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people's VOICE

Socialism on German soil

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"SAVE CANADA POST"



The campaign to stop postal delivery service cuts moves into action across the country.

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Nova Scotia's Bill 1: "vicious attack on workers' rights" - page 3

Nova Scotia's Liberal government has rammed through Bill 1 which will radically restructure healthcare bargaining and unleash an enormous union-busting attack on healthcare workers. This follows on the heels of Bill 37, which was passed in April by the Liberals and stripped 40,000 healthcare workers of the right-to-strike. The Liberals have sold the bill as reducing inefficiencies in the healthcare system by reducing the number of health authorities and the number of bargaining units from 50 to four. The bill, however, is a frontal assault on basic democratic rights. Bill 1:

- Allows employers to dictate which unions healthcare workers belong to, with no democratic say by workers.
- Allows employers to help decide what collective agreement benefits workers must accept.
- Instructs mediators/arbitrators to choose the most "harmonious" union and allows the employer to select that union.

The bill is likely unconstitutional and will not survive a court challenge, but this will not stop the government from implementing it. Point #1 already violates the province's Trade Union Act which expressly forbids employers from choosing which union a worker belongs to...



(Text and photo from <http://rankandfile.ca/2014/10/01/novascotiabill1/>)

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The housing issue...

For the fifth consecutive civic election, homelessness and the high cost of housing are key issues in Vancouver, where voters go to the polls Nov. 15 to elect City Council, School Board and Park Board.

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The MH17 shutdown

As the western corporate media backs away from reports on the Malaysian Air tragedy, engineers point to a probable cause.

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India's new regime

India's new Prime Minister has completed his visit to the White House. But serious questions still remain about Narendra Modi's human rights violations and his reactionary political ideology.

"Save Canada Post" campaign in high gear

PV Vancouver Bureau

Opposition against the Harper government's move to eliminate urban home mail delivery is moving into high gear. The "Save Canada Post" campaign backed by the Canadian Union of Postal Workers is pressing Conservative MPs to reverse their attack on this crucial public service.

In a recent news release, CUPW President Denis Lemelin raised one of many important arguments: the impact of so-called "community mailboxes" on residential property values.

"Postal service cuts are coming to people's homes, and they may be wondering what the impact will be," Lemelin says. "Canada Post intends to install and use Community Mailboxes (CMBs) where homes currently have door-to-door delivery.

"The plan will affect both postal workers and users, so the Canadian Union of Postal Workers wanted to find out how much the CMB plan could cost homeowners. Earlier this year, CUPW investigated how CMBs might affect residential property values. We learned there is more than one way to find whether something would influence a home's market value.

"One method is called the direct comparison approach. This approach suggests that yes, a CMB installation would probably reduce a home's value: if you had a choice between two homes, one with and one without a CMB there, other factors being equal, it's reasonable to think you would prefer the one without. So you would likely pay more for that one. But this direct comparison approach doesn't put a dollar figure on the impact.

"Another method, a 'before and after' method of appraisal would help determine the amount of the devaluation, but this kind of data isn't available yet, because there aren't yet any residential properties

in Canada that have had CMBs added to their property. In other words, Canada Post is in unknown territory, and no-one can accurately predict the cost.

"Why would someone rather buy a house without a CMB next door? Because of: the associated increase in traffic and noise; the nuisance of vehicles stopped and idling there; debris and litter; loss of privacy; decreased curb appeal;

**Save
Canada
Post**

and vandalism concerns, among other possible reasons.

"Canada Post Corporation (CPC) maintains it has the right to impose its new mailboxes on people and doesn't have to give them any choice in the matter. Representatives of CPC have met with affected residents to tell them this is how things will be. But they're leaving some important questions unanswered.

"Should a residential property owner seek compensation? Are they being misled to believe they have no choice? What will they do about the costs of cleaning and maintaining the property if/when Canada Post fails to adequately maintain the CMB area? What if someone should be injured or cause other liability on a homeowner's property? Canada Post's plan makes homeowners and the public pay for the costs, while cutting services. Offering less for more isn't a good plan."

CUPW argues that ending home delivery is unnecessary, since the financial situation of Canada Post does not require drastic service

cuts. In the second quarter of 2014 Canada Post reported \$62 million in profit. In fact, it has reported profits in 17 of the past 19 years.

