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# people's VOICE

**Revolting  
Europe**  
*See page 9*

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"Defend Our Coast" in Victoria on Oct. 22

**Needed: a  
people's  
alternative to  
tar sands exports**  
*- see page 6 -*



Rallies took place in six cities across Canada on October 6, as part of an International Day of Action to oppose the drive to war against Iran and Syria. In Toronto (above), hundreds marched in response to a call for protests issued by the Canadian Peace Alliance. (Photo: Ed Bil)

**Canadians  
demand:  
Stop war  
build-up  
against Iran  
and Syria!**  
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**What's the beef?**

As recalls of E.coli-contaminated beef spread from Newfoundland to Hong Kong, serious questions are being raised about Canada's food safety system and the dangers of giant agribusiness operations.

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**The Assange case**  
Despite soothing assurances from U.S. and Britain, all evidence points to an attempt by these countries to imprison the Wikileaks founder

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**Colombia talks**  
Talks towards a peace agreement between the Colombian government and the FARC-EP insurgents are set to begin. We print an interview with rebel leader Timoleon Jimenez.

# "We will never give up this just fight"

**Final Declaration of the People's Tribunal and Assembly, "Breaking the Silence: Justice for the Five". Held Sept. 21-23 in Toronto, the Assembly was attended by a wide range of prominent supporters of the Cuban Five.**



*Teresa de Jesus Vicente, Cuban Ambassador to Canada, brings greetings to the Assembly on Sept 21. (PV photo: Ed Bil)*

Over the past two and a half days, we have reviewed in detail the legal miscarriages and political intrigue which led to the detention and wrongful conviction of the Cuban Five - Antonio Guerrero, Fernando Gonzalez, Gerardo Hernandez, Ramon Labanino, and René Gonzalez - patriots whose only "crime" was to investigate and expose the criminal, terrorist plots being hatched and executed

against Cuba by hostile groups based in Southern Florida - extremist right-wing groups aided and abetted by the U.S. government. The Cuban Five never spied upon or otherwise threatened

U.S. national security; they acted only to protect their native country and the lives of their people.

Once again, we affirm that these five Cubans are not only the innocent victims of a grotesque miscarriage of justice, and not only prisoners of conscience. They are all that. But they are also, and foremost, "prisoners of war", an undeclared and unrelenting war which has been conducted by U.S. imperialism against Socialist Cuba and its people ever since the victory of the Revolution in 1959.

We express our deep appreciation for the tremendous legal work which has been and continues to be undertaken on behalf of the Five Cuban heroes. And we salute the tireless efforts of friendship and solidarity groups, trade union and labour organizations, the youth and student movement, First Nations organizations, progressive NGOs and other people's organizations and concerned individuals in Quebec and across the rest of Canada, as well as within the United States itself and indeed around the world, for speaking out in favour of winning justice for the Cuban Five and in demanding their immediate release, and for organizing campaigns and other initiatives to spread awareness of their plight and build pressure on the U.S. government to win their freedom.

At the same time, we express our anger at the intransigence of the U.S. authorities in refusing to reverse this grievous wrong, and at the mainstream corporate-controlled press & media for maintaining a "wall of silence" around the case of the Cuban Five.

We are convinced that our collective effort to break the silence and bring to light the full, untold story of the Cuban Five remains a decisive factor in ultimately overturning their conviction, winning their release and allowing them to return to their families in Cuba.

Despite all of the obstacles prolonging this injustice, we are not discouraged. We remain steadfast in our knowledge of the rightness of this cause, convinced that truth and justice will ultimately triumph. We draw strength from the victories - large and small - which have been won along the way. We are renewed by every solidarity initiative which helps spread awareness and build support for this struggle. And most of all, we are inspired by the Cuban Five themselves, by the remarkable courage and grace they have maintained through all they have endured over the past fourteen years.

At this Tribunal & Assembly, we have exchanged ideas and proposals on how we can move this struggle forward. It has been a dynamic and creative process, and while much remains to be done to bring these fresh ideas and initiatives to life, we are committed to ensuring their realization. We leave this Tribunal & Assembly with renewed energy and commitment, as well as a renewed sense of urgency, to broaden and deepen the solidarity movement supporting the Cuban Five. We will not be deterred. We will never give up this just fight. Let us move forward with vigour and unity.

Free the Cuban Five! ●

## The verdict is in!

**The ruling of the Peoples' Tribunal & Assembly.**

This People's Tribunal was convened in Toronto fourteen years after the arrest and detention of Gerardo Hernandez, Ramon Labanino, Antonio Guerrero, Fernando Gonzalez Llorca and Rene Gonzalez in the United States.

After considering all the evidence before this Peoples' Tribunal, we find:

There is overwhelming and compelling evidence as to the activity of terrorist groups in Southern Florida, groups which have planned and executed terrorist actions against the people of Cuba for decades in contravention of U.S. and international law.

Every country has the right to defend itself and in that context, the Cuban Five acted in the least adversarial and nonviolent manner to prevent acts of terrorism without engaging in actions against the national security of the United States.

The U.S. failed to take any

action to prosecute the actual terrorists in Southern Florida.

We find that men that are peacefully trying to prevent terrorism should not be in prison.

This Peoples' Tribunal condemns the cruel and unwarranted treatment of the Cuban Five during their incarceration.

We find the Trial was a political trial against the Five.

We find there was no credible evidence to support a conviction of conspiracy to commit espionage against the Five.

We find there was no credible evidence to support a conviction of conspiracy to commit murder against Gerardo Hernandez.

We find the U.S. Government interfered in the trial by spending considerable sums of money to pay reporters to write over one thousand printed articles and other television and radio coverage amounting to propaganda which had the unequivocal effect of influencing the outcome of the trial.

We find the court's decision to

deny the motion for change of venue was patently unreasonable in light of jury intimidation and a pervasive environment of hostility against the Five.

Therefore this Peoples' Tribunal concludes that the Cuban Five were unjustly detained, unjustly prosecuted, and unjustly sentenced, all contrary to international and U.S. domestic law including the U.S. Constitution. This Peoples' Tribunal proposes the convictions be quashed, and that Gerardo Hernandez, Ramon Labanino, Antonio Guerrero, Fernando Gonzalez Llorca and Rene Gonzalez be set free immediately, without any restrictions on their liberty.

In the alternative, and in the interest of justice and healing, this Peoples' Tribunal proposes that the President of the United States should exercise his prerogative of a Presidential Clemency and allow the Five to return home.

For more information, visit: [freethe5peopletribunal.org](http://freethe5peopletribunal.org) ●

## Court strikes down BC gag law

The BC Court of Appeal has again unanimously rejected the BC Liberal government's latest attempt at gagging third parties from advertising about political issues. This time, the government has announced it will finally give up.

Prior to the 2009 B.C. election, the Campbell Liberals tried to impose restrictions on advertising for 60 days before the campaign period. The government's stated intention was to prevent trade unions or other movements from mounting effective publicity campaigns to raise their issues with the public.

But that heavy-handed legislation went much further, threatening heavy fines against nearly any organization or individual which spent any money to speak out on issues. According to legal advice at the time, for example, a newspaper such as *People's Voice* would have been barred from printing articles or advertisements which covered topics likely to arise during an election, starting sixty days prior to the writ being dropped.

After the courts struck down that law as an infringement of free speech rights, the Liberals pushed another set of amendments through the Legislature, proposing restrictions for up to 40 days before the campaign period. The court ruled that these amendments violate the Charter of Rights as well.

Writing on behalf of the court, Mr. Justice Lowry quoted from Supreme Court of Canada decisions saying "It is difficult to imagine a guaranteed right more important to a democratic society than freedom of expression. Indeed a democracy cannot exist without that freedom to express new ideas and to put forward opinions about the functioning of public institutions."

He added that advertising by individuals and groups "enriches the political discourse" by raising issues unlikely to get the attention of parties and candidates. The court said that interfering with political expression is allowed "only where there are the clearest and most compelling reasons for doing so," and found that the government had failed to show any such reason.

Indirectly, the ruling may bolster efforts by small political parties to cut down the web of political and bureaucratic barriers which hamper their efforts to reach voters. In recent elections, there have been growing attempts to block small parties from taking part in all-candidate forums, and even to bar candidates from speaking to voters or handing out campaign materials on post-secondary campuses. Such measures are clearly at odds with the emphasis on free political expression outlined by Justice Lowry in the B.C. case. ●

## Building the working class press at "Word on the Street"



*People's Voice supporters and press-builders were out as usual for this year's Word On The Street literacy festival, on Sept. 23 in Toronto. At the PV booth, about 20 volunteers distributed over a thousand sample copies of the paper as well as other progressive literature. (Photo by Ed Bil)*

# Farmers, consumers, workers pay for federal policies

By Kimball Cariou

New revelations keep emerging about the XL Foods tainted beef scandal, as recalls of contaminated products expanded nearly every day during late September and early October.

For example, there was a delay in getting data from the Alberta slaughterhouse at the centre of the largest beef recall in Canadian history.

That was the word from Canadian Food Inspection Agency president George Da Pont, speaking on Oct. 3 to reporters in Calgary together with Agriculture Minister Gerry Ritz. Shortly after Da Pont's admission, a federal government staffer cut the news conference short.

Da Pont said the CFIA asked for information from XL Foods on Sept. 6, but there was a delay in getting a response. Tests in the U.S. raised further alarms, but the plant continued to operate until the Inspection Agency closed it on Sept. 27.

After visiting the XL plant in Brooks, Alberta, Ritz said the facility would not reopen until inspectors certify that Canadians are not at risk. The reopening was initially expected almost immediately, but then kept getting delayed.

As the *Globe and Mail's* Andre Picard pointed out in an Oct. 8 commentary, "XL Foods... the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, which oversees the monitoring and enforcement of

food safety regulations, and Agriculture Minister Gerry Ritz, who is ultimately responsible for food regulation, have distinguished themselves with foot-dragging, the uttering of half-truths, cowering in fear, and inappropriate beef boosterism."

After routine testing revealed E.coli 0157 in meat produced at XL Foods, the U.S. Department of Agriculture halted shipments, but the CFIA first determined "there was no risk to consumers." The CFIA did not issue an alert to consumers until Sept. 16, days after the first illnesses were reported.

After Gerry Ritz's Oct. 3 news conference was cut short, he attended a Rotary Club luncheon, where he said of his beef entrée: "I don't know where it came from. I don't care. I know it's safe."

XL Foods said nothing until Oct. 4, when it posted a statement on an answering machine, saying: "We take full responsibility for our plant operations and the food it produces."

But as the E.coli 0157 outbreak spreads, it becomes more and more apparent that soothing words are just not good enough.

Federal agriculture and trade policy created the conditions that led to the massive recall of beef from stores, homes and restaurants across Canada due to E.coli 0157 contamination.

That's the view of the National Farmers Union (NFU), which opposes the massive concentration in the meat packing industry and increased self-regulation of a few

high-volume, high-speed processing plants. These developments, says the NFU, are due to policies that help the biggest companies increase profits and market share in pursuit of global competitiveness, by allowing them to reduce costs for meat inspection.

"Cattle farmers are already feeling the effect of the closure, as prices for fat steers and cull cows have already dropped by 20% and 30% respectively," says Glenn Tait, NFU Board member from Meota, Saskatchewan. "This sudden and unpredictable loss of income may well wipe out our 2012 profits. As farmers, we have done nothing wrong, but we are paying the price for XL's inability to run a clean plant and the Canadian Food Inspection Agency's inability to enforce food safety standards."

