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# people's VOICE

## ARREST BUSH!

*See page 5*

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# Uprising of the 99%



*What's behind Wall Street protests? - page 6*

*Declaration of New York City - page 6*

*Occupy your city!  
Editorial on page 4*

## Unequal treatment derails Missing Women Inquiry - p. 3

**12**

### What empires do

The "U.S. empire" has been a hot topic in recent years. Author Michael Parenti will be on tour in Southern Ontario, speaking about the urgent need to understand and resist U.S. imperialism.

**INSIDE**

**9**

### Better health care

Despite spending far less per capita than in Canada or the U.S., socialist Cuba has found ways to dramatically improve the health of its people.

**10**

### Hot Earth

A new pamphlet from the Communist Party of Australia looks at the global environmental crisis and calls for radical economic and social changes to ensure human survival.



# McGill strikers turn up the heat on employer

## PV Montreal Bureau

Montreal's prestigious McGill University, often ranked number one among Canadian post-secondary institutions, is denying justice for non-academic staff, says the union for the workers, who have been without a contract for almost a year and fighting a difficult strike since September 1st.

The McGill University Non-Academic Certified Association (MUNACA, which is affiliated to the Public Service Alliance of Canada) represents 1,700 non-academic employees, including library assistants, lab technicians, and clerical administrators. MUNACA is seeking parity with other university workers in Montreal, protection of their pensions, and implementation of a fair wage scale.

"These conditions are not conducive to education," MUNACA president Kevin Whittaker told *People's Voice*, accusing the university of trying to wear down the strikers at the expense of students and research.

McGill has declared the campus a "no free-speech zone" according to the union. A Quebec Superior Court injunction, demanded by the

administration and recently extended, restricts picketers from speaking to students and faculty about their concerns, pushing them away from campus and instructing them to keep quiet.

"McGill is also sending out emails to students with misleading information about the strike," says Jessica Rozon, a student at McGill. Rozon's mother is a member of MUNACA (almost eighty per cent of MUNACA's members are women). The strike impacts her family, as well as her academic life.

"One computer lab I use now only has about 24 functioning computers with just four working printers, creating problems for students" Rozon told PV. "The people who work in the library, and really [all campus workers] are overloaded. McGill is not fairly negotiating and this is a big issue for people."

"Their working conditions are our learning conditions," says Jamie Burnett, a member of the McGill student's union (SSMU). Burnett helped draft a SSMU council resolution backing the strikers and has joined in numerous actions in support of the MUNACA.

The strike particularly impacts

students with disabilities and those relying on financial aid. "It is a real concern how seriously the administration actually takes what student's think," he says, noting that student's are also fighting steep tuition increases.

A group of biology professors also recently publicly backed the strikers, citing serious concerns about the deterioration of McGill's academic standards, especially on research funding and the quality of education.

"MUNACA is the largest and strongest union on campus," said Faridudin Attar, the president of the Association of McGill University Support Employees which represents casual, part-time and temporary workers. "Many of our demands [in negotiations] are very similar."

"We've had students, professors, community members and the labour movement out in support," Whittaker says. The union is now turning up the heat by organizing surprise "flashmob" actions outside the offices of members of McGill's Board of Governors, which includes representatives from major corporations. Kathy Fazel at the Royal Bank of Canada, Martine Turcotte at Bell Canada, and Thierry Vandal at Hydro Quebec have all been targeted.

"If our union can take on Diamond Mines, Canada Post and the federal government, it can take



On the picket line at McGill. Photo from the MUNACA website, <http://munacastrike.wordpress.com>

on the McGill Board of Governors," a speaker said at a recent strike rally.

McGill has repeatedly been rated as one of Canada's elite

educational institutions. Ironically, a business group also recently ranked the school as one of Canada's best employers - along with Air Canada! ●

## Manitoba NDP elected to fourth term

By Darrell Rankin, Leader, Communist Party of Canada-Manitoba

Convinced that the Tories were the worse threat, voters in Manitoba elected the NDP to its fourth consecutive term in office on October 4. The NDP took 36 out of 57 seats, to 19 for the Tories and one Liberal. In the context of an escalating global economic crisis, most voters supported continuity instead of change as the best survival tactic.

The NDP made minimal promises to improve health care, expand jobs, education and training, and to fight crime with more police officers. They were able to keep the Tories on the defensive as untrustworthy and likely to privatize Manitoba Hydro, which 90 per cent of people want to keep public.

Fear governed the short stampede to the polls, but the NDP's slogans managed to reassure voters "Progress families can count on," "Let's keep building" and "Let's not risk it."

The NDP, Tories and corporate media all covered up the economic crisis "poverty and the loss of better-paying jobs" and the impact of global warming to create worse, perhaps catastrophic floods in the province. The NDP's reassurances can't last long.

The idea that "elections are not the time for complex discussions" was dutifully enforced by the corporate media throughout the campaign. There was a near total blackout of the Communist platform, and scant comment on the Green Party's platform which contained some gestures to the "People's Agenda for Manitoba" raised by the Communists.

One editorial writer in the Winnipeg Free Press called the election "one of the most vapid and banal contests in Manitoba history." Big business groups led an ineffective campaign for "bold ideas," such as increasing the number of entrepreneurs. The only meaningful fact in "Manitoba Bold's" full page ads was that the province has the lowest wages in Western Canada.

So what are we left with? After the election, Manitoba Chamber of Commerce head Dave Angus said the main parties are "wandering around in the dark," they have "no bold vision for the future," and that the NDP's victory is "not a concern for the Chamber." All absolutely true.

The debate on real solutions for Manitoba's many festering problems is stalled. For example, unions carried out a campaign to remind people that public opinion supports keeping Manitoba Hydro public, a defensive effort when in fact real change is needed to prevent greater setbacks.

The Communist Party carried out a vigorous campaign which had four candidates on the ballot, reached tens of thousands door to door, and brought many closer to our positions. We were greeted with curiosity, warmth, support and recognition at many doors.

Affected by the blackout and the short campaign, Communist votes dropped slightly, ranging from 0.6% to 1.0% of the votes in the four ridings. But the Communist Party has full confidence in its People's Agenda and will be around in the next election. We have much work to do to make sure the stampede is different the next time. ●

## Tentative deal in U.S. Steel lockout

As this issue of *People's Voice* went to the printer, active members and pensioners of United Steelworkers Local 1005 in Hamilton were preparing for an information meeting to discuss a tentative agreement reached between the union and U.S. Steel on Oct. 10.

A news release to Local 1005 members, locked out by the company since November 2010, says, "As you know, the union has stayed united as one behind its negotiating committee in its opposition to company attempts to dictate concessions and its refusal to take up its social responsibilities towards its Hamilton Works labour force. Local 1005 has stood as one behind the steadfast attempts of the negotiating committee to reach a negotiated settlement with U.S. Steel which the workers feel they can accept.

"Finally, on Monday, after eleven months of a phony lockout and repeated decreed 'final offers', some headway was made and negotiations finally took place producing a tentative agreement. This will be provided for your consideration at the information meeting on Wednesday, October 12, 2011.

"If this entire experience has given us anything at all, it is the confidence that today Hamilton steelworkers can proudly and confidently exercise an informed vote, fully aware of the situation they face and of their responsibilities towards not just themselves and their families, but also towards the retirees, the future generation of workers, their union and their community, as well as the plight of Canada itself whose steel

industry is now in foreign hands. We are also confident that this experience has prepared us further for the challenges which lie ahead.

"See you all on Wednesday to that together we can deliberate on

whether or not this tentative agreement meets our needs at this time."

Our next issue will report on latest developments in this important working class struggle ● .

## Four Directions Walk to End Poverty in Manitoba

Winnipeg's largest annual anti-poverty activity, the Four Directions Walk will take place on Saturday, October 22. Four walks from the city's perimeter will meet at the Legislature at 3:00 pm for a rally and discussion of the Justice Charter to End Poverty.

Organizers are working to make this fourth annual walk the largest ever, considering the rise in poverty and food bank use "an increase of 10,000 to 57,000 a month in the last reported year, 2010.

The Four Directions Walk Committee is looking for sponsoring groups to take on one of the directions, to bring literature and nominate Elders or speakers. Drummers are welcome on the walks or at the rally. The group may be reached at (204)792-3371. ●

## Winnipeg Labour Council calls for action on Wheat Board

### PV Manitoba Bureau

At its September monthly meeting the Winnipeg Labour Council unanimously supported a resolution calling on the Canadian Labour Congress take urgent measures to block the Conservative government from passing legislation that would kill the Canadian Wheat Board. According to the resolution, the action should be "in alliance with other Labour, farm, student, women's, Aboriginal and faith groups."

The vote took place after delegates heard from Bill Toews, an elected CWB director and farmer. Toews responded to questions how farming had changed, pointing out that corporations are becoming an ever larger presence in the farm economy. Toews exposed the dictatorial approach of the Conservative Party which ignores the democratic wish of farmers to keep the Board intact.

The meeting also heard from Manitoba NDP Labour Minister Nancy Allen who urged delegates help in its election campaign, explaining that the NDP was facing its greatest threat since it was elected in 1999. There was applause, but one delegate said the NDP still gave millions more last summer to True North, owners of Winnipeg's new NHL team, a billionaire anti-union outfit. ●



# Unequal treatment derails Missing Women Inquiry

PV Vancouver Bureau

"Sisters in Spirit" vigils in dozens of locations on October 4th drew attention to the hundreds of missing and murdered women across Canada, and the failure of governments and police forces to make this issue a top priority.

One flashpoint of this crisis has been in British Columbia, where an official "Missing Women Commission of Inquiry" has lost public credibility. While millions of taxpayer dollars are provided to ensure legal counsel for police forces which failed to protect women, the "family friendly" government of Premier Christy Clark has rejected such funding to other organizations, many of which have dropped out of the process.

On Sept. 28, 20 of the 21 organizations which had been granted standing to appear before the inquiry, and another ten supporting groups, sent the following joint letter to Premier Clark.

"We write to you as organizations directly interested in the crucial human rights concerns at the heart of the Missing Women Commission of Inquiry, established by your government's September 27, 2010 Order in Council. Regretfully, we write to advise you that this Commission is in serious jeopardy. We are asking for you to intervene in this broken process, meet with our organizations, hear our concerns, and take steps to ensure that the Commission lives up to its vital mandate to determine why so many women's lives were lost and what can be done to prevent a recurrence of this tragedy.

"...All of our organizations share the goal of ending violence against girls and women. This Commission has as a key mandate identifying the systemic failures that led to brutal violence against women from



The Women's Memorial March held every February 14 pays tribute to murdered and missing women in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside. (Photo: K. Cariou)

Vancouver's Downtown Eastside, and failed to prevent it. That violence against this group of vulnerable women continues to this day; the problem has not been solved with the arrest of William Pickton. This Commission is therefore not just a necessary step, but is only one step towards ending violence against women. Its failure and its loss of legitimacy among women and girls and those that support their safety is a disappointing continuation of successive failures of governments to enact meaningful policies to eradicate violence against women, and, in particular, against Indigenous women and other vulnerable and disadvantaged women...

"Our concerns are simple but fundamental: that those with information critical to the inquiry are assisted and supported so that their information can come before

the Commission; that the hearings, when held, provide a fair and safe opportunity for those with evidence to share their information and be heard; that groups granted standing have representation by legal counsel of their choice, just as the police do, so that they may probe and engage with the evidence that comes to light; and that, when the hearings are concluded, government will act in a constructive way in reforming policy based on the information collected...