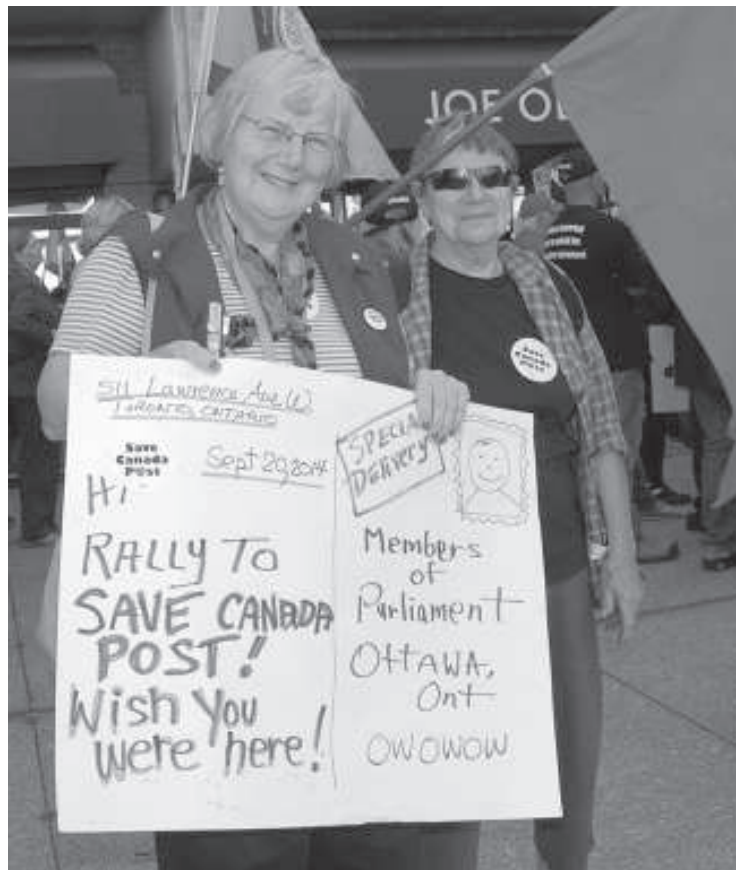
The union says that forcing people to walk or drive to a community mailbox to receive their mail will cause real hardship for many with disabilities and restricted mobility. These cuts, and the postage rate hike, create hardship for the most vulnerable segment of the population.

CUPW says Canada Post should follow the example of other countries and use its enormous retail network and its decades of experience in banking to expand into financial services.

In the past, public opposition has successfully stopped Canada Post management from making unnecessary service reductions. In the 1980s, postal management planned to close thousands of post offices. Public pressure eventually forced the newly elected Liberal government to place a moratorium on closures in 1994.

The union is asking supporters to visit www.savecanadapost.ca, to send a message to their MP, download window signs, or ask for notices about upcoming events. Supporters can sign online petitions and find out about meetings with MPs or municipal representatives.

On Sept. 20, representatives of the Toronto Local, the Metro-Toronto Region and the national CUPW office, with the support of other organizations, demonstrated at the office of Finance Minister Joe Oliver. Over 250 people joined the protest against Canada



People's Voice supporters Liz Hill (holding the placard) and Cathy Holliday at the Sept. 20 "Save Canada Post" demonstration outside Finance Minister Joe Oliver's constituency office.

Post's five-point plan, and other service cuts.

In other recent actions, CUPW members and other supporters rallied at the offices of Conservative MPs Denis Lebel, James Moore, and Lisa Raitt.

Save Canada Post info tables and petition collections have been held at London's "Western Fair," the annual "Rib Fest" in Oshawa, and Labour Day parades in

Hamilton, Windsor, Durham, Toronto, Acadie-Bathurst, Victoria, and North Bay. In some communities, door-to-door canvassing actions have been organized.

The website also lists upcoming activities. For example, there will be an information table at the Union of Municipalities of Nova Scotia annual meeting, in early November. ●

Ontario votes October 27

By Liz Rowley

Municipal elections take place on Oct. 27 across Ontario, with the right wing on the offensive in many cities.

In Toronto, two conservatives and former NDP MP Olivia Chow are vying for Mayor. Chow is backed by labour and was the front runner until late summer when her campaign sputtered. In a city wracked with high unemployment, high taxes, skyrocketing housing costs, a transportation crisis, and where only 17% of the insured unemployed have access to EI, Chow's campaign team decided to focus on her immigrant background and "can do" personal success instead of attacking the issues head on.

