the case of women,

what clothing they should use.

"While many people go to the Mosques, it is more out of tradition than a strict adherence to Islamic beliefs," Nadir explained. Large banners with the slogan "No to Sunnis, No to Shiites - For a Secular State" have appeared at many demonstrations, he added.

"What is remarkable is that Iraqis have poured into the streets despite the risk that security forces would step in," remarked Nadir. During the Arab Spring that washed over the Middle East in 2011, police and military brutally repressed Iraqi street demonstrations.

Nadir stated that no single organization has been responsible for organizing the demonstrations. "Some are spontaneous and others are organized by trade unions (affiliated to both the FWCUI and the Iraqi Federation of Labour, the country's two labour groupings). In some places, communists - either from the Iraqi Communist Party or Workers Communist Party - have organized demonstrations."

The demonstrations are not occurring in the ISIS controlled areas of Iraq where the trade union movement has had to go underground.

Nadir called on trade unionists in Canada to support protestors in Iraq. "We cannot be survive without international working class support." •



Anti-government protesters in southern Iraqi city of Basra.

"The KKE will utilize its forces for the regroupment of the movement, for the people's alliance"

Statement by Dimitris Koutsoumpas, General Secretary of the Communist Party of Greece (KKE) on the Sept. 20 election results.

The KKE salutes the hundreds of thousands of people who honoured it with their votes. All those men and women who ignored the extortion, the dilemmas, overcame hesitations and various reservations in order to join forces with the KKE.

The KKE will utilize its political, electoral and parliamentary strength to work for the comprehensive regroupment and strengthening of the labour-people's movement, for the construction of a great social, people's alliance.

The KKE is the only force whose struggle against the memoranda is at the same time a consistent struggle against the capitalist system itself, the system that also creates the predatory alliances which only bring new torments for the people, the country and the youth.

The KKE, as always, will stand shoulder to shoulder with our

people, consistently against any government that is ready to implement the barbaric memorandum.

The correlation of forces in parliament will in any case produce a coalition government. Its programmatic statements are already ready: the implementation of the 3rd memorandum. Capital, its political and governmental personnel, together with the Troika, wants to win the people's consent in order to implement the barbaric measures without resistance. They want a harmless, fake opposition so that its hands are free to wage the anti-people offensive.

The election results as a whole are negative for the workers, the employees, the urban and rural self-employed, the youth, the pensioners.

The KKE will consistently and continually struggle inside Parliament and inside the people's movement in order to isolate the Nazi monstrosity, Golden Dawn.

There needs to be a stronger KKE everywhere, in the work-places, in the places of education, the popular neighbourhoods, in the places where the heart of our

WFTU marks 70th anniversary

This month marks the 70th anniversary of the founding congress of the World Federation of Trade Unions, held Oct. 3-8 in Paris. That congress was attended by delegates representing 67 million workers from 56 national organizations and 20 international bodies.

The establishment of the WFTU closely followed the San Francisco Conference of June 1945 which created the United Nations. The Paris Congress of WFTU spoke in the name of the working people of the world, organized in trade unions who wanted a world free from war and social injustices.

The foundation of the WFTU was indicative of the new era which began with the defeat of fascism at the hands of the anti-fascist alliance of states.

Following a difficult period during the 1990s, the WFTU began a process of renewal. In January 2006 it moved its headquarters from Prague, Czech Republic to Athens, Greece. The WFTU has reinvigorated its activity by establishing regional federations of unions in the Third World, and organizing campaigns against imperialism, racism, poverty, environmental degradation and exploitation of workers under capitalism. In recent years, the WFTU has recruited several important trade unions in Europe, as well as COSATU (South Africa) and some other large union bodies in Africa.

Today, the WFTU represents 78 million members of 210 trade union organizations, from 105 countries across all six inhabited continents.

The WFTU website is at www.wftucentral.org. •

People's Voice deadlines

October 16-31 issue: Thursday, Oct. 1

November 1-15 issue: Thursday, Oct. 22

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

CUPE engages community to save VCC

VANCOUVER – CUPE 4627, representing 600 education, administrative, library and facility support workers at Vancouver Community College (VCC) in downtown Vancouver, are taking on the BC Liberal government.

Premier Christy Clark is putting Vancouver Community College on the chopping block, say leaders of the newly launched Save Our VCC campaign.

The campaign says that VCC has endured devastating cuts over the past two years, resulting in more than 120 layoffs—including 52 in August—and the loss of college programs and services to students. The Save Our VCC campaign was launched to inspire community action to pressure the Clark government to re-invest in the college.

"VCC is Vancouver's most affordable community college, giving a hand up to thousands who might not otherwise get the education they need," said CUPE 4627 President Chris Joyce, noting that VCC has a proud history of serving marginalized communities.