"We urge you to appoint

someone senior within government to hold an emergency meeting with every group granted standing in this Inquiry, either in a group, or individually, to determine how this Commission of Inquiry may be fixed. We urge your government to repair the inquiry process based on these consultations so that we may all move forward."

Heading the list of signers are 17 families of murdered women: Dianne Rock, Georgina Papin, Marmie Frey, Cynthia Dawn Feliks, Cara Ellis, Mona Wilson, Helen May Hallmark, Dawn Crey, Angela

Hazel Williams, Jacqueline Murdock, Brenda Wolfe, Andrea Joesbury, Elsie Sebastian, Heather Bottomley, Andrea Borhaven, Tiffany Drew, and Angela Jardine.

The organizations include the Assembly of First Nations, Amnesty International Canada, B.C. Civil Liberties Association, Carrier Sekani Tribal Council, Don Larsen (of Crab Water for Life Society), Downtown Eastside Women's Centre, The Ending Violence Association of B.C. (EVA BC), the February 14th Women's Memorial March Committee, First Nations Summit, Frank Paul Society, Native Courtworker and Counselling Association of BC, Native Women's Association of Canada, Providing Alternatives Counselling & Education Society (PACE), Sex Workers United Against Violence Society, Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs, Vancouver Area Network of Drug Users (VANDU), WISH Drop In Centre Society (WISH), West Coast Women's Legal Education Fund, Women's Equality and Security Coalition, Aboriginal Women's Action Network, Canadian Association of Sexual Assault Centres, Coalition of Childcare Advocates, EVE (formerly Exploited Voices now Educating), Justice for Girls, National Congress of Black Women Foundation, University Women's Club of Vancouver, Vancouver Rape Relief Society, Poverty and Human Rights Centre, Asian Women Coalition Ending Prostitution, Provincial Council of Women. ●

## CLC says Ottawa must tie tax cuts to job creation

OTTAWA - The Canadian Labour Congress says that the federal government is getting poor value for the \$31 billion that it has provided in corporate tax breaks during the past four years.

"The government's policy of cutting corporate taxes and hoping that the private sector will create jobs is just not working," says CLC President Ken Georgetti. "The Finance Minister admits that there is a lot of cash sloshing around on corporate balance sheets. They are getting big tax breaks but sitting on the money rather than creating jobs."

There are almost 1.4 million Canadians unemployed, well above the number prior to the Great Recession which began in October 2008. The rate of unemployment in September 2011 was 7.1% compared to 6.1% in October 2008. The jobless rate for young people in August was 14%.

Georgetti says that the Canadian economy and those of other industrialized countries are slowing down while unemployment remains high. "We have to create new jobs and the government has failed to tie corporate tax cuts to job creation by the private sector." ●

## Here's my contribution to the PV Fund Drive!

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Send your contribution to:

People's Voice, 706 Clark Drive, Vancouver, BC, V5L 3J1

By Jane Bouey, COPE candidate for Vancouver School Board in the Nov. 19 civic election. Bouey was a trustee on the 2002-2005 COPE board. She was elected again in 2008 as part of the Vision-COPE majority. This commentary has also appeared on the Georgia Straight website.

When my son began school, he faced serious learning challenges. Teachers, extraordinary champions for my son, shared tears with me as they explained that if he had just started a few years earlier he would have received the support he needed. When I successfully advocated for such supports, I soon realized these scarce resources would be taken from another child. I began to see the big picture.

Gradually I understood that thousands of students - those living in poverty, students for whom English was an additional language, Aboriginal students, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered and questioning (LGBTQ) students - all faced barriers to having their unique learning needs met.

I joined others in the community advocating for full funding of public education. We were angered by NPA school boards who were reluctant to stand up for our students. Those Boards looked to corporate funding, fundraising and

fees to make up the shortfall. But we saw we could count on COPE to defend public education.

Working people - overtime, and around the world - have struggled for free, democratically controlled, quality public schools. One of the fathers of public education in Canada, Egerton Ryerson stated in 1847, "Education is as necessary



Vancouver Trustee Jane Bouey

as light. It should be as common as water and as free as the air." Inclusive, relevant and engaging public schools teach critical thinking and even have the power to liberate.

This election is taking place with the backdrop of the teachers' job action, provoked by a premier trying to relive her "glory years". As minister of education, she presided over massive funding cuts. Students who face barriers to learning were hurt the most.

## "COPE will continue to defend public education"

Parents fled the public system. Teachers' collective agreements were stripped. COPE and Vision trustees have done our best to keep the cuts out of the classrooms, but public education has yet to recover from Christy's shock treatment.

This is a "make-it or break-it" moment in BC. We cannot afford a Vancouver School Board made up of Liberal yes men.

I am proud to currently serve as Vice Chair of the School Board. Vision and COPE have worked well together - disagreeing sometimes, but always keeping our eyes on the big picture. We have been vocal and visible advocates for public education. Together we have helped force the province to come up with a bit more money for education and seismic upgrades. Together we have worked with the Aboriginal community to move ahead with bold new ideas.

With COPE at the table, we have continued the groundbreaking LGBTQ work begun under the COPE Board in 2002-2005. We have spoken out against child poverty and stopped the closure of five eastside schools.

Whether part of a majority, or in opposition, and no matter who is in power provincially, I will continue to fight for well resourced schools so that every student can learn to the best of their ability. You can count on COPE trustees to stand up for public education - just like we have for 40 years. ●



# EDITORIALS

## Occupy (your city)

To paraphrase the famous Russian Nikolai Chernyshevsky, the road to revolution takes many unexpected twists and turns. Who could have predicted a year ago that Tunisia would be the spark for a series of uprisings, or that the magazine *Adbusters* would initiate an occupation of Wall Street which now involves tens of thousands?

In both cases, circumstances were ripe for a popular upsurge. In every capitalist country, even the U.S. empire itself, unemployment, poverty, and inequality feed the sense of desperation and give birth to a wide range of fightback strategies. The most advanced struggles are in countries such as Greece, where revolutionary Communist parties with significant working class support are building broad, militant struggles around key demands.

Starting without a declared political aim, the Occupy Wall Street movement combines rage against oppression and poverty with hope for a better world. These sentiments are moving millions into the streets, and Occupy is spreading like wildfire.

The challenges faced by this openly anti-capitalist but extremely diverse crusade are enormous. But the decision to rise up together against corporate domination is a powerful and liberating act, with enormous potential. Through their bold attempt to defeat the system, the "99 percenters" will learn more about social change than any textbook could teach.

This movement deserves the unhesitating support of all progressive activists. More "occupations" will begin in cities across North America in mid-October. We urge our readers to jump in and help build these struggles, taking *People's Voice* and socialist ideas into the debates. Our next issue will report on the progress of this unique political development.

## Tough times for neo-cons?

The ultra-rich are getting a tough ride these days, although their bloated profits will do much to soothe hurt feelings. Some even complain of being "demonized"! Typical of these whiners is Daphne Guinness. Profiled recently in the *New Yorker*, Daphne is famous for her wardrobe of 2,500 garments, 450 pairs of shoes, 200 handbags, and vast quantities of the finest gold, silver and jewels. No doubt the sight of Ms. Guinness has helped spark the ire of thousands who support Occupy Wall Street. We can only hope that this movement continues to afflict our corporate masters. Big turnouts at the Oct. 15 "occupy everything" anti-corporate rallies across North America would be a good step in this direction.

On the political side, the Harperites and their ilk have taken a few good whacks this fall. First it was Toronto Mayor Rob Ford, whose bombast has been popped like a balloon by the red-hot needle of public opinion. The Mayor's sudden implosion helped drag Tory Tim Hudak's far-right gang to defeat in the Ontario provincial election, just two days after the Manitoba Tories were rejected by voters in that province. We also note the interesting victory of "red Tory" Alison Redford in the race for her party's leadership, becoming the first woman premier of Alberta. (Redford immediately reversed over \$100 million in education cutbacks; will other premiers will follow this worthy example?)

A few swallows do not necessarily make a spring, of course. There is little sign that the right-wing Saskatchewan Party government will be defeated next month. And nobody expects that Ontario's Dalton McGuinty or Manitoba's Greg Selinger will embark on a progressive agenda. But it's inspiring to see that working people, in various ways, are starting to challenge the corporate agenda.

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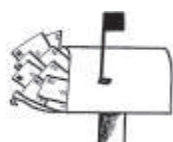
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## LETTERS

*People's Voice* welcomes your letters. We reserve the right to edit for length and clarity, and to refuse to print letters which may be libellous or which contain personal attacks. Send your views to: "Letters to the Editor"  
706 Clark Drive, Vancouver, BC, V5L 3J1 or  
pvoice@telus.net

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## Letters to the Editor

### Reader comment on Sri Lanka article

I am gravely concerned about the Labour Day issue's article "Indian Communists Debate Tamil Issue" in the *People's Voice* which states "Sri Lanka's Tamils were largely brought from Tamil Nadu by the British as labourers." Even the chauvinist Sri Lankan government's own census shows this is simply not true, the last complete census (1989) shows Tamils who had been in Sri Lanka since ancient times outnumbered Tamils brought by the British from India by over 2 to 1 (2.1 million vs under 1 million). As the CPI(M)'s Ramdass discussed in his article "Developments in Sri Lanka" in the theoretical journal *The Marxist* (Vol. 3, No. 2, April-June 1985) "The Jaffna Tamils had emigrated to Sri Lanka, then Ceylon, about

2000 years ago". The root of the problem is that the Sinhalese consider Sri Lanka to be their country where the Tamils have no business to be."

Unfortunately the *People's Voice* article not only suggests a misrepresentation of the position of the Indian Communist Parties, let alone facts on the ground, but does so in a way that plays right into the hands of the most reactionary chauvinists.

As Ramdass explains, "What is generally referred to as the 'ethnic problem' is in fact the problem of a minority nationality - the Sri Lanka Tamil people - whose aspirations and legitimate demands have been denied by the ruling classes." Although the Indian communists are against Tamil separation,

Ramdass explains who has true responsibility for this demand: "But it should not be forgotten that it is the refusal of successive bourgeois-landlord governments to concede autonomy to the Tamil majority areas, the breaking or scuttling and again of agreements arrived at that finally brought the separatist slogan to the forefront."

Two years ago thousands of Tamils, some waving LTTE (Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam) flags, blockaded highways in Toronto to bring attention to the genocidal war (CPI Tamil Nadu state secretary D. Pandian called it that in the party's *New Age Weekly* Jul. 9, 2011 "CPI for Solidarity with Sri Lankan Tamils"), concentration-camp roundups of the Tamil people and, whether one agrees with them or not, the leading force for their national liberation which is the LTTE.

The Canadian government targets for deportation Tamils who have ties to the LTTE and the struggle for national liberation. We must refrain from any dodges on the facts of nationhood and the principle of self-determination, whether abroad or in Canada.

Asad Ali, Niagara Falls, ON

### People's Court comes to Toronto

A network of concerned citizens will convene a popular tribunal in Toronto to try politicians and their friends - tax-evading and profit-piling millionaires and big corporations.

The People's Court will take place on Oct. 20, from 5:30 to 8 pm at Oakham House, Student Centre, 55 Gould St., Toronto.