Far right candidate Doug Ford has little to say about the issues, but a lot to say about his rivals, Olivia Chow (a pinko) and former Ontario Conservative leader John Tory (born with a silver spoon in his mouth). Ford attends few debates, instead calling press conferences (faithfully reported verbatim by local media) to attack his opponents.

The infamous Ford brothers are a tag team of right-wing populism, whose mantra is to stop the gravy train. This means to slash public services and spending, and attack public sector unions. Their track record over four years - with Rob in the Mayor's seat and Doug in the director's chair on Council - is to privatize garbage collection in

half the city, sell off city-owned social housing, slash budgets and services, attack libraries, and maul city unions in the last round of collective bargaining.

One of their most egregious acts was to unilaterally replace the publicly appointed Toronto Community Housing board, with a Ford appointee hired from US public housing. Gene Jones and the new hand-picked Ford Board were responsible for mass evictions which led to the death of at least one elderly tenant who was evicted for owing \$45 in rent arrears.

The Fords have also made racism, sexism, homophobia and anti-communism acceptable. Their rants have helped create the climate for vicious attacks on Olivia Chow, Kristyn Wong-Tam, and others.

This was an agenda supported by Big Business, with big donations to the Ford campaigns in 2010. The Fords were millionaires backed by other millionaires and big corporations, closely connected to the Conservative Party, and direct ties to Harper in Ottawa.

But after four years of mayhem, fuelled by drugs and corruption, the big money has moved on. Business is now firmly behind John Tory, the man who wanted to publicly fund religious and private schools across Ontario, prior to a resounding defeat at the polls in 2007.

Former CEO and President of Rogers Cable, and President of Civic Action - the organization

advocating the Big Business agenda for Toronto - Tory is backed by former Tory Premier Bill Davis and Cabinet members in the Mike Harris government.

In all the important things, John Tory and the Ford brothers are on the same page. They both support privatization, contracting out, and disciplining public sector unions. They want to reduce services, cut taxes, and eliminate government regulation. What they call "red tape" ensures that water is safe to drink, food is safe to eat, buildings don't collapse, and the corrupt unbridled influence of developers is kept at bay.

According to polls, Tory has pulled into the lead, with Ford in second place, and Chow in third. For working people the stakes are very high. Dumping the Fords won't dump the agenda, which Big Business has adeptly handed off to John Tory to deliver. Nor will it eliminate Ford Nation, a movement built on widespread feelings of exclusion and privation resulting from mass unemployment, falling living standards, mass insecurity, and austerity.

The Chow campaign's latest ads say "Chow has the best dance moves. She also has the best transit plan". That won't win any votes and could alienate many.

Her campaign needed to address the issues of jobs and a higher minimum wage, expanded public

see ONTARIO, page 11

Fête Octobre Che

**11 Octobre 2014 à 18h30
à l'Association des
travailleurs grecs,
5359 ave du Parc**

Musique et exposition en l'honneur de Che Guevara. Entrée : 15\$ billet acheté d'avance (20\$ le jour même à la porte). Le billet comprend un délicieux repas cubain et un billet de tirage pour le prix de présence.

Organiser par le Parti communiste du Québec (Section du PCC)

Labour activist in race for Kamloops City Council

PV Vancouver Bureau

For progressives in British Columbia, one of the most interesting civic election races this fall is in Kamloops, where Peter Kerek is mounting a challenge to the domination of city council by pro-business forces. He is speaking out strongly against the controversial plan by the transnational KGHM to open a copper mine on the edge of the city, and to defend the interests of working class families.

Kerek, the president of the Kamloops Labour Council, says the community should know the identities of big political financiers before Election Day on November 15.

"In the name of transparency, and because of the highly sensitive nature of the AJAX proposal, I ask that all candidates reveal publicly if they have received a donation from KGHM," said Kerek in a recent news release. "There needs to be more transparency before voters go to the polls - it's too late once the ballots are cast. I'm meeting with ordinary folks and I'm hearing concerns about the cozy nature between corporations, donors and certain members of council as well as some of the challengers."