The XL Food plant processes about 30,000 animals per week, with Cargill, the largest packer, processing slightly more. About 80% of Canada's beef is processed in Alberta, mostly at these two operations. With Alberta's capacity virtually cut in half, a backlog is developing at cattle auctions, driving prices down. The NFU warns that many cow-calf producers, the foundation of Canada's beef sector, may soon suffer serious losses, compromising their capacity to continue raising cattle.

Neil Peacock, National Farmers Union Board member and cattle producer from Sexsmith, Alberta, remembers the 23 deaths and 57 illnesses from the 2008 listeriosis crisis at Maple Leaf Foods, and asks "Isn't this XL Foods situation just more evidence that Canada's food safety, security and sovereignty is in danger?"

While farmers wait for the CFIA and XL Foods to re-establish clean and safe processing, they must feed their cattle longer and incur extra costs, or else sell sooner at reduced prices. The food safety risk was taken by XL Foods, says the NFU, but the costs of that risk are being borne by consumers who have gotten ill from the tainted meat and farmers who cannot sell their cattle for the price they had expected.

The 2,200 workers at XL Foods are also paying the price for corporate and government policies. Largely immigrants from Sudan and other African countries,

they are members of the United Food and Commercial Workers Union. The crisis affecting the industry could soon have a major negative impact on the workers and their families.

Some XL employees have told the media that food safety was regularly jeopardized inside the plant. The UFCW's Tom Hesse says the union has heard about management's a general lack of concern for food safety issues, such as clogged cleaning equipment.

Workers also say that if they take the time necessary to sterilize their knives between cuts, they

can't keep up with the workflow demanded by the company. Employees have described witnessing unhygienic behaviour, including failure to wash hands properly, and wearing contaminated clothing into clean areas. Management allegedly turns a blind eye, refusing to stop the production line when such problems are found.

"(The workers) are saying that XL is more concerned with the numbers they can produce rather than the safety of the workers or the safety of the product," according to Hesse. ●



## NIAGARA NEWS BULLETIN

### People's Voice Niagara Bureau

\* The municipal government of Welland voted to mobilize residents against the provincially-appointed health system **supervisor's plan to close the city's hospital** entirely. The closure is planned for when a second regional hospital is built in Niagara Falls, which was proposed as a tactic to quiet community protests. The supervisor was appointed to take over the health system after many died in superbug outbreaks and thousands protested the closure of emergency rooms in favour of a P3 (public-private-partnership) hospital being built a half-hour drive away in St. Catharines. He has already said he will move obstetrics, pediatrics, and gynecology to St. Catharines even before the closure.

\* About **1,000 people protested at Marineland** and over 100 occupied the park on the last day of the season, shutting down a dolphin show, after workers exposed abuse and ill-treatment. The Ontario Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals gave only vague inspection results about "areas of concern" and "deficiencies", skipping some animals by deeming them under the care of the company veterinarian.

\* The **District School Board of Niagara** is reviewing three more schools so it can close one or more, after already deciding to close one school which was pit against another despite hundreds of students, alumni, and teachers protesting through downtown St. Catharines.

\* The Liberal Ontario government says it will **cut Niagara's homelessness programs** by "only" 52% instead of the originally announced 88%. The region's community services commissioner told reporters this revised cut is "really bad" compared to the original proposal being "really, drastically, horribly bad".



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## CLAC off: ITUC dumps rat union

Responding to a complaint from the Canadian Labour Congress, the International Trade Union Confederation's executive voted unanimously a year ago to suspend the Christian Labour Association of Canada (CLAC) as a member. A move to expel CLAC would have been considered at the next ITUC congress in 2014. Instead, CLAC has decided to quit before it gets kicked out.

Formed in 2006 through a merger of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) and the World Confederation of Labour (WCL), the ITUC represents 175 million workers through 311 affiliates in 155 countries and territories. To the dismay of unions which consider the CLAC an employer-dominated "rat union", the merger

process brought the CLAC - which had been an affiliate of the WCL - into the ITUC.

Announcing its decision to suspend CLAC in October 2011, the ITUC explained, "CLAC uses instruments enabled by weak legislation and on invitations of employers that in practice contest efforts of CLC unions to organise workers in their companies, which results in undermining minimum labour standards and undermining CLC efforts to organise workers in many companies especially in the construction sector. CLAC feels obliged to use certain instruments and methods (mainly) because it opposes the existing system of closed shops in the Canadian construction sector. CLAC also has taken the initiative to present itself as 'alternative' to

employers that are against unionising by CLC. In its leaflets CLAC expressed negative opinions about the CLC to challenge workers to choose CLAC as an alternative. In many cases CLAC made agreements with employers shortly after CLC started organising unions in these companies. Also by accepting lower labour conditions in case of economic circumstances or competition from outside, CLAC accepts a 'race to the bottom'."

CLAC voted last month to join the World Organization of Workers (WOW), which it calls "an agent of reconciliation in the workplace", i.e. class collaboration between bosses and workers. WOW is a "Christian" trade union federation founded in 1921 in Luxembourg. ●

# EDITORIALS

## Congratulations to Venezuela

The October 7 election in Venezuela was a major victory for President Hugo Chavez, for working people and the poor in that country, and for the global movements for democracy, national liberation, social justice, peace, and revolutionary change. The "Great Patriotic Pole" (GPP) coalition which includes Chavez's PSUV, the Communist Party of Venezuela and other left forces won 54.4% of the popular vote, to 45% for the right-wing Democratic Unity candidate Henrique Apriles Radonski.

This success was achieved under difficult circumstances for the Bolivarian Revolution, which faces complex challenges at a time of global capitalist crisis. The GPP was confronted not only by united domestic capital, but also by Yanqui imperialism and the worldwide corporate media. Absurdly posing as defenders of social justice, this counter-revolutionary alliance also engaged in vicious tactics, predicting that the outcome would be "razor thin" in hopes of provoking post-election violence.

In the end, there was a record turnout and eight million Venezuelans cast their ballots for President Chavez, giving him a strong mandate for another six-year term. But already, capitalist media pundits in Canada are calling on Chavez to yield to the demands of his opponents. When was the last time these hypocrites ordered the dictatorial Stephen Harper to pay attention to the 61% of Canadians who voted against his destructive far-right policies?

Despite such background noise, the outcome will strengthen progress towards socialism in Venezuela. The Bolivarian Revolution remains a bulwark of Latin America's rejection of domination by Washington, towards policies which put the interests of the people ahead of the greed of big capital. We congratulate the people of Venezuela for standing firm against the threats of imperialism!

## Austerity under fire

Across the planet, the tide of popular anger against "austerity" policies keeps rising. Some of the most publicised examples are in Europe, where huge general strikes and demonstrations have spread to many countries. The European working class and its allies are turning their fire not just on government cutbacks and attacks on social benefits, but on the so-called "treaties" which eliminate any democratic, popular sovereignty. As critics of capitalist globalization have warned since the WTO "Battle in Seattle", these treaties are a strategy by transnational corporations to enforce their "race to the bottom", the push to reduce wages and working conditions to the lowest possible level everywhere. Today this policy is called austerity, supposedly needed to "share the pain" of the capitalist economic crisis. There is no "sharing" by the bosses, just by working people.

Resistance is not limited to Europe. Look at Indonesia, one of the world's most populous countries, where nearly three million factory workers hit the streets in early October to demand higher wages and an end to the one-year contract system (with no benefits) imposed by employers. Or Latin America, where working people in Venezuela have resoundingly re-elected Hugo Chavez, on a platform to expand the Bolivarian Revolution. The working class is clearly at the centre of an emerging world-wide movement for fundamental social transformation.

Many Canadian working people share this hunger for a better future for our families and communities. The main bodies of the labour movement, especially the Canadian Labour Congress, need to recognize this reality and step forward to provide stronger leadership. We urge the CLC and the Quebec union federations to seize the moment, by convening a People's Summit of the labour movement and its social allies, to hammer out a united popular struggle to demand people's needs, not corporate greed.

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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"  
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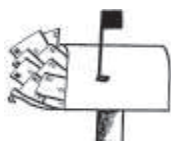
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Economic Pessimist



Economic Optimist



## Letters to the Editor

### An Albertan's Thoughts

The op-ed piece on Peter Lougheed from the last issue (*Peter Lougheed's True Legacy, Oct. 1-15*) did raise good points, but it missed a larger point. It is true that Lougheed was backed by and represented the corporate elites in this province, as was the case for every single Premier any Canadian province has ever had, unless you exclude some of the farther left Progressive/United Farmers, CCF or NDP governments. Lougheed did the back oil and gas industries, to the profiting of energy elites at the expense of the people and the environment, again, no question.

However, he had a more enlightened attitude compared to his successors, most notably Ralph Klein, in the case of provincial revenues from the resources. Where King Ralph believed that high royalties would scare away the oil companies, King Peter understood that there was no point in extraction without real taxation. He spent at least some this money on social projects and infrastructure (and it would be wrong also not to recognize his socially progressive policies, such as the end of provincially funded eugenics). Do not get me wrong, he was not socialist, but he was a "Progressive" Conservative, unlike the neo-conservative Wildrose Party.

The points raised about provincial rights issues also seem to miss another point with regards

to current issues like the Keystone Pipeline. To claim that provincial rights are purely to break the country and harm Canadian unity is a very divisive statement, and one that may turn off a lot of Western ears. The perception out in the West, particularly in Alberta, has long been that the political elites in Ottawa see us as little more than a colony from which to enact mercantilist resource policies, to steal away our own product and earnings for themselves. And our fear is valid to a degree when you consider how our raw resources are now planned to be extracted out of the province and into another nation, no less, for processing, sacrificing jobs for us here in Alberta. Thus, the distinction between Washington and Ottawa, or any foreign capital, is very minimal in the mind of the average Albertan.

This is why the notion of taking control of our own resources has been so popular in Alberta, and it has to be said that no federal government, Liberal or Conservative, has ever supported a plan of building production plants here in Alberta or even really here in Canada. At least when the power is in local provincial hands, we feel safer that we might get a fairer deal for the transfer. NDP leadership candidate Brain Topp made this point well when he compared statements by both Lougheed and NDP Premier of Saskatchewan Allan Blakeney on the importance of maintaining our hold over resources and processing them here.

With the defeat of the Wildrose and the draining of the PCs of its Klein-era backers, Alberta has a chance to begin to stem the tide of neo-liberalism that so ravaged us in the 1990s. Yes, this is the lesser of two great evils, but it is progress in the right direction. This is also not to undermine the fact that our province's, and our nation's, resources have been stolen from aboriginal peoples. It is also not to say that the issue of provincial rights has not been used to be divisive, and that Western protest parties like Reform were not used as a stepping stone by the corporate right in Canada to take power (often by non-Western Conservatives; Harper was not raised in Alberta).

However, it is equally divisive to try and claim that Albertans should have no control over their own resource future, particularly in an age where U.S. imperialism, backed by the current Canadian federal government, is sucking us dry and leaving us polluted and broke. A fair deal can be made for everyone here, from coast to coast to coast, respecting everyone's unique standing and contribution. That is what sovereignty, equality and self-determination is really supposed to be all about.