In the dock will be an array of criminals, from corporate CEOs to Stephen Harper and other anti-people politicians at all levels.

The Charge Sheet includes crimes against the people through acts, policies, and systems that: undermine democratic rights; deny aboriginal sovereignty, land rights and treaty rights; destroy workers rights; criminalize migrants and refugees; attack the poor, people with disabilities, and the homeless; make war on innocent civilians in other countries; and kill planet earth and various life forms.

Evidence will be presented; statistics, photos, personal stories, victim-impact declarations, and other documents, related to:

- legislation to create super jails that target poor and racialized groups
- increased militarization and police

- brutality during the G8 Summit
- threats of back-to-work legislation, undermining collective bargaining

- increased poverty through destruction of Canada's economic base

- higher poverty, unemployment, and incarceration among racialized people

- promoting hate against people of the Muslim faith or Arabic origin
- privatization, tax exemptions, and subsidies for millionaires and global corporations

- supporting wars of aggression and occupation overseas
- destroying social safety net, selling off public assets and privatizing the public sector
- surrendering Canada's political, economic, social and cultural sovereignty to transnational corporations

- and many more violations of people's economic, social and cultural rights at all!

The event is co-sponsored by *Our Times*, the independent labour magazine which is celebrating its 30th anniversary, with the support of a wide range of progressive and labour groups. ●

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# Groups demand to prosecute Bush for torture

## PV Vancouver Bureau

Just weeks after hundreds of people held a loud, angry rally outside a \$500 dinner in Vancouver featuring Dick Cheney, George W. Bush and Bill Clinton are scheduled to speak at the Surrey Regional Economic Development Forum hosted by Surrey Mayor Dianne Watts.

Bush's ideas on "economic development" remain a closely-guarded mystery, but a lively protest is planned outside the Sheraton Guildford hotel where the Forum will be held. The rally is being organized by StopWar, Vancouver's broad-based anti-war coalition, together with the Fraser Valley Peace Council and other groups. Protesters will gather at 11:00 am on Oct. 20, at the parking lot beside the Bay at the southwest corner of 152 St. and 104 Ave., across the street from the Forum.

In an open letter to Watts, the protest organizers say, "We are writing to ask you to rescind your invitation to George W. Bush... Bush is a war criminal, guilty of authorizing torture and launching an illegal war on Iraq based on lies. Bush should not be allowed a safe haven in Surrey or anywhere else in Canada. Thus far, the federal government in Ottawa has shamefully failed in its duty to

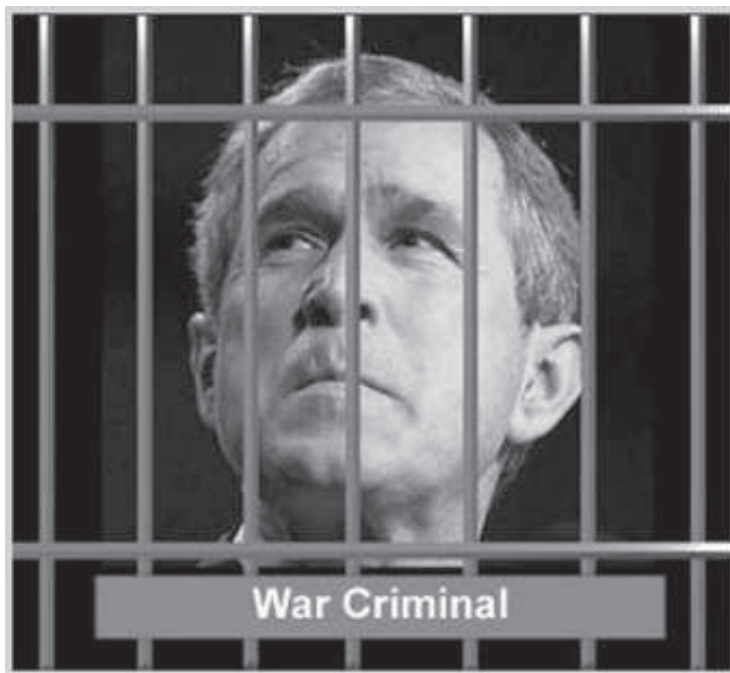
deny entry or to arrest Bush and other officials of his administration reasonably suspected of war crimes. That is why we are asking you to do the right thing and cancel Bush's appearance."

Watts insists the event will proceed, despite growing public outrage about the invitation to Bush.

Meanwhile, on Sept. 29, the New York-based Center for Constitutional Rights (CCR) and the Canadian Centre for International Justice (CCIJ) lodged a detailed indictment, urging the Attorney General of Canada to open a criminal investigation against Bush for his role in authorizing and overseeing his administration's well-documented torture program.

Earlier this year, CCR, supported by CCIJ and more than 60 international human rights organizations, called on Swiss authorities to prosecute Bush, based on evidence setting out his role in the U.S. torture program. Bush cancelled his February trip to Switzerland at the last minute, a move that many speculated was motivated by fear of arrest.

"George Bush has openly admitted that he approved the use of torture against men held in U.S. custody," said Katherine Gallagher, Senior Staff Attorney at CCR. "Despite this admission, no



The rally is being organized by Vancouver's StopWar coalition, together with the Fraser Valley Peace Council and other groups. Protesters will gather at 11:00 am on Oct. 20, at the parking lot beside the Bay at the southwest corner of 152 St. and 104 Ave., across the street from the Forum where Bush is to speak.

country has been willing to investigate and prosecute Bush's criminal acts, leaving the victims of his torture policies without any justice or accountability. Canada is a signatory to the Convention Against Torture, and has an obligation to investigate Bush for his leadership role in the U.S. torture program. Torturers - even

former presidents of the United States - must be held to account and prosecuted. We urge Canada to put an end to impunity for Bush."

"Canada has a strong legal framework and there is absolutely no ambiguity in our criminal code when it comes to committing or allowing torture," said Matt

Eisenbrandt, Legal Director of CCIJ. "There is grave evidence that former President Bush sanctioned and authorized acts of torture, not only in violation of Canadian laws, but also of international treaties that Canada has ratified. It is therefore clear that our government has both the jurisdiction and the obligation to prosecute Bush should he set foot again on Canadian territory."

According to the indictment, ex-President Bush bears individual and command responsibility for the acts of his subordinates, as well as for his failure to prevent or punish illegal acts. In particular, he is alleged to have authorized or overseen enforced disappearance and secret detention, exposure to extreme temperatures, sleep deprivation, punching, kicking, isolation in "coffin" cells for prolonged periods, threats of bad treatment, solitary confinement, and forced nudity.

Canada and the U.S. are among 147 countries which have signed the U.N. Convention Against Torture, which commits them to promptly investigate, prosecute, and punish torturers.

The indictment prepared by CCR and CCIJ, along with more than 4,000 pages of supporting materials, are available at: <http://ccrjustice.org/ourcases/current-cases/bush-torture-indictment>. ●

# PROFUNC questions remain unanswered

## By Kimball Cariou

The latest attempts to get the full truth about the RCMP's anti-communist PROFUNC operation, which lasted from 1950 until 1983, have run into a brick wall, as federal Conservative cabinet ministers fail to provide any useful information about the program.

PROFUNC - or "PROminent FUNCtionaries of the Communist Party" - was set up at the height of the Cold War witch-hunt to track leaders, members and supporters of the Communist Party of Canada, as well as many Canadians with other political views.

Under the direction of RCMP Commissioner Stuart Taylor Wood, this blacklist grew to include some 16,000 "suspected communists" and 50,000 "communist sympathizers" to be observed and potentially interned during a state of emergency. The identities were filed at Mountie detachments across the country, with a separate arrest document for each potential internee. These forms were updated regularly, including descriptions, photos, vehicle data, and even notes on "escape routes" from the residences of those on the list. The children of detainees were to be sent to relatives or interned with their parents.

Prominent non-communists were on the PROFUNC list, such as Saskatchewan Premier Tommy Douglas, who campaigned for universal Medicare in Canada and for global disarmament. During the 1970 October Crisis, PROFUNC was used to help detain hundreds of so-called Front de libération du Québec suspects, most of whom had no affiliation with the FLQ or the Communist Party.

During the early 1980s, Solicitor General Robert Kaplan introduced

This page from PROFUNC shows how the database was organized in spreadsheets.

changes to remove barriers which Communists and others faced in trying to cross the Canada-U.S. border. These changes effectively ended PROFUNC by forcing the RCMP to scrap the list.

The background of PROFUNC was first revealed about a decade ago, and then covered extensively in a CBC program last year. Since then, the Communist Party of Canada has been attempting to seek further information. This effort has been complicated by privacy laws which prevent full disclosure of the names of individuals on the PROFUNC list.

The CPC sought the assistance of Vancouver East NDP MP Libby Davies, well-known as a strong progressive voice for civil liberties. On June 6, 2011, Davies submitted formal written inquiries to Vic Toews, the federal Minister of

Public Safety, and to James Moore, Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages.

Davies raised several questions, including whether the government would disclose names on the PROFUNC list upon request, and asking what was done with the data after 1983. In particular, was the database turned over to the newly-formed Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS), or to the U.S. government?

The responses provided three months later are brief and unhelpful. Moore's reply to the first question is simply that the information sought by individuals is "usually" released. As for the broader questions, his answer is: "Any documentation of this nature would have been transferred either to CSIS, to the then National Archives of Canada or disposed of

in accordance with the Government Security Policy..."

In other words, yes, the PROFUNC information went somewhere.

The reply from Toews is slightly longer, indicating that the PROFUNC materials were either destroyed, transferred to CSIS "for custodial purposes only," or sent to Library and Archives Canada (LAC) "for long-term archival purposes." To attempt to answer

Davies' questions "would require a manual search and analysis of the approximately 80,000 remaining records at LAC with no guarantee that the records contain the information requested."

As for other questions raised by Davies, the answers are equally vague. Some RCMP Security Service members who had worked on PROFUNC remained in the RCMP, others transferred to CSIS, but details are not available. Regarding "information sharing" with U.S. agencies, "the RCMP is unable to determine if any of the information in question was shared."

As the leadership of the Communist Party pointed out in October 2010, episodes such as the arrest of over 1,100 protesters during the G20 Summit in Toronto prove that while PROFUNC may be history, the capitalist state's reliance on mass suppression of civil rights and democratic freedoms has not ended.

The Party has demanded an official apology, extending to the families of all those individuals who were targeted under the PROFUNC plan. And it continues to urge the entire labour and democratic movement - the main target of the drive to criminalize dissent in Canada - to demand a complete and final end to the policy of drawing up plans for the mass crushing of opposition forces. ●

## REDS ON THE WEB

- [www.comunist-party.ca](http://www.comunist-party.ca)
- [www.peoplesvoice.ca](http://www.peoplesvoice.ca)
- [www.ycl-ljc.ca](http://www.ycl-ljc.ca)
- [www.solidnet.org](http://www.solidnet.org)



# What's behind the Wall Street protests?

From the Australian-based *New Matilda independent media website*

Protesters have been occupying Wall Street and dodging mace-wielding police since Sept. 17. Why are they there? Commentators looking for one single demand are missing the point.

Young women being pepper-sprayed by cops on Wall Street? A protest movement claiming to represent 99 percent of the population? Missed it? The

#occupyWallStreet campaign was initially organised by the magazine *Adbusters*, but is now administered by a vertical cohort of groups and individuals on social media. Groups in more than 40 cities across the US and internationally have joined in.