Kerek points out that Chances Bingo, owned by 779 Ventures, donated significant amounts to Councillors Pat Wallace, Tina Lange and Nelly Dever, as well as

defeated candidates John Di Cicco and Dino Bernardo, and was the single biggest donor to Mayor Peter Milobar's campaign. Chances later benefitted when Lake City Casinos moved out of downtown Kamloops, leaving Chances the only gaming centre still located in the valley.

"It seems odd to me that those



Peter Kerek

members of council would not have realized the suspicious perception of having received substantial donations from Chances Bingo while also being integral to a decision that went against the recommendation of city administrators and against the KamPlan designs," says Kerek.

"This is a win-win story for both corporations, but, the lack of discussion around the existing donor relationship with members of Council is problematic," he adds, "especially given that the council was not unanimous, all councillors who received

donations from Chances Bingo voted in favour of the move, and the proposal did not have the support of city administrators.

"Of even greater concern for me is the new big donor in town, KGHM. They have been throwing money at all sorts of charities to win folks over or at least buy their silence. This would be a much healthier democracy if we all knew which candidates they're funding before we go to the ballots, not after."

Kerek is calling for the Mayor and Councillors to acknowledge when a significant donor to their respective campaigns comes to make a presentation or application to City Council.

"The vast majority of people, including reporters, don't have the time to go sleuthing around to find out which councillors have received donations from various companies. Forcing them to disclose their donor relationship with a presenter or applicant will at least allow everyone in the room to understand that there already exists a monetary political relationship between the parties," says Kerek. "Although most people accept the influence of money on politics in Canada, most agree that they would prefer it wouldn't be that way. Ideally the most successful candidates should win on the quality of their positions and ideas rather than on their ability to out-spend their opponents."

He notes that in the 2011

municipal election, one individual named Frank Quinn gave personally, and through his companies, almost \$6,000 to six candidates; five were elected, including the mayor. Quinn's companies are involved in property development and construction, which are influenced by city council's policies.

Kerek would support a ban on all donations from corporations and organizations, and supports a \$100 cap on individual donations. This would require provincial action, but there are ways to voluntarily increase campaign transparency on-line.

He is using a crowd-sourcing page on GoFundMe.com as a way to deliver immediate transparency. Every donation to Kerek's campaign is listed on that page, even those which are not made on-line.

The Kamloops and District Labour Council has endorsed Kerek and three other candidates for City Council, as well as one school trustee candidate. The KDLC represents 10,000 unionized workers in the southern interior region of BC, and its endorsement carries significant electoral weight.

As well as opposing the Ajax mine proposal, Kerek wants City Council to take more steps to alleviate poverty.

"We don't need to sit on our hands hoping for a more conscientious party to take over in Ottawa

or Victoria," he says. "There are practical things we can do right here and now. We can reduce and eliminate fees for the use of publicly operated programs and facilities, including public transit.

"The City of Kamloops collected \$3.7 million in fares from transit users in 2013. If the city absorbed that amount and collected it through property taxes, that would result in a savings of about \$1,000 for every household that has two regular adult transit users. Right now a two-adult home, where both adults purchase monthly passes, will spend \$1272 per year in transit fares whereas the tax increase to the average household would only be about \$105 per year.

"Aside from helping those who need it the most, there are many other long-term fiscal and health benefits of getting our community out of their cars and onto transit, including reduced air pollution, less traffic, more available parking, and less money required for the maintenance and expansion of our current road systems. Economists have shown that those at the lowest end of the economic spectrum spend more of their money locally than do people at the top, and that helps communities like Kamloops."

Readers can follow Kerek's election campaign on Twitter @Kerek2014, or on his Facebook Page "Elect Peter Kerek for Kamloops City Council". ●

Nova Scotia's Bill 1: vicious attack on workers' rights

Statement by the Central Executive Committee, Communist Party of Canada, Oct. 2, 2014

The attempt by the Nova Scotia Liberal government to remove fundamental labour and democratic rights from health care workers and to rip up dozens of collective agreements, is a shocking attack on all working people. The Communist Party of Canada condemns Premier McNeil's Bill 1, and pledges to help mobilize against this outrageous legislation, in Nova Scotia and across Canada.

Presented as a measure to cut costs and improve efficiency, Bill 1 would amalgamate health care regions in Nova Scotia. In other provinces, such amalgamations have always led to more privatisation of health care (especially P3s), less consultation and involvement of health care workers and the general public, and attacks on the rights of trade unions.