Graham L. Wilson, Albertan family rancher

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## The 1% and the 99%

Every so often, it's useful to remember the extent of the gap between rich and poor. The most recent Statistics Canada figures show that corporate profits during the second quarter of 2012 were reported at a total of \$71.9 billion. Over a full year, that would top \$285 billion, well over the pre-2008 crisis levels of about \$250 billion. Meanwhile, 1,394,000 Canadians were officially counted as unemployed in September. That number would be much higher if it included all those who can only work part-time, and the "discouraged" workers who have dropped out of the labour market completely. On the Oct. 15 anniversary of the Occupy movement, these figures are a stark reminder that the 1% and the 99% are very much still a reality.

# The scheming centred on Julian Assange

**Editorial from The Guardian, newspaper of the Communist Party of Australia**

It is now official - Julian Assange is considered an "enemy" of the United States. Documents obtained by The Sydney Morning Herald from US Air Force counter-intelligence make it clear that contact with the Australian journalist or his organisation, WikiLeaks, will bring charges of "communicating with the enemy" down on the heads of US military personnel. The maximum sentence in the event of conviction is death.

The information blows apart the story pedalled by Australian Foreign Minister Bob Carr that the US has no interest in extraditing Assange to face charges of espionage or conspiracy. It confirms that authorities in Australia, Britain and the US have been engaged in delicate manoeuvring to neutralise a grave threat to their war plans - public awareness of the horrors of those wars and the dishonesty of diplomacy and manipulation of public opinion required to pursue them.

The US does not muck about with its "enemies". Such individuals have been targeted by drones in countries like

Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan, Yemen and Somalia. There have been 297 strikes killing at least 1,800 people, many of them non-combatants. Of course, it wouldn't do to attack Assange with a missile

## Guest Editorial

from a drone in the centre of London but make no mistake, hatred for the world's most famous whistle-blower is deep-seated in the upper reaches of government in the US and elsewhere.

In fact, the expressions of hostility to somebody whose only "crime" was to tell the international community precisely what happens behind embassy doors had to be toned down for the sake of decorum. Official US spokespersons used to openly refer to him as a "high-tech terrorist" and an "enemy combatant". Prime Minister Gillard, a lawyer in a previous stage of her career, once declared WikiLeaks guilty without trial of "an illegal act" and the airing of the US' dirty laundry as "grossly irresponsible".

Bob Carr is in the forefront of the latest tread softly PR campaign, insisting the only issue to be cleared up in relation to Assange is that of

the allegations of sexual assault in Sweden. With regard to those matters, Carr insists Assange has had extensive consular assistance though he hasn't specified to what end that "assistance" has been directed. Carr has joined a chorus of right-wing commentary asserting that extradition to Sweden would actually make any subsequent extradition to the US more difficult. It is hard to believe the assurances of this most pro-US of foreign ministers.

The reasons given as to why Assange can not be questioned in London over allegations of sexual assault keep shifting. It was originally

claimed that Swedish law would not permit it. In the end, the only obstacle was said to be that of the "prestige" of the Swedish judicial process. Concerning the possibility of extradition from Sweden it was claimed that the Swedish courts would determine any such request in complete isolation from the sordid world of politics. It turns out that the government has the last word in these questions and its record is not good.

Much is made of the claim that Sweden cannot extradite a person to a country where they may face the death penalty. That didn't prevent its involvement in the

"extraordinary rendition" of two asylum seekers to Egypt where they were imprisoned, beaten and tortured. It is not hard to imagine a scenario in which Assange could be extradited in exchange for assurances he would not face the death penalty.

The government of Ecuador has come under attack for granting asylum to Assange. There are allegations of "hypocrisy" directed at WikiLeaks because of the Latin American nation's supposedly woeful record on freedom of speech. Ecuador has broken away from US dominance since the election of President Rafael Correa late in 2006. The shift has earned the enmity of the US and dubious NGOs like Reporters Without Borders whose major donors are to be found in the Miami-based Cuban ex-pat community with all their CIA connections.

Ecuador has confirmed its status as a leader of the movement of countries reasserting their independence after decades of dominance by the US. Australia's record, on the other hand, shows just how disgraceful its government is in its subservience to US military, economic and political interests. We need have no illusions about its loyalty to its citizens or the cause of truth in international relations. ●



July 2011: Supporters of Julian Assange, and Bradley Manning, accused by the U.S. of passing secret information to Wikileaks, protest outside the High Court in London.

## Furlong abuse allegations rock British Columbia

By Kimball Cariou

British Columbians appear sharply divided over allegations that the top organizer of the Vancouver 2010 Winter Olympics lied about his past and abused Aboriginal children. The dispute raises critical questions about the role of journalists and the mass media in Canada today. Just as important, the case indicates that racism and sexism, and the extraordinary privilege granted to wealthy white males, remain powerful factors in our society.

When the September 27 edition of Vancouver's free weekly *Georgia Straight* hit the streets, the uproar was immediate. Well-known journalist Laura Robinson wrote that Olympics CED John Furlong's 2011 memoir left out his early years in Canada. Furlong's book "Patriot Hearts" places his arrival from Ireland in 1974. That version omits Furlong's stint as an 18-year-old teacher at the Immaculata Catholic school in northern British Columbia, where several ex-students allege that he was verbally and physically abusive. A separate complaint of sexual assault was filed in July, and is under currently investigation by the RCMP.

Robinson appears to have done her homework, gathering eight signed affidavits, and making repeated attempts to contact Furlong by email through his publisher for his side of the story.

Furlong denies everything, except to admit that he had indeed first come to Canada in 1969. This period of his life was uneventful, he says, even though he married his wife at the time. He also launched legal actions against Robinson and

the *Straight*, accusing her of not doing her job properly, and of conducting a vendetta against him. Even more startling, Furlong alleged that somebody told him the accusations would go away in return for cash. In the context of his statements, this appeared to implicate Robinson has begun a counter-suit, claiming defamation by Furlong.

What can people make of these allegations and counter-charges?

Some answers may come through the courts. Furlong is so far not replying to questions from reporters, even as more allegations emerge. But if the legal cases proceed, it seems that either Furlong or Robinson will be exposed as a liar.

This is the point to put my own cards on the table. As the editor of *People's Voice*, working just

blocks from key Olympic sites, I published many articles critical of the huge social and economic costs of the Winter Games. I wrote some of those stories myself, and I took part in activities to oppose the Games, starting with Vancouver's civic referendum on the 2010 bid. Along with others, I helped turn the Olympic Torch away from its planned route along Commercial Drive, and I marched with thousands of protesters during the opening ceremonies.

That said, I also enjoyed the Winter Games. I was elated when the Canadian women's team won our first ice hockey gold medal since 1952, and when Sidney Crosby scored in overtime against the U.S. a couple of days later. I share with Laura Robinson a passion for sports, from neighbourhood soccer fields to the

highest level of competition.

I also profoundly admire her willingness to write about the men who dictated that women could not ski jump at the Vancouver Olympics. Furlong and his supporters seem stunned that a woman would dare to question such decisions by the rich and powerful. In fact, Furlong charges Robinson with "open contempt for the Olympic Games and male authority figures in sport", but I and many others cheer such contempt for patriarchy in sport and the rest of society.

The vitriol directed against Robinson extends in other directions. Many of Furlong's backers appear outraged that former students have anything critical to say about the man. After all, "everybody knows that things were different back then"; supposedly violence by teachers against students was widespread and acceptable forty years ago. Others say worse things happened to Aboriginal children at many residential schools, so why pick on Furlong years later? Some simply dismiss the affidavits as lies, particularly those who have worked as colleagues with Furlong.

In one form or another, such responses point to deep-rooted racist attitudes, no doubt unrecognized by some of Furlong's defenders. Anyone who has spoken to survivors of the residential schools realizes that it was

extremely difficult, even impossible, for many Aboriginal people to come forward with their tragic stories. Those who airily dismiss the Furlong affidavits have no idea how much courage it takes to finally speak to a reporter about the past; in fact, such reactions show that Aboriginal people are still often stereotyped as liars or habitually lazy. The same racist and sexist stereotypes apply in reverse, implying that a wealthy white male would never lie about important matters.

Robinson, along with *Georgia Straight* editor Charlie Smith, have brought a difficult story to the attention of the public. These are highly competent journalists, and the *Straight* has excellent lawyers. Furlong, on the other hand, appears to have hidden a controversial period of his life in Canada.

Three years ago, the Supreme Court of Canada established the defence of "responsible communication on matters of public interest". If Furlong's lawsuit proceeds, the *Straight* and Robinson will have to prove that the story was a matter of public interest, that they made every effort to verify the published claims, and that they gave Furlong full opportunity to answer the claims. My money is on Robinson and Smith, although one should never underestimate the determination of the ruling class to protect its own. ●



Contrary to the official mythology, the decision to host the Winter Olympics in Vancouver at a cost of \$6 billion was highly controversial. This PV file photo shows one rally drawing attention to the need for low-income housing, not expensive Olympic Village condos.

The Georgia Straight article by Laura Robinson, "John Furlong biography omits secret past in Burns Lake" and other commentaries on this matter can be read online at [www.straight.com](http://www.straight.com).

# Needed: a people's alternative to tar sands exports

**Statement by the BC Provincial Executive Committee, Communist Party of Canada, Oct. 4, 2012**

On October 22, thousands of people will gather at the Legislature in Victoria for a powerful protest against the corporate drive for more tar sands exports and tankers on the west coast. The Communist Party extends full solidarity to this courageous action, which will include members and supporters of our party.

Earlier this year, the Communist Party submitted our views to the Joint Review Panel hearings into the Enbridge Northern Gateway (ENG) pipeline. At the time, we called the hearings "a historic clash between two different visions for the future of Canada."

Subsequent events have validated this prediction. The broad coalition against the ENG proposal brings together growing numbers of Aboriginal peoples, environmentalists, working people, and even business people who understand the grave environmental, economic and social dangers posed by this project.

Public opposition has even compelled Premier Christy Clark to pose as a critic of the ENG proposal. But this phony public relations battle is not between the working people of B.C. and Alberta. In fact, both British Columbians and growing numbers of Albertans fear the threats posed by tar sands expansion, new pipelines and expanded tanker traffic.

Submissions to the panel hearings have shown that the Northern Gateway project does not meet the criteria of being "required" and "in the public interest." Rather, it is intended to generate huge new profits for the oil and gas monopolies.

Aboriginal peoples along the pipeline corridors, many of whom have never ceded inherent indigenous title to their traditional lands and waters, call the ENG project a direct attack on their national rights. Instead of meeting legal and constitutional obligations to engage in meaningful consultations with First Nations, the pipeline proponents and its political backers set up phony pro-pipeline groups and pay so-called aboriginal leaders to issue supportive statements. These corrupt tactics have only strengthened opposition by First Nations across B.C.

The potential for catastrophic environmental damage was seen again by revelations about Enbridge's failure to prevent and respond to its catastrophic oil spill in Michigan. The Northern Gateway pipeline would be constructed across 1177 kilometres, crossing some 1,000 rivers, streams and bodies of water, bringing bitumen to load onto supertankers in the narrow Douglas Channel, one of the most environmentally fragile areas of the west coast. Despite its expensive greenwash propaganda, Enbridge's record of more than 800 leaks over the past decade proves that the only real question is the frequency and scale of more such disasters.