The protests have been getting bigger and bigger, and they've been graced by progressive luminaries such as Susan Sarandon and Michael Moore, but unless you closely follow alternative media the protests might have escaped your attention.

They haven't been widely reported in the mainstream media, and when they have, reports have turned on police brutality rather than what the protest is all about. This isn't altogether surprising. One protester told the *NY Daily News* "I was shocked because it seemed like one person after another was being brutally tackled, and it wasn't clear why". The many videos in circulation of protesters getting zapped with pepper spray provide clear evidence of police zealotry - but have also served to

distract media outlets from why the protesters were there in the first place.

The *New York Times* has been criticised for missing the point in the article. Gina Bellafante wrote: "The group's lack of cohesion and its apparent wish to pantomime progressivism rather than practice it knowingly is unsettling in the face of the challenges so many of its generation face."

Some progressive media outlets have been less than enthused too. Lauren Ellis in *Mother Jones* says the campaign is "lacking traction" and lists four reasons why - including police brutality being in the spotlight rather than the protesters' concerns, and for a "kitchen-sink" approach she summarises thusly: "First make noise, then decide what the noise is all about."

National Public Radio Ombudsman Edward Schumacher-Matos explains why the radio network hadn't given the protests any coverage in this post. He quotes NPR's executive director for news, Dick Meyer: "The recent protests on Wall Street did not involve large numbers of people, prominent people, a great disruption or an especially clear objective."

Inadvertently, Bellafante and Meyer might have got it right. It's very apparent that there is no one single reason drawing protesters to Wall Street and to other protests. One "clear objective" and group cohesion just isn't the name of the game - so perhaps it's not surprising that the media has taken a while to twig to what's going on.

The protests started very small and not all the protesters who turned up have the same reasons for doing so. As Eli Schmitt wrote a few days after it all started: "We still don't know exactly what the demands are. One of the members of our group, in discussing the criteria for a good demand, noted that Americans like to 'get something' out of a political action. Repeal, enact, ban. We want visible, measurable outcomes."

The 99 percenters did get around to issuing a list of their "one demands" in response to the media's desire for "one clear demand". It's not one objective, but many - some of which are extremely abstract.

As Schmitt observes, the protests underway in Wall Street and across America don't look much like the anti-globalisation protests of the early 2000s. The

protest movement is changing and even though the original *Adbusters* call referenced Tahrir Square, the Occupy Wall Street movement gestures to a far more diffuse set of goals: "Compared to other large-scale protests I'd attended in my life - the WTO protest in



Washington DC in 2000, various anti-war protests throughout the early naughts - the aggravating causes here were less abstract. These were not Americans decrying foreign policy. They were Americans in debt, Americans out of work. This 'day of rage' was inspired by personal injustices, best illustrated by anecdote rather than data. Along with all the familiar righteous ire at corporate sway in our supposedly democratic political system, there were tales of joblessness, debt, and desperation."

Ed Pilkington in *UK Guardian* concurs, writing, "The protests were a lament for a nation in which, despite the 2008 meltdown, the financial system remains largely unregulated, where 46 million Americans live below the official poverty line, and where inequality is greater now than at any time since 1929."

David Weidner, writing in *Market Watch*, is in touch with the same rage and desperation; he just placed a slightly different emphasis.

"If you want to know how a nation supposedly by and for the people has become uprooted, one only needs to see how common young people, who are suffering so badly in this recession, were humiliated further by trying to exercise their given right to peacefully protest. If this is justice, I'd rather break the law."

"The bankers who brought us this mess not only walk free, they drive free in Bentleys paid for by money looted through toxic mortgages, trading debacles and derivative madness. Regulators, prosecutors and an administration patsy to big finance do nothing except hand out US\$1.3 trillion in bailout cash and guarantees." ●



## Declaration of the Occupation of New York City

This document was accepted by the New York City General Assembly on September 29, 2011.

As we gather together in solidarity to express a feeling of mass injustice, we must not lose sight of what brought us together. We write so that all people who feel wronged by the corporate forces of the world can know that we are your allies.

As one people, united, we acknowledge the reality: that the future of the human race requires the cooperation of its members; that our system must protect our rights, and upon corruption of that system, it is up to the individuals to protect their own rights, and those of their neighbours; that a democratic government derives its just power from the people, but corporations do not seek consent to extract wealth from the people and the Earth; and that no true democracy is attainable when the process is determined by economic power. We come to you at a time when corporations, which place profit over people, self-interest over justice, and oppression over equality, run our governments. We have peaceably assembled here, as is our right, to let these facts be known.

They have taken our houses through an illegal foreclosure process, despite not having the original mortgage.

They have taken bailouts from taxpayers with impunity, and continue to give Executives exorbitant bonuses.

They have perpetuated inequality and discrimination in the workplace based on age, the colour of one's skin, sex, gender identity and sexual orientation.

They have poisoned the food supply through negligence, and undermined the farming system through monopolization.

They have profited off of the torture, confinement, and cruel treatment of countless animals, and actively hide these practices.

They have continuously sought to strip employees of the right to negotiate for better pay and safer working conditions.

They have held students hostage with tens of thousands of dollars of debt on education, which is itself a human right.

They have consistently outsourced labour and used that outsourcing as leverage to cut workers' healthcare and pay.

They have influenced the courts to achieve the same rights as people, with none of the culpability or responsibility.

They have spent millions of dollars on legal teams that look for ways to get them out of contracts in regards to health insurance.

They have sold our privacy as a commodity.

They have used the military and police force to prevent freedom of the press. They have deliberately declined to recall faulty products endangering lives in pursuit of profit.

They determine economic policy, despite the catastrophic failures their policies have produced and continue to produce.

They have donated large sums of money to politicians, who are responsible for regulating them.

They continue to block alternate forms of energy to keep us dependent on oil.

They continue to block generic forms of medicine that could save people's lives or provide relief in order to protect investments that have already turned a substantial profit.

They have purposely covered up oil spills, accidents, faulty bookkeeping, and inactive ingredients in pursuit of profit.

They purposefully keep people misinformed and fearful through their control of the media.

They have accepted private contracts to murder prisoners even when presented with serious doubts about their guilt.

They have perpetuated colonialism at home and abroad. They have participated in the torture and murder of innocent civilians overseas.

They continue to create weapons of mass destruction in order to receive government contracts.\*

To the people of the world, we, the New York City General Assembly occupying Wall Street in Liberty Square, urge you to assert your power.

Exercise your right to peaceably assemble; occupy public space; create a process to address the problems we face, and generate solutions accessible to everyone.

To all communities that take action and form groups in the spirit of direct democracy, we offer support, documentation, and all of the resources at our disposal. Join us and make your voices heard!

(\* These grievances are not all-inclusive.)





# Cuban Five prisoner released “under supervision”

## Special to PV

The first of five Cubans imprisoned in the United States since 1998 was released on Friday, October 8. But Rene Gonzalez remains in grave danger, forbidden from returning home for three more years because a court order requires that he remain under US supervision.

Rene Gonzalez was released from the Marianna federal prison in Florida after more than 13 years behind bars. He had asked to be allowed to return to Cuba, but Judge Joan Lenard of the US district court for southern Florida rejected the request on September 16.

“He has no family in the United States. He wants to return home to Cuba with his wife and two daughters. His wife has been deported so she’s not allowed to come to the US,” said Rene’s lawyer, Philip Horowitz. “Our contention is that it’s three years of additional punishment away from his family.”

Upon his release, Rene was met by his two daughters, and his father and brother. U.S. authorities denied a visa to allow his wife, Olga Salanueva, to be present for the occasion. For his own safety, Rene was taken to an undisclosed location pending a legal appeal of the order to remain in the United States.

Rene Gonzalez was arrested in 1998 with Gerardo Hernandez, Ramon Labanino, Antonio Guerrero and Fernando Gonzalez, and convicted on espionage charges in Miami in 2001. The five had never spied on the United States; their task was to monitor terrorist groups based in Miami, and in fact they turned over evidence of the criminal actions of these groups to the FBI.

Typically, foreigners are deported from the United States to their home country once they have served a prison sentence, even when they are released on parole. But Gonzalez has dual US-Cuban citizenship, a technicality which the judge used to delay his return home. Born in Chicago, he went back with his family to Cuba in 1961.

Cuba has demanded Gonzalez’s immediate return, accusing the Obama administration of waging a political vendetta. Former Cuban leader Fidel Castro has expressed fears that Gonzalez will be kept “at the mercy of unpunished murderers for three long years.” Fidel called the order for Gonzalez’s supervised release “brutal, clumsy and expected,” accusing Washington of “engendering monsters like (Luis) Posada Carriles and Orlando Bosch,” Cuban exiles who are responsible for blowing up a Cuban airliner in 1976, killing all 73 on board.



Rene Gonzalez

## Let Rene Gonzalez return to Cuba!

### Statement from the U.S. National Committee to Free the Cuban Five, Oct. 7, 2011

Rene Gonzalez, one of the five men known as the Cuban Five, today will walk out of Federal Prison in Marianna, Florida. He will walk out with his head held high after more than 13 years in prison, having served his utterly unjust sentence with complete dignity. He has been a model prisoner, even while suffering the indignity of being inhumanely deprived visits from his wife for more than 11 years.

Unable to afford Rene even the small victory of his release, however, the U.S. government insists on punishing him and his family even more by requiring him to remain in Florida for the three years of his parole, even though Rene has no family in Florida and his life will be in danger from the very terrorist groups he helped to infiltrate.

That danger cannot be underestimated. Florida Congressperson Ileana Ros-Lehtinen was quoted in the *Miami Herald*

calling Rene an “enemy of America” with “American blood on his hands.” These utterly false charges are a clear incitement to violence, and demonstrate all too clearly the necessity of allowing Rene to return immediately to Cuba.

The very fact that a man who the government called a “spy” and a “threat to national security” is required to remain in the United States, rather than being immediately deported, demonstrates quite clearly what the prosecution and persecution is all about. The government never thought for one minute that Rene and his brothers were “spies” or a “threat to national security”; if they did, they would be putting Rene on the first plane back to Cuba. Instead, the punishment meted out to Rene and his brothers was all about protecting the terrorists who serve the interests of the U.S. government by trying to destabilize the Cuban government and overturn the Cuban Revolution.

Cuba has suffered the scourge of terrorism not just since Sept. 11,

2001, but for more than 50 years. A scourge that over those years has killed at least 3,478 people, most of them Cuban but also many others including 11 Guyanese and five North Koreans killed in the 1976 bombing of Cubana Airlines Flight 455 and an Italian (Fabio di Celmo) killed in a hotel bombing in 1997. Thousands more have been seriously injured by the terrorists.

Rene and his brothers - Gerardo Hernandez, Fernando Gonzalez, Antonio Guerrero, and Ramon Labanino - can be proud that they came to the United States, unarmed and risking their lives, to fight that scourge by infiltrating the right-wing terrorist groups based in Miami who were responsible for that terrorism, and exposing their ongoing plots. The U.S. government helped organize, finance, and direct the actions of those terrorist groups from the beginning, and protected them from the consequences of their actions. It continued that collaboration and protection by arresting Rene and the others, and continues that protection with the unjust punishment of Rene and the other four.