Bill 1 is the most serious such assault to date, moving to arbitrarily legislating union members into four government-imposed bargaining units. The affected workers would be given no voice as they are assigned to unions at the whim of

their employer.

This is a clear violation of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, which includes the right to freedom of association. This law would set a frightening precedent for governments across the country to effectively remove the hard-won right of workers to choose which unions they want represent their collective interests.

Bill 1 is being rammed through even though the unions had already

not to improve health care in Nova Scotia, but to attack the entire labour movement and the right to free and fair collective bargaining. It is also directly an attack on women at predominantly female workplaces. Since coming to office last year, the Nova Scotia Liberals have passed Bills 30 and 37, which limited the right to strike for health care workers around the province, and Bill 19, which weakened first collective

agreement

negotiations.

The McNeil Liberals are acting on behalf of the corporations to weaken the labour movement, and to protect the interests of the wealthy at the expense of working people, who already have the second lowest average incomes in Canada. The government's main target is the NSGEU. As the largest single union in the health care sector, the NSGEU has often taken militant action to defend the rights of its members, many of whom are women disproportionately

affected by poverty and neoliberal government policies.

The McNeil government's austerity agenda is to further push down wages, benefits, services, and working conditions, putting Nova Scotia into a "race to the

bottom" matching the "right to work" states in the US where unions are virtually illegal and super-exploitation is the law. This agenda must not be allowed to pass.

Already, protests have begun at the Legislature in Halifax, and unions are working on a court challenge to the health merger bill. The most effective response to union-busting Bill 1 will be mobilizations in Nova Scotia and across the country, following examples such as wide community support for the historic strike by BC Teachers, which blocked the attempt by the right-wing Liberal government to cripple the BC Teachers Federation. The huge protests by Quebec municipal

workers and their allies to defend pension rights also show how to fight back against neoliberal attacks by corporations and governments.

The Communist Party demands:

- * No to Bill 1!
- * guarantee workers' collective rights to free and fair collective bargaining by enshrining them in a Labour Bill of Rights;
- * reverse all privatization and outsourcing in health and public services;
- * stop all Public Private Partnerships (P3s);
- * immediately restore and expand public funding to health care;
- * protect the Canada Health Act; defend and expand Medicare, in Nova Scotia and across Canada. ●



Image from nsgeu.ca

made proposals for a bargaining association, to allow workers to remain in the union of their choice, while simplifying the negotiation process in the province's health care sector.

In fact, the real aim of Bill 1 is



EDITORIALS

The newest Iraq war

A month after Canada entered the latest war in Iraq for thirty days, the Conservative government made it official: the term of this military mission will be six months. But despite the media manipulation to claim that this war is widely supported by Canadians, the public mood is dubious, and rightly so. One interesting test was an Oct. 4 street poll conducted by Vancouver's StopWar coalition, which found that over 90% of respondents were opposed to Canadian military intervention in Iraq.

The U.S. and its usual "allies", including Canada, argue that they were compelled to begin bombing Iraq and Syria because of the barbaric acts of Islamic State/IS. Yet one of the "allies" in this war is Saudi Arabia, which has publicly beheaded 79 prisoners so far this year alone. The key NATO ringleader, the U.S. itself, has initiated coups and invasions in dozens of countries over the last century, killing millions along the way. Human rights abuses? Just look at the apartheid imposed on Palestinians by PM Harper's best friends, the Israeli government. Little wonder that many Canadians understand the real motive for going to war again; this is another chapter in a long-term conflict to dominate the energy resources of the Middle East and nearby regions by western-based transnational oil corporations.

Much more will be written as this tragedy unfolds. But most important, every effort must go into mobilizing a new upsurge of the anti-war movement. Our opposition must not focus on a few Canadian casualties; it must condemn the devastation spread by the fighter-bombers and missiles of the U.S.-led alliance. If previous wars against Iraq proved anything, the lesson is that imperialist interventions kill innocent people, with violent and unpredictable consequences. Shame on the Harper government for making Canada a partner in this bloodbath. We cannot remain silent!