But the transnational energy monopolies and the federal and Alberta governments have not given up. These forces remain determined to proceed despite negative public opinion and scientific warnings. Last spring, the Harper Tories used their parliamentary majority to remove key legal barriers to the rubber-stamping of controversial energy projects. The Tories demonize critics as "foreign radicals" and "billionaire socialists", but this smear tactic has only strengthened popular determination to block this dangerous project.

Bitter struggles over energy and resource policy go back decades in Canada. Natural resources such as fossil fuels, lumber, water and minerals could provide the material base for a publicly-owned "value-added" economic structure, focused on creating good jobs and meeting people's needs, without destroying the natural environment. Instead, starting with the colonial seizure of Aboriginal lands, and the "Abbott Plan" adopted by the post-war Liberal government, vast resources within the borders of the Canadian state have been grabbed by transnational (especially U.S.) capital. Canada has become mainly a supplier of raw materials for the U.S. military-industrial war machine. "Free trade" sellouts ensure that the First Nations and the peoples of Quebec and the rest of Canada are still denied any genuine sovereignty over our economic future. The Enbridge project is another nail in the coffin of Canada's declining

domestic manufacturing base.

The ENG project, the twinning of the Kinder-Morgan pipeline to Burnaby, and massive natural gas fracking in northern BC, all feed into the global imperialist pattern of fossil fuel dependence and domination. This relentless capitalist expansion not only threatens British Columbia's coastline, it has grave health consequences for the people of Alberta, and contributes to the deadly spiral of global warming and climate change.

The Communist Party opposes the policy of exporting unprocessed raw materials. Instead, we call for a People's Energy Plan, based on a sustainable, conservation-based economy; full respect for the

inherent rights of First Nations over their traditional territories and resources; and public ownership of the energy industry, as the material basis to rebuild Canada's industrial and manufacturing sector and to create jobs.

Ultimately, blocking the Northern Gateway pipeline and other forms of tar sands expansion will require united, massive, and militant mobilizations, like the Oct. 22 action in Victoria. We urge the labour and democratic movements to build united solidarity with the Aboriginal peoples and environmentalists, both to kill this dangerous project, and to create a genuine people's alternative plan for economic development, based on people's needs, not corporate greed! ●



April 2012 rally at the Vancouver Art Gallery (Photo: K. Cariou)

## "We belong to nature"

*The following passage by Frederick Engels, from The Part Played by Labour in the Transition from Ape to Man (1876), is very relevant to present-day debates over energy policies.*

Let us not, however, flatter ourselves overmuch on account of our human victories over nature. For each such victory nature takes its revenge on us. Each victory, it is true, in the first place brings about the results we expected, but in the second and third places it has quite different, unforeseen effects which only too often cancel the first.

The people who, in Mesopotamia, Greece, Asia Minor and elsewhere, destroyed the forests to obtain cultivable land, never dreamed that by removing along with the forests the collecting centres and reservoirs of moisture they were laying the basis for the present forlorn state of those countries. When the Italians of the

Alps used up the pine forests on the southern slopes, so carefully cherished on the northern slopes, they had no inkling that by doing so they were cutting at the roots of the dairy industry in their region; they had still less inkling that they were thereby depriving their mountain springs of water for the greater part of the year, and making it possible for them to pour still more furious torrents on the plains during the rainy seasons. Those who spread the potato in Europe were not aware that with these farinaceous tubers they were at the same time spreading scrofula.

Thus at every step we are reminded that we by no means rule over nature like a conqueror over a foreign people, like someone standing outside nature, but that we, with flesh, blood and brain, belong to nature, and exist in its midst, and that all our mastery of it consists in the fact that we have the advantage over all other creatures of being able to learn its laws and apply them correctly. ●

On October 22, 2012,  
I am joining people from across  
the country in Victoria, BC to

**DEFEND OUR COAST**



## Thousands sign up for Legislature sit-in

As this issue goes to press, the Defend Our Coast coalition reports that over 2700 people have signed pledges to join the Oct. 22 action at the Legislature.

"We are excited to join with you in solidarity on the legislature lawn to stand against tankers, pipelines, and tarsands," says the coalition. "Together, in this historic action of peaceful civil disobedience, we will hold a mass sit-in to defend our coast, in place of the BC legislature that will not sit until 2013."

"You may have seen in the news that Christy Clark met with Alberta Premier Alison Redford

to continue to negotiate around the Enbridge pipeline. It is now, more than ever, that we must ensure Christy Clark doesn't make a deal with our coast for this pipeline, or the other projects we often do not often hear about, such as the Kinder Morgan pipeline and tanker expansion."

For more information, visit <http://defend-ourcoast.ca>. Those looking for a place to stay or a ride (or those who can offer one or both), check out this website to connect with other participants who can help with transportation or billets. ●

## Unions endorse October 22 "Defend Our Coast" action

Some of the largest unions in British Columbia have added their names to the list of endorsers for the Oct. 22 "Defend Our Coast" sit-in against tar sands tankers and pipelines. The list includes the Communications Energy and Paperworkers Union (CEP), the Canadian Autoworkers Union (CAW), the BC Teachers' Federation, the United Fisherman and Allied Workers' Union-CAW, and the

Canadian Union of Public Employees BC.

"More than 50 BC communities have said 'no' to these tar sands export pipelines and the tanker traffic they will bring to BC's pristine coastline," said CUPE BC President Barry O'Neill. "That's along with 132 First Nations, and thousands of working people right across Canada who say no. CUPE BC stands with them all, and we're

very proud to support this action."

"The students in our classrooms are keenly aware of environmental issues, and they are demanding that we adults do our part to ensure that the world they inherit is clean, healthy and sustainable. We all have a responsibility to take a stand for our children and grandchildren," said BCTF President Susan Lambert.

"The on-going risks that these

tarsands pipelines and tankers pose aren't worth any price. Tens of thousands of unionized and other jobs depend on healthy river and ocean ecosystems," said Susan Spratt, CAW Area Director for BC and Alberta. "On October 22nd we will be standing in solidarity with thousands of working people in BC and our First Nations sisters and brothers."

"We will be coming to Victoria not just to oppose Harper's vision

of an economy based on exporting raw bitumen but to propose a very different economic vision for our country," asserted Jim Britton, Regional Vice President, CEP. "We want a transition from dependence on fossil fuels that is fair to the workers in the sector, as well as a national energy strategy that includes good green jobs and long term energy security to Canadians." ●

# "The real danger is war, not dialogue"

**Carlos Lozano:** You begin a new process of discussion with a government that in some way is a descendent of Uribe's "democratic security." How does the FARC approach this?

**Timoleon Jimenez:** We always have been disposed to looking for solutions other than war. With Uribe, that wasn't possible, what with his open disavowal of our political orientation. Santos not only is heir to democratic security, but more than that, one of its star protagonists. (President Alvaro Uribe, 2002-2010, propounded "Democratic Security" as his national security plan directed at "terrorism," i.e. the FARC.) In fact, with embellishments to the name he is continuing it. But as he himself says, Santos decided to assume the risks of dialogue and take positive steps along these lines. Any Colombian would say



Timoleon Jimenez

that the real danger is war, not dialogue. On that account we don't waver in accepting conversations in a search for peace. In regards to how to approach the new process, I would say that we do it with great expectations of arriving at an end to conflict. The President reiterates that he doesn't want to commit errors of the past, and we trust that's the way it will be. You know that the main error of all previous processes was to come to the table demanding surrender, with no real disposition to solving the causes that led to and kept on feeding confrontation.

**The agenda includes the theme of "giving up arms," which would be the point at which an agreement or a peace pact has arrived. What does the FARC expect in this regard?**

Without thinking of an arrival point of laying down arms we would lack any sense of beginning a process aimed at a definitive termination of conflict. Giving up arms consists of giving up on use of force, of appeal to any type of violence as remedy for economic or political ends. It's a veritable good bye to arms. If we made that into a reality in Colombia, our country would take an enormous leap forward. For the first time, we trust that the Santos administration and all sectors resorting to violence as a method of economic and political action are together with us on this criterion.

**President Santos has said his government insists that this negotiating process "not repeat the errors of the past," also offers a guarantee it's heading toward an end of conflict and indicates**

**Timoleon Jimenez, commander in chief of the central high command of the FARC-EP, is the visible head of the legendary guerrilla movement. Today he is committed to the search for a democratic peace by means of new dialogue with the national government. This interview with Timoleon Jimenez was conducted by Carlos Lozano Guillen, editor of VOZ, the Colombian communist newspaper, at the moment of a new effort to achieve peace in Colombia.**

**his government will maintain military operations and military pressure on the FARC. What assumptions does the insurgency have so the process might end up successfully?**

The dominant Colombian oligarchy, with solid support from U.S. governments, has for almost 50 years bet on exterminating the guerrillas. Twelve presidents, one serving twice, have invariably promised to finish us off. To do so, they've given the military apparatus a free hand. When Santos orders intensified operations, sections of the extreme right are not satisfied. He does it because he believes with them, as with all previous governments, that in fact he can make us surrender through force of arms. It's precisely that vicious cycle that needs to be broken. If you look at the general plebiscite giving approval to conversations on peace, you see that the great majority of Colombians don't share the idea of a military solution, among other reasons because, with more wisdom than their governments, they know it's not possible. We start out with the idea that this process will be successful. But that depends on those great majorities inclined toward a political solution having the opportunity to speak out, get mobilized, exert their influence, and decide the outcome. And we are inviting them to do it.

**In various sectors supportive of dialogues, they are proposing a truce proposal, a cease-fire, and cessation of hostilities. What does the FARC-EP think?**

We agree completely. It's always been in the forefront of our plans for trying to get close to different governments. Unfortunately the Colombian oligarchy has turned away because dialogues play out in the midst of confrontation. If the de-militarized zone of the most recent process had been accompanied by a mechanism of this sort, there might have been a different outcome.

In Colombia, the dominant sectors, its political class, and its mass media suffer from the obsession of looking at only one side of things. A report on the slaughter of 30 guerrillas in an aerial bombardment elicits their applause, while combat casualties on their side they repudiate as assassinations. We anticipate

further heavy pressures on us at the negotiating tables from such manipulation...

The Colombia that is ignored and victimized must now rise up and, speaking through those who were murdered and disappeared, demand a definitive end to the war, end consecration of impunity, and satisfy old cries for vengeance for those who were violated in such wide-spread, atrocious ways.

**What do you think of the six to eight months President Santos is proposing?**

That has to do with one expectation he is bringing up on his own. It hardly squares with the letter and spirit of what was agreed upon in the exploratory meeting. It was decided upon there to set no "drop-dead" dates, not even use the word "months." What the President said suggests for us how difficult this road we are undertaking is going to be. At the same time, it clearly pointed up the strategy they are going to implement when they don't achieve something at the table: they'll try to impose it through the mass media. Even being in Havana and being able to carry out exploratory meetings took two years, not a matter of weeks, as we originally thought. And that wasn't precisely because of the insurgency. I don't want to go into particulars on that theme out of respect for our promise to keep silent on details for the moment. From stories coming up in the media, our counterpart seems to have forgotten that.

**What political proposal will the FARC-EP make to Colombians at the beginning of negotiations?**

First, we want to mobilize around definitive termination of the conflict. The question of war or peace is a business concerning all of us Colombians and we are obliged to speak out. As it repeatedly insists, the government assumes negotiations will play out exclusively between their spokespersons and ours, discretely and without fanfare. That was the way when Laureano Gomez and Lleras Camargo signed the Sitges and Benidorm accords in Europe. The government alleges we of the FARC reject its plans for the most suitable government for the country. (Liberal and conservative party leaders signed the "Sitges and Benidorm accords" in Europe

in 1956-1957, introducing power-sharing arrangements between two parties taking over from the Rojas Pinilla dictatorship.)