That same government continues to this day to resist Venezuela’s valid extradition request for the most notorious terrorist of them all, Luis Posada Carriles, responsible not only the 1976 plane bombing which took the lives of 73 people, but also for the torture of numerous Venezuelans when he was part of the secret police in that country.

If the U.S. government wants to continue to claim it is engaged in a “war on terror,” it can help back up that claim with some very simple actions. Allow Rene Gonzalez to return to Cuba immediately, free the remaining members of the Cuban Five and allow them to return to Cuba as well, extradite Luis Posada Carriles to Venezuela, and arrest the other known terrorists in Miami. Until those acts have been performed, any claims by the U.S. government of “fighting terrorism” will continue to ring hollow. ●



## Anti-fracking activists arrested in Alberta

### PV Vancouver Bureau

In recent issues, People’s Voice has reported several times on the growing controversy around “fracking”, the process of injecting water, chemicals and sand under high pressure, causing underground shale rock to “fracture”, releasing natural gas to flow through pipes to the surface.

As the documentary film *Gasland* reveals, this process is held responsible for devastating impacts to the health of humans and animals across the United States. Fracking is also a big issue in Canada. While there is a temporary moratorium in Quebec, fracking is quickly becoming a huge industry in western Canada.

In the autumn of 2010, Kainaiwa Resources Inc. - a corporation owned by the Blood Tribe, part of the Blood Confederacy in southern Alberta - signed an agreement with Murphy Oil and Bowood Energy. Opponents say the five year lease deal netted the Blood Tribe at least

\$50 million and potentially more revenue in the future, in return for allowing the companies to access 129,280 acres of land on the Kainai (Blood) reserve, for oil and gas exploration.

Blood Tribe members who fear the consequences of this deal have been raising questions and engaging in various forms of peaceful opposition. On Sept. 9, three women from the Tribe were



For information, visit <http://protectbloodland.ca>

arrested for standing on a road to block company vehicles. We reprint here excerpts from a statement by Elle-Maija Tailfeathers, who was arrested together with Lois Frank and Jill Crop Eared Wolf.

“On September 9, 2011, we gathered peacefully on the road leading to a newly built Murphy Oil well on the Blood Reserve. After nearly a year of doing everything in our power to stop hydraulic fracturing from occurring on our land, we felt that time was no longer on our side.

“With the imminent threat of hydraulic fracturing about to begin on Blood Tribe land, we decided that we had to act immediately. Over the last year, we have written letters and created petitions, we have tried to raise awareness both within our community and beyond including founding Kainai Earth Watch and the Protect Blood Land website, we have repeatedly contacted the Blood Tribe Chief and Council,

Kainai Resources Incorporated, the gas and oil companies, the media, the Energy Resources Conservation Board, and various levels of government including Indian and Northern Affairs Canada but still our rights were violated. Countless times, we were told that this was a matter between members of the Blood Tribe and the Blood Tribe Chief and Council.

“But as members of the Blood Tribe, we were never asked whether or not we wanted these wells built in the first place. There was no referendum, no vote, and no transparent consultation process. If any objective body were to look at the facts, they would see that the actual people who live on this land were both ignored and lied to.

“The fact is that we are a marginalized population that has, once again, been exploited by those in power. We have been cast into a legal no man’s land and were left with few other recourses at that particular moment but to exercise our right as members of the Blood

Tribe to peacefully gather on our land and demand justice. We were an unarmed group of people who numbered less than twelve at any given time. We remained on Blood Tribe land and did not step foot on the well site. We treated those working on the well along with the security personnel with respect.

“After being told by the law enforcement officers present that the Blood Tribe Chief and Council refused to meet with us, we were given no other option but to stand our ground and refuse that any of the Murphy Oil vehicles carrying these harmful chemicals be allowed to leave the well site and enter tribal land.

“At this point, Lois Frank, Jill Crop Eared Wolf, and myself were all arrested and handcuffed by the Blood Tribe Police while RCMP officers stood by. Just after 9 pm, we were all placed in a Blood Tribe holding cell and held without





# GLOBAL CLASS STRUGGLE

## New trials for Bahrain health workers

Bahrain has responded to international pressure by ordering a retrial for 20 medical personnel charged with attempting to overthrow the government and "spreading fabrications." A special security court recently sentenced the doctors and nurses to jail terms ranging from five to 15 years. But the Oct. 6 decision changes course, towards a new trial in a civilian court. The convicted doctors and nurses, who had filed an appeal, will remain free pending the new trial, which has not yet been scheduled. Another group of 25 medical personnel still face similar charges.

The doctors and nurses worked at the state-run Salmaniya Medical Centre close to the capital's Pearl Square, which became the epicentre of Bahrain's uprising last February and March. The authorities claimed the hospital's mostly Shia staff - some of whom participated in pro-democracy street marches - were protest sympathisers, although the medics claimed they treated all who needed care.

Bahrain's ruling Muslim Sunni monarchy has waged sweeping crackdowns against protesters calling for greater rights on the strategic Gulf Arab nation, home to the US Navy's 5th Fleet. The monarchy maintains support from the West because of its key military partnerships and close ties with powerful Gulf neighbours, foremost Sunni-ruled Saudi Arabia, which sent troops to help quell the protests.

Bahraini authorities have come under increasing criticism for a series of rapid-fire verdicts against suspects accused of aiding protesters and causing violence. More than 80 convictions were issued in early October by the security court set up during martial law-style rule last spring. The move to hold a retrial for the medical personnel could throw into question the other verdicts by the security court.

## "Action Plan" fails to improve workers' rights

Colombia's Labor Action Plan, billed as a major step to ending violence against trade unionists and protecting the right of workers to come together in unions, "has failed to achieve improvements on the ground for Colombia's working families," a new AFL-CIO report finds.

As a result, workers who wish to better their lives by forming a union and bargaining collectively continue to be the victims of threats and violent acts, including murder. Moreover, Colombian law continues to provide broad avenues to deny workers the ability to exercise their most basic rights.

With the U.S. Congress expected to vote on a free trade agreement with Colombia this month, the AFL-CIO has distributed the report—"The

Ineffectiveness of Colombia's Action Plan"—to key lawmakers. Hundreds of union members took part in a lobby on Capitol Hill telling Congress to vote "No" on the Colombia trade agreement and proposed trade deals with Korea and Panama.

The action plan was agreed to between Colombia and the United States in April in hopes of swaying opponents of the trade deal. The Colombian government said it would issue new laws, regulations and other measures aimed at ensuring workers' rights, stopping



the violence against trade unionists and bringing those behind the deadly violence to justice. But nothing in the action plan required Colombia to show improvements in workers' rights and a reduction or end to the violence before a trade agreement could be approved. Twenty-three union leaders have been killed so far this year in Colombia, including 16 since the action plan went into effect.

The report also finds that workers are forced to join cooperatives or cooperative-like structures to prevent workers from forming a union. Workers also are illegally fired for legitimate union activity and threatened and even killed.

## AFL-CIO backs Occupy Wall Street

In an October 5 statement, AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka said that "Occupy Wall Street has captured the imagination and passion of millions of Americans who have lost hope that our nation's policymakers are speaking for them. We support the protesters in their determination to hold Wall Street accountable and create good jobs. We are proud that today on Wall Street, bus drivers, painters, nurses and utility workers are joining students and homeowners, the unemployed and the underemployed to call for fundamental change. Across America, working people are turning out with their friends and neighbours in parks, congregations and union halls to express their frustration - and anger - about our country's staggering wealth gap, the lack of work for people who want to work and the corrupting of our politics by business and financial elites. The people who do the work to keep our great country running are being robbed not only of income, but of a voice. It is time for all of us—the 99 percent—to be heard. As we did when we marched on Wall Street last year, working people

call on corporations, big banks, and the financial industry to do their part to create good jobs, stop foreclosures and pay their fair share of taxes."

Trumka raised several demands: corporations must be forced to invest in job creation, banks should write down the 14 million mortgages that are underwater and stop the more than 10 million pending foreclosures, and education and jobs must be funded by taxing financial speculation.

## Egyptian teachers step up protests

Teachers in Egypt are preparing to organize a "million-man march" to call for the dismissal of Prime Minister Sharaf. On October 8, the teachers held their third consecutive Saturday demonstration calling for Sharaf to step down. The latest march took place in front of the cabinet offices.

A spokesperson of the Independent Teachers' Syndicate, Ayman El-Bialy, has said teachers are also still demanding the sacking of the Minister of Education Ahmed Gamal El-Din.

For weeks thousands of teachers across the country have been protesting low wages and perks, taking to the street several times to blame Gamal El-Din. Their demands include education reform, cleansing of the education ministry institutions, minimum and maximum wages, and banning private lessons.

## German Airbus workers on strike

Some 11,000 employees of Germany's aircraft manufacturer Airbus downed tools on Oct. 7, the IG Metall union said, after bosses and workers failed to agree on a new wage accord. Negotiations broke down last month after a year and a half of efforts to reach a deal on a range of issues from an employment guarantee to a ceiling on the number of temporary workers that can be hired.

"Only together can we secure the future of Airbus," said Meinhard Geiken, a representative of IG Metall, as he called on management to return to the negotiating table.

A major sticking point in negotiations is over the company's demand for commitments to increase employee productivity, in exchange for employment guarantees. The workers have offered productivity gains of two percent worth about one billion euros (\$1.3 billion) between now and 2020 in exchange for guarantees of employment and maintaining four work sites in northern Germany. Management wants a higher rate of eight percent, according to the unions.

## Harassment struggle in Korea

On Oct. 6, trade unionists and supporters held a solidarity rally/culture festival in Seoul's Cheonggye Plaza to support the female Hyundai Motors workers, who were sexually harassed on

their workplace and later fired, because they brought their case to court. A sit-in by the workers has been taking place since late June in front of South Korea's Ministry for "Gender Equality" at the Plaza.

A 45-year-old woman, who worked at a subcontractor of Hyundai Motor's plant in Asan, for 14 years has filed complaints that she was sexually harassed by two officials of the subcontractor. The National Human Rights Commission acknowledged the harassment and recommended the subcontractor to compensate the woman. But the company sacked her, then closed business, changed its name and reemployed other workers.

The woman, identified only by her family name Kim, argued that she has suffered mental disease because of the sexual harassment at the workplace. In addition, she insisted that she suffered another harassment when she underwent "improper" questioning at the Korea Workers' Compensation and Welfare Service (KWCWS).

She said that a male official of the KWCWS asked her, "I knew that you filed with authorities a divorce suit. What's going on?" "Did you have problems with your children?" "Could you reenact sexual harassment?" and "As I know all about you, you should tell me about them right now."

The metal union affiliated with the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions said, "The petitioner continued to complain about sexual harassment and mental sufferings resulting from unlawful dismissal. But these complaints were deleted from the documents submitted to human rights commission and questioning centered on the petitioner's family background and whether she had disciplinary records."

## New York lays off school staff

In the biggest single civic layoff since New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg took office in 2002, 672 school workers lost their jobs on Oct. 7. The cuts came as "Occupy Wall Street" protests continued to gain support from unionized workers in New York.

Last June, the layoff of thousands of teachers was averted by their union. But this time the axe fell on school aides, parent coordinators, family workers and others who work in support jobs at roughly 350 schools.

The city administration blames the workers' union for "squandering" its chances to make a deal by allowing the city to take from its health care fund. The union had instead offered to give up paid holidays and to reduce the number of hours school aides were allowed to work, but the city rejected these proposals.