WFTU holds global action day

Steadily gaining new affiliates, the class-struggle oriented World Federation of Trade Unions now represents over 100 million members in more than 100 countries. The WFTU encouraged member unions to take to the streets and meeting halls on October 3 to fight the scourge of unemployment, "the biggest, most dangerous problem for the working class in the whole capitalist world". The International Labour Organisation estimates the number of jobless at 197 million, or 6 per cent of the global workforce, but the WFTU says that ILO definitions exclude millions of unemployed and underemployed people.

The International Day of Action took widely diverse forms. In India, WFTU-affiliated unions helped organize mass rallies; the Bank Employees Federation of India pointed out that "millions of youth suffer the pains of unemployment" and that many more are employed on subhuman terms and with no job security.

In South Africa, the health workers' union NEHAWU held marches across the country to protest the serious understaffing of hospitals. A thousand members of Turkey's Nakliyat-Is union demonstrated in Istanbul to demand secured and dignified work. Mass rallies were held in over 50 cities in Greece, where 1,500,000 people are unemployed, and 850,000 are "employed" without being paid. The Union of Migrant Workers in Russia, where unemployment was eliminated by socialism in the 1930s, condemned the rebirth of capitalism, which has forced millions to become migrant workers.

WFTU affiliates are not alone in taking action. In Britain, three days of nationwide strikes are being held - by health staff on October 13, council workers on October 14 and civil servants on October 15.

We salute all these examples of working class resistance to government austerity and corporate attacks. For more information on the WFTU, readers can check out www.wftucentral.org.

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People's Voice, 706 Clark Drive, Vancouver, BC, V5L 3J1
Tel: 604.255.2041 Email: pvoice@telus.net

Volunteers and contributors for this issue:

Dave Arland, Ed Bil, Johan Boyden, Liz Rowley,
Darrell Rankin, Baldev Padam, Nino Pagliccia,
T.J. Petrowski, and our mailers in Vancouver & Toronto.

Editor: Kimball Cariou Business Manager: Hassan Azimikor

Editorial Board: Kimball Cariou, Miguel Figueroa,
Doug Meggison, Naomi Rankin, Liz Rowley, Jim Sacouman

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Harper puts
boots on the
ground in
Iraq

CIVIL WAR

SPEAKING FRANKLY

10 key facts about the Lucia Vega Jimenez inquest

In December 2013, refugee Lucia Vega Jimenez committed suicide in a holding cell at the Vancouver International Airport, as she was in the process of being deported to Mexico. This commentary by human rights activist Harsha Walia is from <http://themainlander.com>.

This past week [Sept. 29-Oct. 3] an all-white jury listened to testimony at the inquest into the death of Lucia Vega Jimenez while in Canada Border Service Agency (CBSA) custody.

During the last month of her life, every institution that Lucia came into contact with was most interested in law enforcement and least interested in her safety. Though this is not shocking to anyone familiar with the immigration system, the facts that are emerging about what happened to Lucia while in custody are illuminating to those unfamiliar with how immigration enforcement really operates.

While the inquest has focused on proposals for suicide prevention, better communication between officials, and training for private security employees, it has stayed clear of systemic issues. Lucia's fears were due to her deportation to Mexico (a country Canada deems 'safe' under the new Refugee Exclusion Act), fears she relayed multiple times to numerous authorities. But CBSA does not care for refugees like Lucia; their mandate is to callously enforce deportations. The holding cells below the Vancouver International Airport and Vancouver Public Library are a grim metaphor of the invisible underclass of 11,000 migrant detainees, including children, held in CBSA custody every year. The inquest does not insist on an end to these coercive practices nor does it interrogate the criminalization of migration.

Emerging story about Lucia's tragic death

1. Transit police officer Jason Schuss stopped Lucia for an unpaid fare. Schuss testified that he subsequently turned Lucia over to CBSA, in part, because Lucia had

an accent and that he believed "she wasn't originally from Canada."

2. Even a RCMP officer who interviewed Lucia's fellow detainees (who have all since been deported) testified that Lucia appeared visibly distressed and "extremely nervous" to them. Nurse Lilia Hernandez-Cazares testified that she referred Lucia for a mental health assessment and that Lucia showed her scars from violence she suffered. But on the day of the appointment, the computer system mistakenly showed that Lucia was no longer in custody. The appointment with the mental health coordinator was never rescheduled.

3. The Mexican consulate interviewed Lucia several times. They were also to arrange for Lucia to see a counsellor after she told them about her experience of domestic abuse, but they never followed up. Instead, they started to process the Mexican travel document needed for her deportation from Canada.