What we are saying is that once more they are disregarding the Colombian people. They agree to impose on them that which interests and suits, in truth, only the transnationals, bankers, business people, and landowners. This can no longer happen in this country. The great majority must be listened to and heeded. Our proposal leads in that direction.

**Why did the FARC decide to take on this new attempt at peace? Weakness? Strategy? Realism?**

Whoever says military pressure was decisive in moving us to political negotiation forgets that this decade of war was unleashed when Pastrana unilaterally ended the peace process taking place in Caguan. It's now the state who is returning to the negotiating table with the FARC. It must have undertaken its own internal assessment. One of their considerations, not yet made public, has to do with their recognizing that the enormous effort undertaken to defeat us turns out to have been useless. The FARC keeps on: fighting, resisting, and advancing. Now we return to the natural scenario of politics, civilized dialogue. It's absurd to insist they made us sit down at the table, when it was the state that furiously left it. We negotiate because a political solution has been our banner always, and also that of the people's movement.

**But, wait, hasn't the FARC taken severe blows during these last ten years?**

I can't deny we've received serious blows - and extremely painful ones. The deaths of four members of the National Secretariat can't be minimized. And combatants' dying under fire from bombardments has been hard. Nevertheless we have courageously adjusted to all these situations. None of the current members of the Secretariat has had less than 35 years of guerrilla experience, which applies also to the Central High Command. There's no improvising when it comes to relief personnel.

Forty eight years of continual struggle has enabled us to gear up in formidable fashion. We keep on moving, with pain in our soul, but more attached to and convinced of our reasons. There are deaths in every war. The media campaign insists on presenting us as a worn out and dead - end organization. It's always been that way. If it were a question of confronting an already defeated force, they would not be working, as they are doing, to augment their forces even more, and also their enormous, acquired arsenal. These are truths that the state and the mass media deliberately hide.

**So, although the FARC is not carrying out operations of the calibre of those 14 years ago, can you affirm that confrontation continues on a large scale? The**

see DIALOGUE, p. 11

## "Support peace process in Colombia"

**Statement by the International Network in Solidarity with Colombia's Political Prisoners (INSPP), September 2012**

The International Network in Solidarity with Colombia's Political Prisoners, INSPP welcomes the commencement of formal negotiations between the Colombian Government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia-People's Army, FARC-EP on 8th October in Oslo, Norway.

We ratify our support for a political solution to end the social and armed conflict in Colombia. We hope that the government of President Santos is entering the negotiations with the FARC-EP in good faith so that the disappointments and tragedies of past attempts at negotiating are not repeated. This peace negotiation acknowledges that there is a social and armed conflict in the country fought by belligerent forces. We welcome the statement made by the National Liberation Army, ELN that they are also willing to participate in such peace negotiations.

We recognise that this step has been taken in response to political pressure from the people of Colombia and the upsurge in political mobilisation of democratic forces for peace with social justice in the country. We pay our respects to those forces and wish them continued success.

Without sovereignty, genuine land reform and democratic rights there will be no long-term peace in Colombia. We believe that the current peace process is an important step towards achieving those goals. We support calls for a truce in the conflict to coincide with the negotiations but recognise that it need not be a precondition for the beginning of formal negotiations between the parties.

The FARC-EP has released all of its prisoners of war with the commitment to cease any kidnapping for economic reasons. We call on the Colombian Government to demonstrate its good faith by the immediate release of the estimated 10,000 political prisoners held in Colombian prisons including those extradited to the US: Simon Trinidad, Sonia and Ivan Vargas. All are victims of the internal armed conflict in the country.

We congratulate the people of Colombia for their long struggle for peace as guarantors for a successful peace process. We call on the international community to support and accompany the peace process in Colombia. This can be done through the formation of friends of the peace process to provide trust and security to the parties at the negotiating table. ●



(Colombia's initial peace talks took place in Cuba.)



# GLOBAL CLASS STRUGGLE

## Wildcat walkout at Foxconn

A strike at Foxconn's Zhengzhou factory in China began on Oct. 5, involving three to four thousand production workers. In addition to demanding that they work during the Oct. 1-8 national holiday, reports said that Foxconn raised demands on product quality without providing training for the corresponding skills. When this led to defects in production of iPhone 5 products for Apple, fights broke out between quality control inspectors and the workers. After factory management took no corrective measures, a work stoppage began on the factory floor, including both production workers and inspectors. The work stoppage reportedly ended the next day.

## S.A. drivers demand 12% raise

Thousands of striking South African lorry drivers protested in central Johannesburg under the eyes of a heavy police presence on Oct. 2. The drivers marched peacefully to submit a petition to the transport bargaining council for a 12 per cent pay raise. The South African Transport and Allied Workers Union said the rally was joined by 15,000 drivers and their supporters. At another rally in Cape Town, a lorry was pelted with stones, causing it to overturn, and two other lorries were set on fire.

The protests are part of a wave of labour unrest which has seen strikes spreading from mines to the transport sector. Two of the world's top mining giants, disturbed at seeing their profits interrupted, have toughened their line against their striking workers. Amplats sacked 26,000 workers on Oct. 5, for failing to report for disciplinary hearings. Gold mining giant Anglo-Gold Ashanti has warned strikers that it might scale down operations if strike action continues.

Meanwhile, the commission investigating the killing of 34 miners by police, and murders of other union activists, has opened its public hearings after a visit to the Marikana site. In September the Marikana strikers returned to work after accepting a pay increase of up to 22 per cent. That agreement was reached through mediation by church and community leaders.

But unions have warned that the Marikana settlement set a bad precedent for labour relations.

"Lonmin should have known that getting wage negotiations facilitated by the churches and allowing everybody, no matter their legal status, to play a role in the negotiations will create precedents that they will not be willing to repeat elsewhere," the Congress of South African Trade Unions and the National Union of Mineworkers said.

The unions said that wage demands should be resolved through collective bargaining rather than "taking short cuts such as mass dismissals of workers."

## Millions strike in Indonesia

Nearly three million Indonesian factory workers downed tools for a one-day strike across the country on Oct. 1 to demand higher wages and to protest against the hiring of contract workers. Confederation of Indonesian Workers Union chair Yoris Raweyai said the striking workers are calling on the government to increase the



minimum wage, provide health insurance and social security for all employees, and revise government policies that allow companies to hire temporary staff on one-year contracts without benefits.

"We warn the government that we can do worse to the country's economy if they continue ignoring our three main demands," said Said Iqbal, a protest organiser from the Indonesian Workers Assembly.

Indonesia's Constitutional Court ruled in January that the hiring practice was unconstitutional and violates workers' rights, but so far little has been done to redress the balance.

Over 200,000 workers marched in the industrial city of Bekasi, just outside Jakarta, waving flags and chanting "Workers unite. We can't be defeated." Many thousands marched through Jakarta itself, and around 11,000 police and 4,000 military personnel were deployed around the rally. Jakarta police said that hundreds of thousands of labourers from more than 700 companies in 80 industrial estates around the capital had taken to the streets. The national figure was 2.8 million on strike in 34 cities.

Factory workers in Indonesia earn an average basic salary of less than \$100 a month. The economy grew 6.5 per cent last year, the fastest pace since the 1997-98 Asian financial crisis, but rapid inflation makes it harder for workers to pay for food and basic necessities.

## Walmart walkouts in LA area

Workers from nearly a dozen Walmart stores in the Los Angeles area went on strike Oct. 4 to protest attempts to silence workers for speaking out for improvements on the job. Hundreds of community supporters joined employees in calling on Walmart to raise their pay. The group protested outside the Pico Rivera store with signs reading, "Stand Up, Live Better, Stop Retaliation" and "Stop Trying to Silence Us." Some were arrested by riot police during the peaceful protest. "Walmart should not be

silencing workers for standing up for what's good for my store, my co-workers, my family and my community," said Venanzi Luna, a striking worker at the Pico Rivera Walmart. Luna is one of thousands of members of OUR Walmart, the nationwide Associate organization calling for changes at the company. "I am striking to take a stand against Walmart's illegal bullying tactics."

"We cannot stand by while the country's largest employer tries to silence workers who stand up for a better future for their families," said Maria Elena Durazo, Secretary-Treasurer of the Los Angeles County Federation of Labor. "We are here to tell Walmart the company must change the way it treats workers and our community. Our city and our country need big profitable corporations like Walmart and billionaires like the Waltons to take responsibility for rebuilding our economy - and stop squeezing the middle class to the breaking point."

Warehouse workers in Southern California were on a 15-day strike that included a six-day, 50-mile pilgrimage for safe jobs. And in Dallas and San Diego, hundreds of people held marches calling on Walmart to make changes. The company refuses to address concerns that affect its 1.4 million "associates" in the U.S.

Walmart workers from nine countries have launched the UNI Walmart Global Union Alliance to fight for fairness, decent working conditions, and the fundamental human right of freedom of association, including allowing workers to join a union.

## World Day for Decent Work

Actions were organized in many countries on Oct. 7 to mark the World Day for Decent Work 2012. Co-ordinated by the International Trade Union Confederation, the day highlighted youth unemployment, which is as high as 60% in some countries, and a whole generation of young people faces exclusion from the labour market.

"The crisis, and the inability or unwillingness of governments to restore jobs and growth, is having a particularly brutal impact on young people. Official figures show that 75 million young people are without jobs across the world, many millions more are trapped in informal or precarious work, and tens of millions of new job seekers have no prospect of finding work, or education and training to equip them for work in the future," said Sharan Burrow, General Secretary of the ITUC.

Events on Oct. 7 included one of the first street protests by Haitian trade unions in recent years, another national strike in Indonesia following the walkout by 2.8 million factory workers a few days earlier, over 25 actions across Bulgaria, and a conference on alternatives for youth employment in the west African country of Senegal.

"The issue of unemployment for young people is a global crisis, but each national government needs to take its own responsibility, and this is a big responsibility for

the labour ministers," said Sharan Burrow.

## S. Asia maritime week of action

The International Transport Federation (ITF, composed of seafarer and dockworkers unions around the globe) and trade unions in India and Sri Lanka kicked off a week of maritime action on October 8, spearheaded by joint seafarer/dockworker/ITF inspector teams in Mumbai, Goa, New Mangalore, Visakhapatnam and Tuticorin, with support from other ports in South Asia. The actions sent a strong message to shipping companies that even non-inspectorate ports in India are active and fighting for seafarers' rights. For the first time unions at private port terminals took part in the actions.

As well as defending seafarers' rights, the unions highlight issues such as deregulation, privatisation, casualisation, health and safety and precarious work.

Mahendra Sharma, ITF Asia Pacific regional secretary, commented: "South Asian maritime unions are fed up having to deal week-in week-out with the exploitation of seafarers, the abandonment by owners of ships and seafarers and the failure of some owners to take responsibility to ensure safe internationally compliant operations. This week of action will focus on eliminating substandard ships from South Asian ports and high seas to ensure ITF acceptable wages and decent working and living conditions on board."