"It's a job-creating machine with 93 per cent of graduates from diploma, certificate, and associate degree programs employed on graduation," says Joyce. "It just doesn't make any sense to put it on the chopping block."

More cuts are expected over the next year, with another cut to VCC's operating grant from the province, and the loss of dedicated funding for adult upgrading. In addition to layoffs this summer, funding was suspended for campus maintenance and the downtown campus coffee shop was closed.

"It feels like death by a thousand cuts," said Ghezal Sorkhabi of VCC's students' union. "VCC does so much good for so many people; now we all need to speak up and defend it."

The Save Our VCC community is made up of people and organizations concerned about ongoing cuts, closures and layoffs at VCC, Vancouver's most affordable college. VCC is one of B.C.'s oldest community colleges, serving a diverse urban community at two campuses in the City's downtown core.

Save Our VCC is calling on the government to stop the cuts and make access to affordable community education a priority again. Go to www.SaveOurVCC.ca and take action.

struggling and sorely tested people truly beats.

In the final count, the KKE received 5.55% (301,629 votes), retaining its 15 seats in the parliament. The SYRIZA party led by Alex Tsipras finished first with 35.46%, winning 145 seats (including 50 seats for taking the largest vote percentage), and will continue to govern with its right-wing ally, the ANEL ("Independent Greeks"), which won 3.66% and 10 seats. The main big business party, New Democracy, won 28% and 75 seats; the neo-nazi Golden Dawn won 6.99%

and 18 seats; the coalition of PASOK-DIMAR right-wing social democratic parties won 6.33% and 17 seats (a gain of four from PASOK's previous total); "The River" centrist party won 4.06% and 11 seats (a loss of six); and the Union of Centrists won 3.36%, passing the 3% barrier to enter parliament with nine seats. The Popular Unity party (LAE), formed by MPs who left SYRIZA after Tsipras surrendered in July to the most recent EU memorandum, received 2.86% (155,240 votes), not enough to elect any MPs. •

Stop silencing Palestine solidarity!

*Central Executive Committee,
Communist Party of Canada,
Sept. 17, 2015*

So far in the current federal election campaign, there has been a virtual silence from the major political parties about one of the most crucial international issues: Israel's illegal, apartheid-style occupation of Palestine, and the shift in Canada's position to unconditional support for Israel's expansionist policies. Despite the courageous efforts of many grassroots Palestinian solidarity activists, this issue has been almost completely blocked from any meaningful public debate. This is largely due to the consistent attempt by the Harper Conservatives and pro-Israel lobby groups to label any criticism of Israeli policies as "anti-Semitism", and to vilify all those who support the BDS campaign for "boycott, disinvestment and sanctions" against Israel. One of the key objectives of Harper's Bill C-51 was its implicit inclusion of BDS campaign activists among the many categories of so-called "terrorists".

"In our 2015 election platform," says Communist Party of Canada leader Miguel

Figuroa, "we renew our principled call to oppose Israeli apartheid and its continuing siege of Gaza, and to demand a just peace in the Middle East based on total withdrawal of Israel from all occupied territories, the release of Palestinian political prisoners held in Israeli jails, the right of return for Palestinian refugees, and the formation of an independent, viable Palestinian state."

"Our candidates will make opposition to the illegal Israeli occupation of Palestine a key element of our campaign. We will continue to give full support to the BDS movement, including the ongoing efforts to break the Israeli blockade and bring material solidarity to the people of Gaza."

Figuroa, who is the CPC candidate in the Toronto riding of Davenport, also noted that "although millions of Canadians are strongly opposed to Israel's illegal occupation of Palestinian territories and its wars against the people of Gaza, the 'major' parties display a shameful consensus that no criticism of such policies can be expressed."

In this respect, the parliamentary opposition parties refuse to utter a word to challenge the Harper Conservative stance of unquestioning support for Israel.

Any candidate of these parties who is discovered to have previously expressed opinions critical of Israeli policies faces possible removal from the race, and in fact a number of NDP candidates or potential candidates have been silenced in this way. By stifling their own candidates and members, these parties all give support to the Israeli regime.

"In some cases, the subservience of the parliamentary opposition parties has gone even further. For example, the Liberals and the NDP joined with the Conservatives in expressing condolences to the family of the late war criminal Ariel Sharon, the butcher of Sabra and Shatilla," Figuroa added. "We also recall that BC Green MLA Andrew Weaver publicly called for removal of a Vancouver Island billboard calling for support of the BDS campaign, falsely accusing the groups which placed this billboard of being racists and anti-Semitic."

The Communist Party of Canada is proud of its longstanding policies of solidarity with the Palestinian people, and we will continue to express our views, regardless of the threats of the Conservative government and the complicity of the mainstream

media in silencing dissent.