4. It took Lucia over three weeks to get a lawyer through legal aid, and when she finally got one it was only five days before the filing deadline for a Pre-Removal Risk Assessment (PRRA). It was not CBSA or prison staff or any institutional support, but rather other detainees at Alouette prison that helped her access legal aid.

5. Lucia told her lawyer, Emma Andrews, and CBSA that she intended to file a PRRA to remain in Canada and that she was afraid to go back to Mexico. However, Andrews told CBSA that Lucia did not intend to file a PRRA. Lucia clarified to CBSA officer Raman Vandher that she did want to file a PRRA, Vandher testified that Lucia had missed the deadline and it wasn't her priority to inform Lucia about extensions. An internal email by Vandher referred to Lucia as a "very frustrating Mexican removal."

6. A former employee of the private security company Genesis admitted to falsifying room check records due to chronic understaffing the morning that Lucia was found. Although Lucia was in the shower stall for at least 40 minutes, these falsified records show her as being in a cell at the time.

BC Corrections, CBSA and Genesis have already made

certain changes at the holding center and prison. Most of the changes have to do with mental health supports.

7. Some are relatively positive changes, such as all mental health referrals from immigration detainees are now marked urgent, underscoring how deportation can itself be a form of psychological torture.

8. However, most changes under the guise of 'suicide prevention' are arguably problematic. Invasive cell checks include regularly checking detainees for breathing. Curtains separating security guards from detainees have been replaced by one-way mirrors. Bath towels are now only given to detainees upon request, and CBSA communications with Corrections includes flagging if an immigrant detainee is "exhibiting dangerous behaviour to self or others."

Witnesses and participants have been making recommendations on immigration detention throughout the inquest. It remains to be seen which recommendations the jury will make, and, more importantly, if any of these will actually be implemented.

9. There are certain short-term recommendations that are lifelines for detainees. These include better mental health support, shutting

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"16 years is too long - Not one minute longer!"

By Nino Pagliccia,
Vancouver

I recently attended the Tenth International Colloquium for the Release of the Five Heroes and against Terrorism, held Sept. 11-12 in Havana, Cuba. The event gathered close to 300 delegates from 45 countries. Canada and Quebec were present with 10 delegates.

The goal of the meeting was to advance new ideas leading to the liberation of the three Cuban prisoners still remaining in U.S. prisons - Gerardo, Antonio and Ramon. The other two, René and Fernando, are back in Cuba, actively seeking support to free their comrades. René was recently denied a visa to enter the UK to participate in a meeting of the Law Society of London, although he was linked by video. Fernando, who is now vice-president of ICAP, the organizer of the Colloquium, spoke to us with passion about the necessary work remaining to do.

A sense of perseverance was clearly set by audio messages from Gerardo, Antonio and Ramon, greeting the delegates from their respective prisons. This urgency was also reflected in the main slogan of the Colloquium: "16 years is too long - Not one minute longer!" We must insist on the immediate release of the three



prisoners, in hopes that the next such meeting will be one of celebration, with all Cuban Five free and back in Cuba.

The most heart breaking panel, and yet the most energizing, was with six children - now adults - of the Cuban Five. Stephen Kimber, in his award-winning book, *What lies beyond the waters - The True Story of the Cuban Five*, writes of the personal struggles the Five and their families, living assumed lives as Cuban agents. Their children told of the private pain they endured by the loss of contact with their fathers for so many years, the special events they missed sharing, and the difficulty of understanding why their fathers had left. All concurred that this trauma will stay with them forever. The delegates gave a standing ovation to these brave young people.

In this mood, Fernando suggested that our work must be more strongly directed to the "power structures" of the U.S.,

through lobby work that would include the human side of this tragedy, particularly in reference to Gerardo who still has two life terms to serve. To be effective, we need to add the vigor of youth all over the world, and work in "unity". Fernando was making a clear call to a broad solidarity, one of my favourite values.

I saw this solidarity spirit when the delegates of the Lebanese Committee for the Freedom of the Cuban Heroes had a display of support for the Palestinian struggle, with Palestinian flags. All the delegates applauded statements such as, "There is a genocide in Palestine", "The Five are the Arabs of the West who are suffering the oppression of the U.S. as Palestinians suffer that of Israel", and "Palestine triumphed because Cuba was by its side".