Over recent years ITF affiliated dockers' and seafarers' unions in India have tracked down many flag of convenience ships visiting their ports, signed agreements, secured back wages for hundreds

of seafarers and helped win court claims for crews cheated and/or abandoned by ship owners. A further South Asian week of action will take place in December.

## Unions support jailed teachers

World Teachers' Day was marked on October 5, a reminder of how valuable teachers are for building the future. Massive teacher shortages are "quietly looming over countries struggling to provide every child with quality primary education by 2015," according to UNESCO, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

In Bahrain, where nearly 3,000 citizens who took part in last year's Arab uprisings were dismissed from their jobs and many arrested, teachers were among those targeted.

Mahdi Abu Dheeb, president of the Bahrain Teachers Association and Jalila Al Salman, BTA vice president, have been sentenced to 10 years and three years, respectively, for exercising their right to speech and free association. Al Salman has been released while awaiting her appeal, but Abu Dheeb is still imprisoned and suffering from poor health associated with his diabetes and the prison conditions.

The American Federation of Teachers (AFT), Education International and Amnesty International have filed protests on Abu Dheeb's behalf and are working towards his release while he awaits an appeal. The global labor movement and human rights groups also are working on behalf of the many other Bahrainis who are suffering from retaliatory acts of the government.

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

## Send me information on the Communist Party of Canada



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

**Central Committee CPC**  
290A Danforth Ave, Toronto, ON, M4K 1N6  
416-469-2446 <[info@cpc-pcc.ca](mailto:info@cpc-pcc.ca)> [www.comunist-party.ca](http://www.comunist-party.ca)

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**Ottawa CPC**

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**Manitoba Committee CPC**  
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Tel: 416-469-2446

**Hamilton Ctee. CPC**  
265 Melvin Ave., Apt. 815  
Hamilton, ON, L8H 2K3  
Tel: 905-548-9586

**Atlantic Region CPC**  
Box 70, Grand Pré, NS, B0P 1M0  
Tel/fax: 902-542-7981



# Europe is Revolting

By Tom Gill, London, Sept. 29, 2012

A general strike in Greece, massive protests by the indignados in Spain, public transport strikes in Portugal (and Spain), and industrial action by aluminium, steel and public sector workers in Italy headlined this week.

On Saturday mass protests will erupt again in Portugal as the indignaos movement that brought out a million into the streets of the country on September 15 - the same day there was another huge scale turn out into the plazas in Spain - join action called by the country's largest trade union, CGTP.

And it's not just in the Continent's south. On Sunday mass demonstrations are expected in France, calling for a referendum over the EU Fiscal Compact, the 'permanent austerity' treaty.

The focus of popular anger is 'Europe's austerity madness', as

Paul Krugman puts it in his latest column in the New York times. But the protests also reflect a wider rejection of a political elite that is rolling back basic democratic rights, from protections at work to welfare support and gains for women and minority groups, and privatising as well as slashing public services.

A slew of economic data this week confirmed what is now patently obvious to anybody but the criminally insane (and economists) - austerity is not working. Eurozone business confidence fell to a three-year low and a number of other indicators across the continent pointed towards recession. Most damning for the architects of austerity, unemployment is rising in Germany, which was until now a mainstay for growth in the 17 nation economic and monetary bloc.

Overall, the eurozone economy stagnated in the first three months

of the year and contracted 0.2% in the April-June period. Economists now expect another economic contraction in the third quarter. The European Central Bank meanwhile released data that showed lending to households and companies fell, and by more than expected, in August.

Yet Europe's austerity madness continues. This week Spain, Greece and France pushed ahead with fresh programmes of spending cuts. In Greece, at least 11.5 billion euros will be axed from the national budget. In Spain there will be another 20 billion euros of cuts. In France, President Francois Hollande's government is going for a 30 billion euro cuts package.

What do these huge but dry numbers mean in practice?

18 million unemployed across the Eurozone, for starters, to which another million will be soon added, according to a new report by Ernst and Young.

In Greece, a cuts package near agreed by the government will see wage cuts, a rise in the retirement age from 65 to 67 years, cut backs to pensions - lengthening the contribution period to get the minimum pension - cuts in benefits for the disabled and the sick, cuts to health benefits, cuts to unemployment benefits for workers temporarily laid off in the construction industry, in hotels and in other sectors, new cuts to spending on hospitals, and an average 12% reduction in the salaries of soldiers, policemen and judges.

In Spain, the "depression budget" as Socialist economy spokeswoman, Inmaculada Rodriguez Pineru, describes it, will see the wages of millions of public sector workers frozen for the third year in a row and pensions cut in real terms, and there'll be no relief for collapsing health services, schools and social services. And the arts and culture will take a



Rally in Athens by PAME (All-Workers Militant Front) during one of the latest anti-austerity general strikes in Greece.

massive hit, with cuts hurting renowned institutions such as the Prado and Reina Sofia museums, another self-defeating move that will no doubt hit tourism.

Austerity has already resulted in over a million Spaniards queuing at the doors of charities for food handouts and other aid. That's a tripling since 2007, according to Caritas. And it is not just in the south. In France poverty is on the rise particularly among the young, including students.

The health effects of mounting misery are being felt too. A quarter of Portuguese are now suffering from depression, according to a new study.

The perversity of austerity - which at its most fundamental level is about drastically curtailing the capacity and incentives for 320 million odd people to spend - was highlighted yet again this week. Despite all the cuts, it turns out that Spain's spending is actually set to go up. That's because of a

soaring social security bill to pay benefits to the unemployed and interest rate payments on sovereign debt that have been driven once again by international speculators who are right in just one respect - without growth a country's public finances will just go from bad to worse and so lending to Spain and other recession-hit countries is most definitely a risky business.

This is something that the new mechanism to 'save' struggling Eurozone states - the 500 billion euro European Stability Mechanism that forms part of the EU Fiscal Compact - will not fix. To the contrary. It will bury them deeper into the ground. The fund will swallow up about a quarter of the cuts Spain has just pushed through its own budget in order to save itself, and around a third of those planned in Portugal.

The reality is the latest round of EU centralising moves, from

see REVOLTING, p. 10



Police brutality has been frequent during recent anti-austerity demonstrations in Spain.

## Climate change is "already damaging global economy"

Excerpts from an article by Fiona Harvey, environment correspondent for the UK Guardian, Sept. 26, 2012

Climate change is already contributing to the deaths of nearly 400,000 people a year and costing the world more than \$1.2 trillion, wiping 1.6% annually from global GDP, according to a new study.

The impacts are being felt most keenly in developing countries, according to the research, where damage to agricultural production from extreme weather linked to climate change is contributing to deaths from malnutrition, poverty and their associated diseases.

Air pollution caused by the use of fossil fuels is also separately contributing to the deaths of at least 4.5 million people a year, the report found.

The 331-page study, entitled *Climate Vulnerability Monitor: A Guide to the Cold Calculus of A Hot Planet*, was carried out by the DARA group, a non-governmental organisation based in Europe, and the Climate Vulnerable Forum. It was written by more than 50 scientists, economists and policy experts, and commissioned by 20 governments.

By 2030, the researchers

estimate, the cost of climate change and air pollution combined will rise to 3.2% of global GDP, with the world's least developed countries forecast to bear the brunt, suffering losses of up to 11% of their GDP.

Sheikh Hasina, prime minister of Bangladesh, said: "A 1C rise in temperature [temperatures have already risen by 0.7C globally since the end of the 19th century] is associated with 10% productivity loss in farming. For us, it means losing about 4 million tonnes of food grain, amounting to about \$2.5 billion. That is about 2% of our GDP. Adding up the damages to property and other losses, we are faced with a total loss of about 3-4% of GDP. Without these losses, we could have easily secured much higher growth."

But major economies will also take a hit, as extremes of weather and the associated damage - droughts, floods and more severe storms - could wipe 2% of the GDP of the US by 2030, while similar effects could cost China \$1.2 trillion by the same date.

While many governments have taken the view that climate change is a long-term problem, there is a growing body of opinion that the effects are already being felt.

Scientists have been alarmed by the increasingly rapid melting of Arctic sea ice, which reached a new record minimum this year and, if melting continues at similar rates, could be ice free in summer by the end of the decade. Some research suggests that this melting could be linked to cold, dull and rainy summers in parts of Europe - such as has been the predominant summer weather in the UK for the last six years. In the US, this year's severe drought has raised food prices and in India the disruption to the monsoon has caused widespread damage to farmers.

Connie Hedegaard, the European Union's climate chief, warned that extreme weather was becoming more common, as the effects of climate change take hold. "Climate change and weather extremes are not about a distant future," she wrote in a comment for the Guardian last week. "Formerly one-off extreme weather episodes seem to be becoming the new normal."

Michael Zammit Cutajar, former executive secretary of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, said: "Climate change is not just a distant threat but a present danger - its economic impact is already with us." ●

## Canadian mine controversies in Bolivia and Kyrgyzstan

Canadian-owned mining corporations are relatively big players these days, and with big profits come controversies. Two of the latest examples are from Bolivia and the central Asian republic of Kyrgyzstan.

On October 3, Bolivia ruled out paying compensation to South American Silver (SAS), two months after the government of President Evo Morales nationalized a mine operated by the Canadian firm.

"The nation has no financial obligation to South American Silver," Mining Minister Mario Virreira told reporters.

The silver and indium mine, managed by a local unit of SAS, was expropriated on Aug. 2, over the criticism of the Harper government and foreign investors. The SAS subsidiary claims it held a contract since 2007 to run the mine in the community of Malku Khota, south of the capital La Paz. But Virreira insisted there was "never any document establishing that the Bolivian government had a contractual relationship" with SAS. The decision came after weeks of protests by indigenous leaders calling on La Paz to take over Malku Khota. SAS says it may seek international arbitration to settle the dispute.

Since Morales was elected in 2006, Bolivia has nationalized the energy sector and other "strategic" firms. In June he raised the possibility of making all natural resource-related industries property of the state.

The Malku Khota project boasts one of the world's largest untapped resources of silver and indium, a rare metal used in flat-screen LCD televisions. The mine also contains deposits of gallium, a mineral used in microelectronics.

On the other side of the world, protesters clashed with police and tried to break into Kyrgyzstan's parliament and government offices on Oct. 2, during a rally in the capital Bishek.

Police used dogs and smoke bombs to disperse protesters who attempted to scale the gates. Around 1,000 people had gathered for a rally to demand the nationalisation of the controversial Kumtor gold mine, which has been the source of a series of toxic spills.

Toronto-based Centerra Gold, which is developing Kumtor, has denied accusations that it uses accounting tricks to reduce its tax liabilities. The mine accounts for 12% of the nation's GDP. ●

**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)

# Revolt Europe: the rejection of neoliberalism...

continued from page 9

banking union, to ECB sovereign bond purchases and the EU Fiscal Compact that President Francois Hollande wants ratified in parliament next month - even at the cost of splitting his Socialist Party and deep divisions with his Green allies - are based on a huge lie. That greater integration and renouncing national sovereignty are essential to fix the Continent's financial and economic problems.

Spain, Italy, Portugal and Greece don't need an international rescue. Their own ruling classes have more than enough to bail their own nations out. In Italy, private wealth stands at 8.6 trillion euros, according to the Bank of Italy, or more than four times the country's public debt mountain of around two trillion euros. If the wealth of the top 50% richest were taxed at a rate of 2%, that could raise more than 100 billion euros annually. A moderate tax on the top 1% could bring up to 15 billion euros annually into the state coffers. And then there's the hundreds of billions in dodged taxes, facilitated by tax amnesties and tax havens that cash-strapped governments across the currency bloc like to talk much about, but don't ever shut down.