Union leaders, dressed in black, kept the pressure up until the last minute, holding a lunchtime rally on the steps of City Hall to denounce the layoffs. Seventeen of New York's 51 members signed a letter to the mayor warning that "the constant attack on our education system will continue to burden the most vulnerable population of this city - our children."

The laid-off workers are among the city's lowest paid. School aides make \$14 an hour for four to eight hours of work a day, while parent coordinators and family workers are salaried employees whose pay is about \$35,000 a year. School aides have been a recurrent target of layoffs. In the 2008-9 school year, 503 lost their jobs.

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

## Send me information on the Communist Party of Canada



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

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# Cuba's health system: cheaper and better

A well-known Canadian daily paper has published a very positive assessment of Cuba's health care system. In a Sept. 29 article in the *Saskatoon Star Phoenix*, Mark Lemstra notes the rising costs of the Canadian health care system, which he says is "becoming more like the American model."

Lemstra compares health outcomes in Canada, where the gross national income per capita is over \$39,400, the U.S. (\$47,000) and Cuba, a Third World country with a GNP per capita of \$9,900. Using a World Health Organization

formula for standardized purchasing power, Canada spent \$4,196 per capita on health care in 2009, while Cuba's figure was \$503.

Yet the WHO reports that the infant mortality rate in 2009 for children under five was six per 1,000 births in Canada, eight in the U.S. and six in Cuba. The "age standardized annual incidence rate" of cancer was 326 per 100,000 population in Canada, 335 in the U.S. and 213 in Cuba. The mortality rate from cancer per 100,000 population was 132, 121 and 145 among the countries respectively.

The prevalence of diabetes was 8.8 per cent in both Canada and the U.S., and six per cent in Cuba; mortality rates per 100,000 population from diabetes were 13, 15 and 14 respectively.

The annual death rates from heart disease per 100,000 population were 129 in Canada, 163 in the U.S. and 145 in Cuba.

The *International Journal of Epidemiology* reports that Cuba was the first country to eliminate polio and measles. Cuba has eliminated tetanus, diphtheria, pertussis, rubella and mumps, and has the lowest HIV incidence rate in North and South America.

Cuba's achievements, Lemstra explains, began in the 1960s with an aggressive campaign to improve sanitation and immunization coverage rates. In the 1980s Cuba reorganized its health system toward primary care, with a goal of a family doctor in every neighbourhood. By the 1990s it had 5.9 doctors per 1,000 residents, while Canada had only 2.2 per 1,000 residents. Cuba made doctors responsible for entire communities, with a goal of one family doctor per 120 families. Each health clinic includes a nurse to ensure that patients receive the education and counselling needed to change behaviours. As well, most clinics include a social worker to address the non-medical determinants of health.

Cuba's health policy emphasizes prevention over treatment, primary care instead of hospital care, co-ordinated provision of care, and providing services where people live.

Lemstra gives some specific examples. To reduce its infant mortality rate of 28 per 1,000 births in 1975, Cuba "created a comprehensive maternal-child program that promotes multiple government sectors and community organizations to work collaboratively to provide more supportive networks." The decline in infant mortality to only 5.8 per 1,000 births in 2004 was one of the most rapid ever recorded.

In another case, Cuba aims to reduce coronary heart disease mortality to 72.5 per 100,000 population in 2015 from 85.3 in 2006. To do so, the country decided to increase to 75 per cent the

proportion of hypertensive patients who actually receive treatment, (from 51 per cent in 2006), and to dramatically reduce the number of Cubans with undiagnosed hypertension.

The *International Journal of Epidemiology* reports that Cuba now has the world's highest rate of treatment and control of hypertension, and that cardiovascular mortality has dropped by 45 per cent. The authors conclude that it is possible to "control cardiovascular disease without accumulating the extraordinary medical technology of Europe and North America."

As Lemstra says, "other countries have achieved better health outcomes at significantly less cost than Canada's. If we set some goals and focused on prevention and primary care, maybe one day we could surpass Cuba." ●



A decade after the signing of the Comprehensive Health Agreement Cuba-Venezuela, 45,174 Venezuelans went to Cuba during 2010 to receive assistance for their health problems. Thousands of Venezuelan doctors have received their medical training in Cuba.

## Global actions by WFTU affiliates

The Global Day of Action called on October 3 by the World Federation of Trade Unions was a great success. Affiliates and supporters of the WFTU organized strikes, demonstrations, protests, theatre performances, petitions, migrant protests, and other actions in dozens of countries. The events condemned neoliberal economic policies, calling instead for social security, shorter working hours, and increased wages. Many of the actions declared internationalist solidarity with the Palestinian people and the Cuban Five fighters, and rejected imperialist military aggression. The slogan "we will not pay for the crisis of the capitalist system" was a common theme. Photo shows a rally organized by the All-India Bank Employees Association, a WFTU affiliate. ●



## British campaign demands release of Lilianny Obando

Over 100 British parliamentarians, lawyers and trade unionists have called for the release of Colombian trade unionist, human rights defender and academic, Lilianny Obando, who has been imprisoned since August 2008 without being convicted of any crime.

Obando is currently held in a high security yard of the Buen Pastor (Good Shepherd) prison in Bogota, where she is allowed to exercise outdoors once a week for an hour.

The petition addressed to Colombian President Juan Manuel Santos has been signed by Lords and MPs from all three major parties, including some members of the governing coalition. Over 40 lawyers and the leaders of all major UK trade unions also added their names.

Their statement says, "Ms. Obando has been jailed for her political beliefs rather than for any crime; she is being deprived of her liberty in order to silence

her and discourage others like her from speaking out about human rights abuses."

Steve Cavalier, CEO of Thompsons Solicitors and a signatory to the letter, has said "Lilianny has been in prison for more than three years without being convicted of any crime. This is unacceptable under international standards. The Santos government has done nothing to stop this injustice despite claiming to respect human rights."

Tony Lloyd MP, former UK foreign minister and Chair of the Parliamentary group Friends of Colombia, has said, "We know that in Colombia there are hundreds of cases like that of Lilianny Obando, innocent people who are imprisoned by the Colombian authorities as a means to silence them. The international community must bring pressure to bear on the Colombian state to put an end to these most gross injustices." ●

## Regime of the "Supreme Religious Leader" slides deeper into crisis

By T. Sam

Since Iran's 2009 presidential election and the popular uprising, where according to the Mayor of Tehran three million people hit the streets to protest the electoral fraud committed by the government, the regime of the "Supreme Religious Leader" Ayatollah Khomeini has been sliding more and more into crisis.

The conservative forces, which in the face of the protests had remained united, are now deeply fractured. It all erupted last April, when President Ahmadinejad decided to remove Heydar Moslehi from his post as the "Minister of Information" (Iranian Secret Police). This action was opposed by the "Supreme Leader", who issued a "State Order" to reinstate Moslehi in his position. Ahmadinejad went on "strike" and for more than ten days did not show up at work. After some "behind closed doors negotiations", Ahmadinejad returned to the presidential palace. Since then the rift between the President and the opposing block of conservatives is growing deeper.

The recent scandal in the corrupt Islamic Republic - the embezzlement of close to \$3 billion from the Iranian banking system - is turning into a quagmire for Ahmadinejad. The main perpetrator is Amir Mansoor Arya, whose relation to Efsandiar Rahim Mashae (Ahmadinejad's Chief of Staff) is known to everybody but Mashae, who denies knowing Mr. Arya.

A few years ago, Arya was a cattle breeder in northern Iran. Today his business has turned into a conglomerate. Arya's

presence is in every major Iranian financial, trade or production establishment. His fields of operations include: investment, mineral water, merchandise distribution, consulting and management, steel production, railroad engineering, fitness clubs and so on.

When Shamsaddin Hosseni, the Minister of Economy, was summoned by the parliament to answer questions regarding this embezzlement, he called Arya "an industrial hero." The General Manager of the Central Bank of Iran, Mahmood Bahmani, called the whole scandal "an unimportant issue which happens all over the world."

So far Mohammadreza Khavari, the General Manager of the National Bank of Iran, has fled to Canada after resigning his post, and the General Manager of the smaller Saman Bank has also resigned. Mohammad Jahromi, the General Manager of the Saderat Bank of Iran, the main bank involved

in the scandal, has resisted being removed from his position.

An important point to note is that seven years ago, when Ahmadinejad first ran for president, he entered the political arena as the champion of poor, fighting corruption in the country. He accused Hashemi Rafsanjani and his family of being the ringleader of corruption. Now, Iranians are in a better position to assess his claims.

The regime of the "Supreme Religious Leader" has shown a heavy hand in suppressing the Green Movement (the popular movement against the electoral fraud and more in Iran), but with every passing day the inability of the regime to govern the country becomes more clear. Under these circumstances, and considering the conspiracies of the imperialists, especially the Americans, and the revolutions in the North Africa and the Middle East region, Iran is pregnant with possibilities. It's a country to watch carefully. ●



Protest against the 2009 election fraud in Iran.





# Hot Earth: time to face the facts

By Dr. Hannah Middleton,  
General Secretary of the  
Communist Party of  
Australia

For those concerned with the fate of the earth, the time has come to face facts - not just the environmental crisis but the need for fundamental social change.

*Hot Earth*, a new pamphlet by the Communist Party of Australia, joins the debate about the environmental crisis at a time when the Gillard government's carbon tax is being discussed in Parliament and Coalition Leader Tony Abbott is parading his "direct action" plan which allows polluting corporations to get away with murder.

*Hot Earth* rejects both options, demanding instead regulations and penalties to control carbon emissions by corporations - before it is too late.

It is beyond debate that the earth's environment - the source of life for humans and all other species - is under sustained and severe attack by human activities. It is also clear that the effects of continuing down the same path will be devastating.

Speaking at the 1992 UN Conference on the Environment and Development, Fidel Castro commented: "Never in the history of mankind has such a generalised and destructive aggression taken place against all of the world's vital systems ... For the first time in his history, man is capable of altering the equilibrium of the principal vital systems and breaking the natural

laws that have governed evolution on the planet... For the first time man is capable of changing the course of life."

Humans have always impacted and changed the natural world through their productive activities from the burning off practised by Aboriginal hunter-gatherers in Australia to grazing herds, ploughing and irrigation. However, changing nature does not necessarily mean damaging or

uncontrolled exploitation of the environment and the plundering of natural resources intensified under feudalism and reached its peak under capitalism.

Today developed capitalist countries are using all the achievements of science and technology to "master" nature. A consumer and predatory attitude to natural resources is characteristic of capitalism and, with the scientific and technological revolution, not only leads to their exhaustion but also brings with it a train of negative and, in some cases, possibly irreversible consequences for the environment.

The environmental crisis arises from social and philosophical attitudes rather than from technology which is a creation of human endeavour.

The system that directs the whole course of scientific and technological progress to the making of profit and the exploitation of humankind and nature is mainly to blame for the environmental crisis.

Capitalism's basic driving force and its whole reason for existence is the amassing of profits. The environment exists as a realm to be exploited in a process of growing economic expansion. Corporations, and the system itself, must either grow or die.

Companies have no loyalty to anything but their own bottom lines. For the capitalist it is a matter of indifference whether what is produced is useful or harmful for

individuals or society. They will be produced if a market exists or can be created for them and if they yield an adequate profit. The environmental damage their production may cause is equally a matter of indifference.