In Montreal, the Communist Party's campaign is aiming to make Palestine an election issue and confront Harper's attempt to criminalize BDS by placing signs throughout the city. The signs are being coordinated by William Sloan, Party candidate in Ville-Marie-Le sud-ouest-Île-des-sœurs.

"For the third straight time our election posters' slogan is END CANADIAN SUPPORT FOR APARTHEID ISRAEL. Two elections ago, the City of West-mount

removed these signs illegally, but had their fingers slapped by the Election Commissioner," said Sloan, who is a retired refugee lawyer, and a long time activist with Palestinian and Jewish Unity (PAJU) in Montreal.

"This time we are upping the ante to confront the government's attempt to muzzle freedom of expression," Sloan said. "Our signs have the photo of the boy who was killed on a Gaza beach last year while playing soccer with his cousins." ●



Toronto - Solidarity rally for Palestine during the July 2014 Israeli war against Gaza. PV photo by Ed Bil

Unpacking the Green Party policy on Israel-Palestine

People's Voice commentary

Supporters of the Green Party of Canada sometimes argue that their party has a more nuanced and "even-handed" approach to the Israel-Palestine conflict than the larger parties in Parliament. This applies especially to the most pro-Zionist governing party in the world, the Harper Conservatives, who enthusiastically support every war crime and violation of international law perpetrated by the Netanyahu regime.

It is true that the Greens allow more scope for pro-Palestinian views than the NDP or the Liberals.

Last year, the NDP leadership denied Paul Manly the right to seek a nomination in the Vancouver Island riding of Nanaimo-Ladysmith. Manly says that while

nothing was put in writing, he was told verbally that the reason was "what I said and did when my father was in Israel," and concerns that he would make Israel and Palestine an election issue.

In October 2012, Manly's father Jim, a retired NDP MP, took part in a humanitarian mission to Gaza aboard the *Estelle*, along with European members of parliament and Israelis who oppose the blockade of Gaza. The *Estelle* was illegally seized in international waters by the Israeli military, and Jim Manly was taken to an Israeli prison and held incommunicado.

Not surprisingly, Paul Manly spoke out on behalf of his father, for which he was punished by the NDP. Unhappy with this development, and with the NDP's support for "free trade" deals and

other policies, he moved to the Green Party, winning its nomination in Nanaimo-Ladysmith.

This episode has been interpreted to mean that the Greens have a relatively pro-Palestinian position. But in fact, the party's policy is based on the view that the "conflict between the Israelis and Palestinians" is the fault of "both sides." This "balanced" position ignores that historic reality that Israel displaced hundreds of thousands of Palestinians during the 1948 "nakba," and eventually occupied huge pieces of the remaining Palestinian territories.

The Green policy goes on to state that "military or insurgency strategies" will not bring about an end to the conflict, as though there was any true comparison between the enormous Israeli military

machine (including its nuclear arsenal) and the unguided rockets fired by Hamas.

On a more positive note, the policy says that "Canada's role in the Middle East should be to reduce tensions, find working solutions, and uphold international humanitarian law." The Greens also support "a two-state solution to the Israel-Palestine conflict", which is also the historic position of the PLO (and the Communist Party of Canada).

However, the policy statement regards the occupying Israeli state and the oppressed Palestinians as "equal" partners. For example, it says Green MPs will "call on both sides to immediately stop the killing of civilians and adhere to international law," but nowhere does it recognize the vastly asymmetrical nature of the conflict.

During Israel's 2014 war against Gaza, an estimated 2200 Gazans were killed (70% civilians) and over 10,000 wounded (including 3,374 children). By comparison, 66 Israeli soldiers and five Israeli civilians were killed, and 469 IDF soldiers and 261 Israeli civilians were injured. About 520,000 Palestinians in Gaza (almost one-third of its population) were displaced, of whom 485,000 needed emergency food assistance and 273,000 took

shelter in 90 UN-run schools. The UN calculates that more than 7,000 homes for 10,000 families were razed, together with an additional 89,000 homes damaged by Israeli bombing. Rebuilding costs are estimated at \$4-6 billion over 20 years. In Israel, an estimated 5,000 to 8,000 citizens temporarily fled their homes due to the threat of rocketry from Gaza.

Despite these shocking figures, the Green Party policy is to "protect as inviolable the right of the State of Israel to exist, in the absence of fear and conflict," remarkably omitting the rights of Palestinians to exist without fear!

The statement concludes that Green MPs would "call for an end to the collective siege of Gaza so that medical and humanitarian aid can be provided; call on Israel to stop expansion and the building of illegal settlements beyond the 1967 borders; and actively support the efforts of civil society groups working for peace, human rights, and justice in the region."

These are laudable goals. But many questions still need to be asked. For example, would the Greens call for Israeli citizens to be completely withdrawn from the illegal settlements? Do they support the right of return for

see GREENS, page 10

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