Even Portugal, the poorest of

EU nations, can dig itself out of its own hole if it wishes. The government caused outrage by proposals to raid the incomes of workers through a massive hike in social security contributions, a measure now withdrawn after mass protests earlier in the month. The government needs to save 4.9 billion euros in 2013. The CGTP trade union confederation knows how it could plug that hole and indeed beat that target. Its 6 billion euro budget proposals, unveiled last week, comprise a new 0.25% tax on financial transactions (2 billion euros), a 10% surcharge on dividends targeting the largest shareholders (1.7 billion euros), a higher, 33.33% rate of corporate tax for larger companies with turnover above 1.2 million euros to be implemented in a progressive fashion (1.1 billion) and a plan to combat fraud and evasion, through deploying more inspectors, setting targets to reduce the black economy and by broadening the tax base (1.2 billion euros). But that plan would of course mean Portugal's 1% paying their dues.

There's dozens of other costed proposals out there that could tackle Europe's debt burden and provide plenty of funds for growth, jobs and public services without

hurting and raiding the pockets of working people.

Take Italy again and international missions like Afghanistan that are in place in the name of peace and humanity but are instead resulting in death and destruction. Withdrawing from these commitments would not only save lives abroad but save Italians a tidy 616 million euros, according to campaign group Sbilanciamoci!, money that could be spent on improving their quality of life. Taking the axe to the military budget could yield 3 billion euros.

But these solutions don't fit the priorities of the current crop of EU leaders (with the notable exception of socialist-led France where at least the government has moved to impose a 75% tax on the incomes of the very rich). Their number one goal is to protect the billionaires, the corporations and the banks. And so, amid the penury for ordinary people, plans roll on for blank cheques- including the 100 billion euro bailout of Spain's reckless bankers - underwritten by millions of ordinary Spaniards and their European brothers and sisters.

Opinion polls across the EU show a growing popular rejection of European governments and their neo-liberal policies. In Spain,

almost three quarters of Spaniards disapprove of Mariano Rajoy's handling of the country's economy. More serious for Euro supporters, a majority in a nation that once was a bastion of support for the EU now think the Single Currency is bad for

the economy. And if it can't deliver on that, what's the point of it at all? A question no doubt on the minds of a great many people in a Europe now in open revolt.

Tom Gill's blog is found at [www.revolt-europe.com](http://www.revolt-europe.com). ●

## WFTU International Day of Action

Affiliates of the World Federation of Trade Unions held rallies and demonstrations in many countries on October 3, on the theme of "food, clean water, medicines, books, housing for all, against the multinationals and capitalist barbarity."

A statement from the WFTU for the Day of Action outlined "basic conclusions" which must be defended by the militant labour movements: food, water, medicine etc. are commodities and profit-providers for the capitalists. For WFTU and the militant trade unions those are "social goods". Everyone must have the right to obtain them free of charge or at low prices, from public organizations.

The strategy of the transnationals and the monopolies increases the prices of "social goods" and destroys the living standards of the workers. It attacks the poor farmers and affects negatively the environment.

The capitalist cartels plunder the wealth-producing resources of the countries and the people, especially those of the Third World. They manage in many ways to control the quantity and quality of food, water and medicine. They have the ability with biotechnology to affect the habits, the psychology and the life expectancy of the ordinary people.

International bodies such as the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the World Health Organization, etc. are controlled by the multinationals and their decisions are, overtly or covertly, against the working people, the poor peasants, against the population. Usually, they limit themselves to descriptions of the situation and the publication of statistics.

The Presidential Council of the WFTU, which represents 82 million trade unionists in 120 countries, urged all members and friends to mobilize to unite workers, poor farmers, peasants, and indigenous populations around a militant platform.

For information, visit [www.wftu.org](http://www.wftu.org). Photos below (top to bottom) are from Day of Action events in Bangladesh, Peru, and India. ●



## Ukrainian Labour Temple plaque unveiled

PV Manitoba bureau

On September 29, Winnipeg's Ukrainian Labour Temple finally received a plaque marking it as a National Historic Site. Close to one hundred people attended the unveiling ceremony which included performances by the hall's orchestra and choir.

The ULT and its manor continue to play an active role in Winnipeg's progressive community, including as a venue for meetings of the Communist Party's Mathew Popowich Club. (On this point, the plaque has an error.)

The ceremony was postponed for a year after Parks Canada officials received a communication from Ottawa forbidding the choir from singing the Internationale as part of the program.

The text of the plaque is:

"Constructed in 1918-1919, this imposing building was at the

centre of a radical left-wing movement committed to improving the lot of Ukrainian workers and farmers. Housing a printing shop and the headquarters of several national organizations devoted to education and mutual aid, it also served as a base for the promotion of Ukrainian performing arts. It

was a gathering place for strikers during the Winnipeg General Strike of 1919 and for the Communist Party of Canada until the 1950s. Continuing to serve a cultural function, this neoclassical building is one of the grandest and largest labour temples in Canada." ●



## Documentary reveals caste oppression in India

By Gurpreet Singh

A powerful new documentary by a prominent leftist filmmaker, Anand Patwardhan, reveals the ugly reality of ongoing caste oppression in Indian society.

*Jai Bhim Comrade*, screened at the recent Vancouver International Film Festival, is based on events after the killing of ten unarmed Dalits or so-called untouchables by police in India's financial capital of Mumbai in 1997.

The police fired without any serious provocation after Dalits gathered to protest the desecration of the statue of Dr. Bhim Rao Ambedkar, the architect of the Indian constitution and a Dalit thinker himself. "Jai Bhim" or "long live Bhim" is the most popular slogan of Dalit activists.

At the time, Maharashtra state was ruled by the Hindu nationalist

BJP and its Hindu right-wing partner, Shiv Sena. It is no coincidence that ultra-nationalist Hindus support the status quo of the ancient caste structure of orthodox Hindu society.

Unable to bear the sufferings of the families of the deceased, a Dalit activist and poet, Vilas Ghogre, committed suicide. Ghogre, was previously a Marxist activist who gradually became an Ambedkarite. These incidents happened when India was preparing to celebrate its 50th anniversary of independence from British occupation.

Dalits continue to suffer at the hands of "upper caste" groups, vigilantes and the state machinery. Even though their leadership has also deceived them by forging opportunistic alliances with parties like BJP and Shiv Sena, Dalit activists carry on their struggle through street shows, music and art in the face of

both the state and upper caste thugs. A case in point is the artists associated with *Kabir Kala Manch*, a Dalit activist network who are hounded by the police and branded as Maoist extremists. Some of them have gone underground.

The most striking question the film tries to raise is the role of the left parties. In the director's view, the communists could not recognize the caste reality within society, seeing only class divisions. As a result, poor Dalit workers who could have been ready recruits for the communist parties embraced other forces or were eventually co-opted by the bourgeois parties.

The brutality of caste discrimination is so powerful that it cannot go away even after the class shift of the Dalit population. Overall, the film has a potential to prompt the left parties to indulge in self criticism. ●

# We told you so!

Here at People's Voice we aren't shy about making the case for policies to put people before profits. Occasionally we have been accused of exaggerating the facts to make a political point. So it's great to see mainstream media reports which back up our arguments.

Here are two recent examples, starting with corporate taxation.

For years, we have called to stop the reduction of taxes on corporations, a neoliberal policy that puts an increasing burden on working people.

Don't take our word for it. Turns out that "the tax burden for businesses in Canada is second lowest among 14 major countries and lowest among developed countries, according to a KPMG survey of international tax competitiveness." (That's the *Globe and Mail* speaking on Sept. 25.)

KPMG's Elio Luongo (probably no relation to Roberto of the Vancouver Canucks) says that "the tax system is often what tips the scales" in attracting investment.

India had the lowest overall tax levels. China, Mexico and Russia ranged third, fourth and fifth. Among developed countries, Britain ranked second, followed by the Netherlands, the United States, Germany, Australia and Japan.

KPMG uses an index composed of corporate income tax, capital taxes, sales taxes, property taxes, local business taxes and statutory payroll taxes, using rates applicable as of Jan. 1, 2012.

Comparing major international cities, KPMG also found that Toronto, Vancouver and Montreal are all in the top 10 among 55 cities with populations of more than two million. All 16 Canadian cities analyzed by KPMG had lower tax rates than the least taxed U.S. city - Baton Rouge, Louisiana. So much for all the whining from corporate shills about Canada's "heavy tax burden"!

Then we come to the supposedly complex problem of homelessness. *People's Voice* has long stated that simply building more low-income housing would be a great way to cut spending on health care, emergency services, policing, etc. Too expensive, according to right-wing politicians and corporate think tanks.

Now, a new study by Stephen Gaetz, director of the Canadian Homelessness Research Network, based on research from across North America, suggests it's far cheaper to give a homeless person a place to live than to provide a patchwork of emergency services.

Gaetz says governments spend at least \$4.5 billion a year dealing with homeless people, including the costs of emergency health care, mental-health services, law enforcement, shelters and food banks. Their use of the health system is high and unpredictable, and many end up

homeless again after brushes with the law upon release from jail.

For chronically homeless people who are frequent users of social services, the annual savings are \$25,899 per person, enough for a "housing first" approach across Canada, according to the newly formed Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness.

\$4.5 billion would build an estimated 45,000 housing units. Such an investment over several years would end street homelessness across Canada. Too expensive? No, and we'll continue to say "told you so". ●



## Charles Roach, 1933-2012

We are deeply saddened by the passing of Charles Roach in Toronto on Oct. 2, after a long struggle with brain cancer. Charles Roach was a staunch fighter for the Black community, for migrants and refugees, and for working people struggling against racism, exploitation and oppression. He was a lawyer and a founder of the Black Action Defense Committee, whose struggles led to an inquest into the police shooting of Buddy Evans, and forced the Ontario government to finally legislate

civilian oversight of police services. He was a leader in the fight to end police profiling, and to enforce civilian control over police.

Charlie helped found the Movement of Minority Electors in the 1970s, and was a founder of Carribana, the largest celebration of Carribean culture in North America.

The son of trade unionists in Trinidad, he immigrated to Canada in his teens, attended the U of T and set up his own legal practice in 1968. He never became a citizen because he refused to swear an oath to the Queen, a remnant of colonialism that he fought to reverse for 50 years.

Charlie Roach was a good friend to the Communist Party, speaking out last winter against Georgio Mamolitti's vicious attack on the Party's Ontario leader Liz Rowley and on progressive City Councillors. He regarded red-baiting as an effort to silence critics of right-wing politics.

The Ontario Committee of the Communist Party extends deepest sympathy to his wife June, and to his family. ●

poverty and misery for some and greater wealth for others. Imagine the lives that could have been saved these ten years. That's why we seek negotiations, a solution without blood, and an understanding through political routes. We are confident that the national government also understands the necessity to finish with such long, drawn-out violence against the Colombian people.