Leaders of the capitalist system are unable to conceive of or promote a different economic which gives priority to human and environmental needs, as opposed to profits.

There is nothing in the nature of the system that will allow it to pull back before it is too late. To do that, other forces are needed.

Continuing "business as usual" is the path to global disaster.

"Solutions" which allow the current system of production and distribution to proceed, are not real solutions. They will actually make things worse by giving the impression that the crisis will be overcome when the reality is quite different.

The overwhelming environmental problems facing the world and its people will not be effectively dealt with until we institute another way for humans to interact with nature.

We need a system of sustainable human development. This means enough for everyone and no more. Within the capitalist system, some things have been done and more can be done to lessen capitalism's negative effects on the environment and people.

*Hot Earth* presents the case for steps to start resolving the climate crisis by challenging the power of the corporations and introducing laws and penalties to restrict their activities which are killing the planet.

It also argues for protection of

workers' employment, public ownership, nationalisation, price and profit controls, expanding public transport, cutting military spending and other steps which campaigns can begin to win within the capitalist system.

But the environmental crisis cannot be solved within the present system. The various suggestions for doing so have no hope of success. The system of world capitalism is clearly unsustainable. The transition to a sustainable - and socialist - economy will be a complex and hard fought process.

Fundamental change is needed. This means economic and social change, and a new politics built on the new economic base.

*Hot Earth* concludes: "The struggle for sustainable development is in essence a struggle to restrain and restrict capitalist corporations and to compel an end to environmentally damaging production processes. It is a struggle to fulfil human needs through more creative, democratic and ecologically respectful practices. The contrast with uncontrollable capitalist growth is stark."

A new world is not only possible, it is essential. And a broad popular movement, united in action, working to protect the planet and humanity, can and must bring about the necessary social change.

This is where Communists have a responsibility. We have to work as hard as we can to help expand, unify and galvanise this movement to bring about social change. We have only 10 to 15 years to address the crisis of climate change and prevent catastrophe. What we do now will determine the future of planet Earth. ●



destroying the environment.

With the development of productive forces, the creation of surpluses and the emergence of private property and classes, an ideology of exploitation and mastery developed which began to be reflected in attitudes towards nature.

A separation between humankind and nature grew in people's ideas and nature began to be a thing to be used. The

## The Cold War and the "reds" in the unions

Our tribute to this year's 90th anniversary of the Communist Party of Canada continues with this look at the struggles of the "reds" in the post-war labour movement.

For the Canadian and U.S. ruling classes, the aim of the Cold War was to crush or at least seriously undermine organized resistance by working people. To achieve this goal required driving militant, communist-led unions out of labour federations in both countries. After all, these were the

unions which consistently mounted serious struggles to defend the interests of workers, both on the economic and political fronts.

The anti-communist campaign in the unions began in 1947 with the U.S. Taft-Hartley Act, which used anti-communist rhetoric to attack the "closed shop", restrict mass picketing and other militant tactics, and expand the scope for injunctions. One critical provision of Taft-Hartley prohibited Communists from holding union office. Most of the international (U.S.-based) trade unions accepted

this provision, and many even excluded Communists from union membership.

The first waves of this attack came in western Canada. In August 1948, the executive of the Canadian Congress of Labour (which later merged with the Trades and Labour Congress (TLC) to form the CLC) arbitrarily suspended, and soon

expelled, the Mine-Mill union. This move helped to oust Communists like Harold Pritchett and Harvey Murphy from the executive of the B.C. Federation of

Labour. The communist-led International Woodworkers of America (which had a majority of its members in Canada) was the next target, falling under the control of right-wing forces. These events seriously weakened the left-wing sections of the CCL, and opened the door to further attacks. The United Electrical workers union (UE) was expelled from the CCL in 1949, and both UE and Mine-Mill faced constant raids by the Steelworkers and other unions.

Within the TLC, the Cold War drive began with an attack on the communist-led Canadian Seamen's

Union (CSU), which had won better working conditions and higher pay for merchant sailors. Collaborating with the RCMP, the shipping companies, and even gangsters, right-wing leaders of the TLC helped break the historic CSU strike of 1949. The companies signed contracts with the so-called Seafarers International Union, destroying the CSU.

By this time, UE and Mine-Mill were outside the mainstream of the Canadian labour movement, and right-wing social democracy achieved hegemony over the organized working class. Other unions were expelled from the TLC, including the International Fur and Leather Workers Union in 1951, and the United Fishermen and Allied Workers Union in 1954. Communists who were elected officials or simply rank and file members of other unions were often expelled or blacklisted.

This witch-hunt had serious consequences, as Canada became increasingly integrated into the U.S. imperialist war machine. Class collaboration became the dominant ideology within the labour movement, closing the brief post-war period during which militant union struggles had achieved major victories over the employers.



Striking UFAWU members in 1960, while the anti-communist Cold War kept the union out of the CLC.

Women who had entered industry in large numbers, making huge progress towards equality, were driven back into the home or into low-paying jobs. The labour movement leadership backed Canada's entry into the Korean War on the side of U.S. imperialism, with tragic results including the deaths of millions of Koreans, and over 300 Canadians.

But the attempt to drive the "reds" out of the labour movement and to impose "business unionism" met with stubborn opposition. Communists and other left-wing activists remained a significant force in many union locals and labour councils. In 1972, the CLC was finally compelled to readmit the UE and the UFAWU into the "house of labour." One by one, the "red clauses" which barred

communists from membership or executive positions were removed.

This process paralleled the renewal of labour militancy during the 1960s, leading to the historic Quebec Common Front general strike of 1972. The sharpening struggle between capital and labour entered a new stage in October 1975, with the introduction of wage control legislation Bill C-73 by the Trudeau Liberals.

Later that month, 2,000 angry workers came out when Trudeau spoke to a business gathering at the Royal York Hotel in Toronto. Days later, 40,000 workers rallied in Montreal against wage controls. These actions kicked off a year of escalating struggles, as left-wing sections of the trade unions sought

see REDS, page 11





## Egyptians demand renationalisation

### PV Vancouver Bureau

The swirl of contradictory gains and setbacks has continued in Egypt this fall. Teachers are mobilizing to demand pay increases, and wide sections of public opinion are increasingly angered by the delay in progress towards democratic governance. In the most disturbing development, troops killed over 20 Coptic Christians protesting against attacks on churches. One immediate response was a large united demonstration of Christians and Muslims in Cairo, condemning a slide towards sectarian violence.

At the same time, Egypt's finance minister has again spoken out against the sale of public assets under the former regime of Hosni Mubarak. Hazem El-Beblawi, who also serves as deputy prime minister, said that Egyptian society is not opposed to the work of the private sector, but had "justifiable suspicion" towards the lack of transparency and corruption that characterised Mubarak period.

In September, Egypt's administrative court suspended the privatisation contracts of three former state-owned companies and returned them to public ownership. The court said that post-uprising reviews of privatisation procedures had raised questions over corruption, conflict of interests and a lack of transparency.

The ruling was welcomed by 4,300 workers at Arab Polvara's factory in Alexandria, which was returned to public ownership.

"Are you willing to give the state your 5 per cent share so we can go back to the public sector?" asked one employee at a massed group of his colleagues. The answer from the crowd came back loud and clear: "YES!"

The companies renationalised in September - Tanta for Linen, Shebin for Spinning and Al-Nasr Company

for Steam Boilers and Pressure Vessels - are not the only ones affected. A similar verdict returned retail institution Omar Effendi to the public sector in May.

Some of the most fervent calls for renationalisation come from workers in the textile sector, which has seen years of neglect by industry owners and increasingly damaging competition from the international market.

Workers at Arab Polvara Spinning & Weaving, who have held three sit-ins since Mubarak's ouster in February, are the latest to raise the demand. Previous demonstrations highlighted nine specific changes to improve working conditions, but the open sit-in that began on October 2 focuses on a pay increase and the demand for renationalisation.

Workers at the three companies returned to the state this year, as well as Polvara, all believe the former owners were seeking to liquidate their investments and cutback on the labour force. In all four cases, investors partly sold company assets like land,

equipment and factories.

Even the granting of higher wages has failed to satisfy employees at the Al-Nasr Company for Steam Boilers and Pressure Vessels. Workers say they would rather see their employer return to the public sector where they felt more secure.

"We are getting better wages but the administration policy is unfair. They wanted to dismantle the factory and sell the land to make a resort," said Adel Qorani, repeating a claim that private owners seem more intent on stripping and selling assets than sustaining the businesses to which they are ostensibly committed.

In 2008, Arab Polvara had more than 10,000 employees against 4,300 today. Likewise, Tanta Flax and Oil employed 1,700 in 2005 but now has only 200 permanent workers and another 400 on temporary contracts. Remaining workers think it's only a matter of time before they join the long list of redundancies.

(With files from the Ahram Online website.) ●

## Landau documentary at VIFF



"Will the Real Terrorist Please Stand Up?", a documentary on the Cuban Five case, had its Canadian premiere at the Vancouver International Film Festival this month. Director Sol Landau (at right) spoke at a VIFF reception with Cuban Ambassador Teresita de Jesús Vicente Sotolongo (centre), as well as Nazir Rizvi and Ray Viaud from the Canadian-Cuban Friendship Association.

## Call to Peace Congress Convention

The Canadian Peace Congress has issued a call for its next convention, in Toronto over the Nov. 25-26 weekend.

As the Call points out, "this meeting occurs at a time when Canadian foreign policy is taking

## REDS...

continued from page 10

to build a movement broad and powerful enough to scrap wage controls.

While NDP provincial governments in BC, Saskatchewan and Manitoba backed the controls, the Communist Party threw itself into the fight to defeat C-73. The pages of the Communist press from that period feature a blizzard of local reports on the escalating fightback, including many resolutions calling on the CLC to take action. Communist Party clubs across the country distributed bundles of the weekly *Canadian* and *Pacific Tribunes* to workplaces, encouraging support for the one-day general strike which the CLC had finally called. On October 14, 1976, over a million workers stayed off the job; many joined the demonstrations against wage controls.

The episode proved that despite the legacy of the Cold War years, the Communists and the left still had the capacity to help mobilize a powerful working class fightback. ●

an increasingly aggressive approach that is based on imperialist expansion, deeper integration with the United States military and security apparatus, increased subordination to NATO expansionism, and war. As the economic crisis continues to intensify in domestically and globally, the Harper government continues to promote an economic policy that is centred around accelerated military spending on the one hand and, on the other, severe austerity measures that threaten jobs, working conditions and social programs.

"At the same time, we are witnessing a strong and militant surge in popular resistance to imperialism around the world. These struggles are an inspiration, demonstrating the breadth of opposition to militarism and war, and they demand our solidarity.

"Our convention is an important event for strengthening and building the anti-imperialist peace movement in Canada, which works in full solidarity with the World Peace Council and other fraternal peace organizations around the world. As such, the convention will also provide a valuable opportunity for the Congress to determine how it can make the most effective contribution to a coordinated opposition in Canada to war and aggression, among a broad range of peace and solidarity organizations."

The meeting will convene at Metro Hall on November 25 at 7

pm, and continue on Nov. 26 at 10 am. Metro Hall is located at 55 John Street, two blocks east of Spadina on the corner of King and John.

The convention will have three main agenda items: a Main Resolution which will assess the international situation, and the work of the World Peace Council and Canadian Peace Congress; amendments to the Constitution and Principles of the Congress; and election of the executive.

Delegates are responsible for their own travel expenses to Toronto. The Convention will attempt to provide billets for delegates who indicate a need, but such requests will be considered on a first-come basis and cannot be guaranteed. There is no delegate fee, but a donation of \$25 per delegate is requested upon registering. Local chapters are encouraged to assist with delegate expenses.

The Congress website is [www.CanadianPeaceCongress.ca](http://www.CanadianPeaceCongress.ca). For details, contact Dave McKee, President, Canadian Peace Congress, 416-535-6586, email [dmckee@canadianpeacecongress.ca](mailto:dmckee@canadianpeacecongress.ca).

**Support the 2011  
PV Fund Drive for  
\$50,000.**

**Send your  
contribution today!**

## What's Left

### Surrey, BC

**Rally Against George Bush**, Surrey Economic Forum, gather 11 am, Thur., Oct. 20, SW corner of 152 St. & 104 Ave. near Sheraton Guilford Hotel. Organized by StopWar coalition, Lower Fraser Peace Council, and other anti-war groups.

### Vancouver, BC

**COPE Election Office**, 585 E. Broadway. To volunteer, drop in or call 604-255-0400.

**Senate page Brigitte DePape**, forum on social change, Sat., Oct. 22, 3 pm, Rio Theatre, 1160 E. Broadway. \$5-10, no one turned away. Sponsored by Peace and Global Educators, Check Your Head, StopWar coalition.

**From Devastation to Salvation**, speaker Dr. Jorge Balseiro on Cuban health solidarity work in Haiti, Fri., Oct. 28, 7 pm, Maritime Labour Centre, 1880 Triumph. Donations to Cuban Medical Team welcomed. Sponsors: Canadian Network on Cuba, Canadian-Cuban Friendship Assoc., Vancouver & District Labour Council, Haiti Solidarity BC. Call Ray at 604-253-6442 for info.

**Left Film Night**, screening of "Will the Real Terrorist Please Stand Up," 7 pm, Sun., Oct. 30, Centre for Socialist Education, 706 Clark Dr. By donation, proceeds to Cuba solidarity, call 604-255-2041 for details.

**Revolution Banquet**, great food and program, speaker CPC leader Miguel Figueroa, Sat., Nov. 12, doors 6 pm, Peretz Centre, 6184 Ash St. Tickets \$20. For details, call Sam at 604-254-9836.

### Saskatoon, SK

**Indigenous Young Women: Speaking our Truths**, Nov. 18-21 conference. Info: 1-888-948-1112 or [Natasha@girlsaction-foundation.ca](mailto:Natasha@girlsaction-foundation.ca), or google "Girls Action Foundation".

### Winnipeg, MB

**Four Directions Walk to End Poverty**, Sat., Oct. 22, walks from the city's perimeter will meet 3 pm at the Legislature for rally and discussion of the Justice Charter to End Poverty. Call 204-792-3371 for details.

### Toronto, ON

**The People vs. Harper!** "People's Court" trial of Stephen Harper and his collaborators, Thur., Oct. 20, 5:30-8 pm, Oakham House, Student Centre, 55 Gould St. Sponsored by Our Times Magazine.

**Imperialism Today and the 99% Solution**, forum with Michael Parenti, author of *The Face of Imperialism*, Tue., Nov. 1, 7 pm, Steelworkers Hall, 25 Cecil St. For details call PV Ontario Bureau, 416-469-2446.

### Guelph, ON

**Imperialism Today and the 99% Solution**, forum with Michael Parenti, Wed., Nov. 2, McKinnon Arts Bldg, U of Guelph. For details call PV Ontario Bureau, 416-469-2446.

### Montreal, QC

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

## People's Voice deadlines

**November 1-15 issue: Thursday, Oct. 20**

**November 16-30 issue: Thursday, Nov. 3**

**Send submissions to PV Editorial Office,  
706 Clark Drive, Vancouver, V5L 3J1,  
<[pvoice@telus.net](mailto:pvoice@telus.net)>**

## Fracking protests....

continued from page 7

charge for approximately four hours. After we were charged with violating Section 423(1)(G) of the criminal code for "intimidation", we were not released until 7 am the next morning. One of the conditions of our release is that we do not attend any gas or oil site on the Blood Reserve.

"Recently, Canada endorsed the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. We understand that this declaration is not legally binding, however if Canada wishes to recognize the rights set forth in the charter then it is clear that our rights as Indigenous peoples have been blatantly violated..

"I do not feel as though what we did was heroic. We were a handful of people, including a couple of kids who gathered for a common purpose; to prevent any further

desecration of the land. For us, this place is more than just land; it is the place that has given life to our people since time immemorial. Our culture, our language, our identity comes from the land and it is to the land that we owe our very existence...

"We, on the Blood Reserve, have reached a point where we need to set aside politics and family ties and look at the very real issue at hand. We are about to kill the one thing that has given us life since the very beginning. How can we look our children and grandchildren in the eye and say that we have let such a thing happen?

"We are nothing without this place. There is no simple solution to the greater social issues that come as a result of colonization. However, there is a simple solution to this one problem and that is just to do the right thing. Set aside your fears and protect what we have, the land, our mother..." ●



# What Do Empires Do?

By Michael Parenti,  
www.parenti.org

When I wrote my book *Against Empire* in 1995, as might be expected, some of my U.S. compatriots thought it was wrong of me to call the United States an empire. It was widely believed that U.S. rulers did not pursue empire; they intervened abroad only out of self-defense or for humanitarian rescue operations or to restore order in a troubled region or overthrow tyranny, fight terrorism, and propagate democracy.

But by the year 2000, everyone started talking about the United States as an empire and writing books with titles like *Sorrows of Empire*, *Follies of Empire*, *Twilight of Empire*, or *Empire of Illusions* - all referring to the U.S. when they spoke of empire.

Even conservatives started using the word. Amazing. One could hear right-wing pundits announcing on U.S. television, "We're an empire, with all the responsibilities and opportunities of empire and we better get used to it"; and "We are the strongest nation in the world and have every right to act as such" - as if having the power gives U.S. leaders an inherent entitlement to exercise it upon others as they might wish.

"What is going on here?" I asked myself at the time. How is it that so many people feel free to talk about empire when they mean a United States empire? The ideological orthodoxy had always been that, unlike other countries, the USA



did not indulge in colonization and conquest.

The answer, I realized, is that the word has been divested of its full meaning. "Empire" seems nowadays to mean simply dominion and control. Empire - for most of these late-coming critics - is concerned almost exclusively with power and prestige. What is usually missing from the public discourse is the process of empire and its politico-economic content. In other words, while we hear a lot about empire, we hear very little about imperialism.

Now that is strange, for imperialism is what empires are all about. Imperialism is what empires do. And by imperialism I do not mean the process of extending power and dominion without regard to material and financial interests. Indeed "imperialism" has been used by some authors in the same empty way that they use the word "empire," to simply denote dominion and control with little attention given to political economic realities.

But I define imperialism as follows: the process whereby the dominant investor interests in one country bring to bear their economic and military power upon another nation or region in order to expropriate its land, labor, natural resources, capital, and markets, in such a manner as to enrich the investor interests. In a word, empires do not just pursue "power for power's sake." There are real

and enormous material interests at stake, fortunes to be made many times over.

So for centuries the ruling interests of Western Europe and later on North America and Japan went forth with their financiers - and when necessary their armies - to lay claim to most of planet Earth, including the labor of indigenous peoples (both as workers and slaves), their markets, their incomes (through colonial taxation or debt control or other means), and the abundant treasures of their lands: their gold, silver, diamonds, copper, rum, molasses, hemp, flax, ebony, timber, sugar, tobacco, ivory, iron, tin, nickel, coal, cotton, corn, and more recently: uranium, manganese, titanium, bauxite, oil, and - say it again - oil (hardly a complete listing).

Empires are enormously profitable for the dominant economic interests of the imperial nation but enormously costly to the people of the colonized country. In addition to suffering the pillage of their lands and natural resources, the people of these targeted countries are frequently killed in large numbers by the intruders.

This is another thing that empires do which too often goes unmentioned in the historical and political literature of countries like the United States, Britain, and France. Empires impoverish whole populations and kill lots and lots of innocent people. As I write this, President Obama and the

national security state for which he works are waging two and a half wars (Iraq, Afghanistan, and northern Pakistan), and levelling military threats against Yemen, Iran, and, on a slow day, North Korea. Instead of sending medical and rescue aid to Haiti, Our Bomber sent in the Marines, the same Marines who engaged in years of repression and killings in Haiti decades ago and supported more recent massacres by proxy forces.

The purpose of all this killing is to prevent alternative, independent, self-defining nations from emerging. So the empire uses its state power to gather private wealth for its investor class. And it uses its public wealth to shore up

its state power and prevent other nations from self-developing.

Sooner or later this arrangement begins to wilt under the weight of its own contradictions. As the empire grows more menacing and more murderous toward others, it grows sick and impoverished within itself.

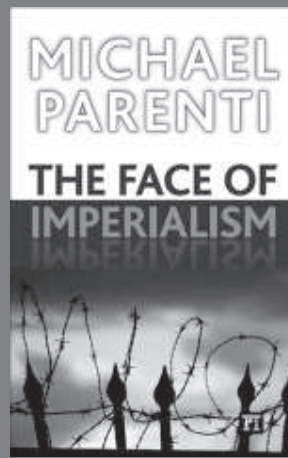
From ancient times to today, empires have always been involved in the bloody accumulation of wealth. If you don't think this is true of the United States then stop calling it "Empire." And when you write a book about how it wraps its arms around the planet, entitle it *Global Bully* or *Bossy Busybody*, but be aware that you're not telling us much about imperialism. ●



Michael Parenti

## "Imperialism Today and the 99% solution"

Public forums  
with Michael  
Parenti



**TORONTO**  
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Steelworkers  
Hall, 25 Cecil St.

**GUELPH**  
Wed. Nov. 2,  
5:30 pm  
McKinnon Arts  
Bldg., University  
of Guelph

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for details

## Greeks fight austerity attack

From the Morning Star (UK)

Greek public-sector staff walked off the job Oct. 5 to protest against the government's push for harsher austerity measures in a bid to win more loans from its EU and IMF creditors. At least 20,000 protesters converged in central Athens and another 15,000 in Thessaloniki.

The 24-hour strike was called by the country's two main union confederations the Civil Servants' Confederation (ADEDY) and the Greek General Confederation of Labour (GSEE).

Air-traffic controllers honoured the action, grounding all flights in and out of Greek airports. State hospitals were running on emergency staff, while lawyers, teachers and tax officers also walked out for the day. Public

transport employees held work stoppages in the morning and evening and state TV and radio pulled news programs off the air.

Greeks have already been robbed of their collective bargaining rights and hit with successive pay and pension cuts in the name of deficit reduction. They are currently enduring a deep recession, with the economy expected to contract 5.5% this year. Unemployment has spiralled to above 16% as small businesses have closed down.

Now the nominally Socialist PASOK government is proposing to suspend about 30,000 public-sector staff on partial pay for six months before sacking them.

Meanwhile, GSEE and ADEDY have called a general strike for October 19. ●

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11/18



The All-Workers Militant Front (PAME) of Greece held rallies on the day of action called by the World Federation of Trade Unions.