(Published in VOZ, Sept. 19, 2012. Translated by W.T. Whitney Jr.) ●

### Fighting Austerity campaign tour dates

**Ontario Communist leader Liz Rowley is on a speaking tour this month, on the topic of "Fighting Austerity in Ontario." Here are the dates and times for these events.**

**Toronto** - Sun., Oct. 14, 2 pm, OISE, 252 Bloor St. W., Room 5-260.

**St. Catharines** - Tue., Oct. 16, at the Public Library, 54 Church St. (Rotary Room).

**Ottawa** - Thursday, Oct. 18, 7 pm, Bronson Centre, 211 Bronson Ave.

**Hamilton** - Monday, Oct. 22, 7:30 pm, Degroote Centre for Learning, Rm. 2018, McMaster University.

**Guelph** - Tue., Oct. 23, 5:30 pm, Room 442, Univ. Centre, U of Guelph.

**Brampton** - Sunday, Oct. 28, 2:30 pm, Brampton Soccer Centre, 1495 Sandalwood Parkway East, Room 1.

# What's Left

## White Rock, BC

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

## Victoria, BC

**Sit-In Against Pipeline Expansion**, Monday, Oct. 22, at the Legislature. Sign up at [www.defendourcoast.ca](http://www.defendourcoast.ca).

## Vancouver, BC

**Report from Gaza**, on the situation of workers, political prisoners and refugees, Labour Council Pizza Educational, Tue., Oct. 16, 6 pm, Maritime Labour Centre, 1880 Triumph.

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

**La Trova Nuestra**, Latin American Pena, 8 pm, Oct. 26, and last Friday each month, 706 Clark Dr., \$10 admission, all welcome.

**Left Film Night**, Sunday, Oct. 28, 7 pm, Centre for Socialist Education, 706 Clark. Film TBA, for details, ph. 604-255-2041.

**Peace and Revolution Banquet**, Sat., Nov. 10, doors open 6 pm, at Peretz Centre, 6184 Ash St. Great cultural program and dinner, tickets from Centre for Socialist Education, 604-254-9836.

## Winnipeg, MB

**Four Directions Walk to End Poverty**, Fifth annual walk, Sat., Oct. 20, rally 3 pm at Legislature; Walk to start earlier in the day. Call 792-3371 for info, including People's Charter.

**Marxism Course** begins in November. Call Communist Party to register, 586-7824 or [cpc-mb@changetheworldmb.ca](mailto:cpc-mb@changetheworldmb.ca)

## Toronto, ON

**Fighting Austerity in Ontario**, Sun., Oct. 14, 2 mp, OISE, 252 Bloor St. West, Room 5-260, speaker Liz Rowley, CPC (Ontario) leader.

## St. Catharines, ON

**Fighting Austerity in Ontario**, Tue., Oct. 16, at St. Catharines Public Library, 54 Church St. (Rotary Room), speaker Liz Rowley, CPC (Ontario) leader, for info email [salehw@yahoo.com](mailto:salehw@yahoo.com)

## Ottawa, ON

**Fighting Austerity in Ontario**, speaker Liz Rowley, CPC (Ontario) leader, Thursday, Oct. 18, 7 pm, Bronson Centre, 211 Bronson Ave. Call 613-882-7108 for info.

## Guelph, ON

**Fighting Austerity in Ontario**, speaker Liz Rowley, CPC (Ontario) leader, Tuesday, Oct. 23, 5:30 pm, Room 442, University Centre, U of Guelph.

## Brampton, ON

**Fighting Austerity in Ontario**, speaker Liz Rowley, CPC (Ontario) leader, Sunday, Oct. 28, 2:30 pm, Brampton Soccer Centre, 1495 Sandalwood Parkway East, Room 1. Call 416-428-9583 for info.

## Hamilton, ON

**Fighting Austerity in Ontario**, speaker Liz Rowley, CPC (Ontario) leader, Oct. 22, 7:30 pm, Degroote Centre for Learning, Rm. 2018, McMaster University.

## Montreal, QC

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

## Dialogue, not war...

continued from page 7

**Minister of Defense minimizes them completely and alleges that engagement persists only in rural areas of the country, in ten isolated municipalities.**

The FARC-EP operates and moves about in the same areas they occupy. The supposed control exercised by their combined commands - tasks forces, brigades, and battalions - is frequently on pins and needles through the activity of mobile guerrillas. The number of the armed forces casualties peaked not long ago. Clearly, we've also taken hits, which have been much publicized by the media. That's what conflict is. A war is joined according to circumstances. There are no operating rules valid for all situations. It's obvious that conditions of today are not the same as those a decade ago, above all through the massive use of military aviation.

But we are fighting everyday. In all blocs of the FARC, we undertake to vary that equation according to the moment. Come what may, persisting conflict will entail many more deaths and great destruction, more sorrow and tears, more


## People's Voice deadlines

November 1-15 issue: Thursday, Oct. 18

November 16-30 issue: Thursday, Nov. 1

Send submissions to PV Editorial Office,  
706 Clark Drive, Vancouver, V5L 3J1

<[pvoice@telus.net](mailto:pvoice@telus.net)>



## La Trova Nuestra

**Friday, Oct. 26, 7:30 pm**

### "La Peña Nuestra"

Centre For Socialist Education, Vancouver  
706 Clark Drive (Clark and Georgia st)  
\$10 Entry

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

# End the Aggression Against Syria! Stop the Drive to War Against Iran!

The Canadian Peace Congress condemns the ongoing foreign intervention in Syria and the escalating drive to war against Iran, and calls for the immediate withdrawal of all Canadian, NATO and foreign mercenary forces from the region. We further call upon the Conservative government of Stephen Harper to restore and normalize its diplomatic relations with Syria and Iran, and to re-orient Canadian foreign policy toward peace, international cooperation and solidarity.

The Harper government's decision to adopt an international policy of belligerence, and to do so without consulting Parliament, is further evidence of its abandonment of a foreign policy of peace and diplomacy in favour of aggressive and hostile interference in the internal affairs of sovereign countries. Syria and Iran are member states of the United Nations and have expressed no hostile intent towards Canada or its people. Prime Minister Harper is actively contributing to the danger of war, through hostile policies that are out of step with the Canadian peoples' longstanding support for peace.

The Canadian government has allied itself with a minority of Western governments who, along with pro-war forces within Israel and a few reactionary Arab regimes, are seeking new pretexts for intervention and war. These include the protection of human

rights or the prevention of the alleged proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. These objectives cannot be achieved by breaking diplomatic relations, imposing economic sanctions, arming foreign mercenaries, or forging international campaigns for regime change and by installing puppet governments favourable to the strategic goals of the major western power.

Foreign intervention, sanctions and military aggression only weaken the human and democratic rights of the Syrian and Iranian people, and diminish their ability to develop and improve their societies. The aftermath of NATO intervention in Libya last year, in which Canadian armed forces bombed Libyan territory, has been disastrous for the people of Libya who are now plunged into factional warfare. This, plus the catastrophic consequences of the military occupation of Iraq, including the deaths of over one million Iraqis, clearly indicate that the main victim of any war is the civilian population.

As in the case of Libya last year, the drive to interfere in Syria and Iran is driven by the strategic and economic interests of imperialist powers. These countries - including the United States, Britain, the European Union and Canada - choose militarism and war as their preferred option for expanding their spheres of influence and control over resources and markets. The result is destruction, displacement and despair to the peoples of the developing countries who have been targeted. Far from resolving conflicts, these policies of interference only deepen current crises and escalate the danger to world peace.

Pro-war forces have seized upon the many complexities in the situations in Iran and Syria, to promote misinformation and confusion. The threat to peace in the Middle East does not arise from countries who exercise their sovereign right to develop the nuclear energy industries to build their economies. Nor does it originate with countries who oppose Western efforts to re-

colonize the Middle East and control its vast energy resources, through the New Middle East Plan. Rather, the concrete threat to peace is the existing conventional and

**The Canadian government is called upon to act for peace, not promote war**

nuclear weapons that the US, its NATO allies and Israel constantly brandish in their effort to destabilize the region, to demonize governments that oppose imperialist plans, and to justify interference and war.

The Canadian Peace Congress asserts that the direction of economic, political and social development in any country is the sole right of the people of that country to determine, without foreign interference. We hold this principle to be true for the people of Canada, as we hold it to be true for the people of Syria and Iran. We are completely opposed to any foreign political or military intervention, under any pretext. This includes efforts to interfere with and divert genuine democratic movements.

The role of the Canadian government in both of these crises has been shameful. Under Stephen Harper's Conservatives, Canada has abandoned its reputation as a country with an independent stance in international relations, and assumed the posture of a vocal NATO aggressor state. In all dimensions - political-diplomatic, economic and military - Canada's recent policies toward Syria and Iran have been geared toward three goals:

- Isolate and neutralize sources of information that conflict with imperialist aims, by cutting off communication with the governments and peoples in Syria and Iran;

- Increase the suffering of the people and generate anti-government sentiment, by imposing economic sanctions that particularly target energy industries who produce for local consumption;

- Increase the active military threat in the region, by deploying warships and other military resources to the region.

These goals all directly serve the overall objective of pro-Western regime change in Syria and Iran, and the Harper government has campaigned hard internationally, to convince other countries to assume similar policies against both countries.

In the case of Syria, the Conservatives have also campaigned aggressively to create and promote a political opposition movement to the government. In November 2011, the NATO Parliamentary Assembly received a report that "virtually no one [in Syria] is calling for international military intervention" and that Syria was "without a clearly identifiable opposition with

under the supervision of the United Nations' International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). Iran has repeatedly stated that its nuclear program is for peaceful purposes and not for military ends. The fact of the matter is that neither the IAEA nor the U.S. administration has been able to show any substantiated evidence about the weaponization of Iran's nuclear energy program. The U.S. Secretary of Defence, Leon Panetta, has publicly conceded, "there is no evidence that Iran has a nuclear weapon."

Israel is a nuclear weapons state with an estimated 200-400 nuclear weapons, who has refused to join the NPT. There is no UN supervision over Israel's nuclear activities. It has pre-emptively attacked other neighbouring states, and has threatened Iran with military attack many times.

United States is a nuclear weapons state with more than 10,000 nuclear weapons, and it has not allowed any inspection of its nuclear facilities by the IAEA. The U.S. has used nuclear weapons against other countries, when it exploded two nuclear bombs on Japan and when it used uranium-enriched weapons in Iraq. The U.S. also has repeatedly threatened Iran with military attack, and has nuclear-equipped forces currently stationed in the region.

The Canadian Peace Congress supports the October 6 Day of Protest Against War, initiated by the Canadian Peace Alliance. After more than a year of conflict and violent foreign intervention, thousands of Syrian people have died. If governments like Canada are allowed to continue their current policies of aggression, interference and colonization, thousands more will die. All peace-supporting groups in Canada - including trade unions, faith communities and student groups - need to speak out and mobilize against intervention in Syria and Iran and the threat of a far broader war in the region.

The Canadian Peace Congress demands that the Canadian government:

\* Immediately withdraw Canadian military forces from the region, and oppose military intervention in Syria and Iran, under any pretext;  
\* Restore diplomatic relations with Syria and Iran, remove sanctions, and support the peace initiatives of those states and organizations advocating a cease fire and negotiated end to the war;  
\* Withdraw from NATO, which has a nuclear first-strike policy and complimentary sea- and land-based ballistic missile systems, and all other military alliances;  
\* Promote full nuclear disarmament, beginning with the nuclear stockpiles of the United States, Israel and NATO;

\* Adopt a new independent Canadian foreign policy of peace, non-intervention and diplomacy in international relations. ●

Iran is a non-nuclear state and a signatory to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), and is



PV photo by Ed Bil

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