Many other delegates presented creative ideas about the tasks we must undertake worldwide to free Gerardo, Antonio and Ramon. Don Foreman of the Canadian Union

of Postal workers read a letter of solidarity from his union, and Tamara Hansen of the Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba reported about Canadian work for the Cuban Five Campaign.

I spoke of the recent book about democracy in Cuba by Arnold August, Stephen Kimber's book, and my upcoming edited book on Cuba solidarity in Canada over the last 50 years. I stressed the importance of writing about our work in order to keep the solidarity movement connected, publishing as an act of solidarity in its own right, and the need to demand our governments to develop foreign relations based on the notion of

solidarity.

Many ideas from the different working commissions resulted in a detailed and challenging Plan of Action for the next year. For the full text of the Final Declaration: www.freethethefive.org/updates/CubanMedia/COXColloq0911.htm.

Given that legal recourses have gone unanswered by the U.S. courts, the consensus at the Colloquium is that we must now demand in every possible way that President Barack Obama exert his power to end this injustice before the end of his presidency.

Among others, three main concrete actions were suggested: 1. Write an open letter to Michelle Obama signed by many so that the media would notice it; the letter must stress the human tragedy behind this political issue. 2. A large international rally in front of the White House in Washington, DC around September 12, 2015. 3. A political event in South Africa next year with the presence of René and Fernando.

The Colloquium ended with a live concert by Cuban artists on the steps of the University of Havana, with solidarity words from the Venezuelan delegation and Fernando's own greetings. A reception at the Institute of Friendship with the Peoples followed. ●



Housing key issue in Vancouver campaign

By Kimball Cariou

Vancouver's civic election enters the final stretch with the close of nominations on October 11. With no limits on donations or spending, and all positions elected city-wide rather than by wards, this is always one of the most controversial municipal campaigns in the country.

This year, the race pits several challengers against the governing Vision Vancouver party, which is backed by an eclectic coalition ranging from most of the labour movement and some environmental groups, to developers who make huge donations.

The main opposition is Vancouver's historic "Non-Partisan Alliance," the big business party which has won most civic elections here since the late 1930s. The NPA has fallen on hard times in recent years, but it gets major support from developers, the big energy and resource corporations, and the right-wing provincial and federal governments. The rich and powerful of Vancouver hope that an NPA victory would open the door to force concessions from municipal employees (CUPE), and end City Hall's opposition to tar sands extraction and exports. An NPA win at School Board would also silence a vocal critic of Premier Christy Clark's attacks on public education.

Wild card factors include the Greens, who are strong in opinion polls; the left-wing COPE, which has received considerable media attention; the new One City progressive party (which has just one Council candidate); and several smaller parties, including the Public Education Project, with

two well-known school trustee candidates.

If enough voters turn against Vision Vancouver for its perceived arrogance and close ties to developers, the city could see minorities at City Hall, School Board and Park Board.

Perhaps the most crucial issue in this campaign is housing.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that "Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and

the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control." (*Article 25, sorry for the dated non-inclusive language*).

Despite the Declaration, the United Nations Commission on Human Rights estimates that about 100 million people are homeless across the planet.

In Vancouver, one of the wealthiest cities of the capitalist world, hundreds sleep in the shadows of million dollar condos and glistening corporate towers. Housing costs and homelessness

have been hotly debated during five consecutive civic elections here, starting in 2002, when anti-poverty activists occupied the abandoned Woodward's building to demand that this historic site be converted to social housing.

A new city council swept into office in 2002, pledging to tackle street homelessness and the spiralling cost of rents, houses and condos. But that eagerness ran into the realities of 21st century neoliberalism, as the provincial government kept slashing social program spending, and federal governments kept downloading responsibilities and costs to lower levels of government.

Some of the Vision Vancouver politicians who won a majority on Council in 2008 have used this issue to their advantage. Mayor Gregor Robertson vowed to end street homelessness in Vancouver by 2015, and his party seemed to be making progress, until recent counts showed a sharp jump in the numbers of people living outside. In late July, homeless activists and supporters established a tent city at Oppenheimer Park, in one of Canada's poorest urban neighbourhoods. Within weeks, hundreds were living in the park, demanding decent housing. The city has found temporary shelter for some, but this is a band-aid solution at best, and a confrontation is brewing over attempts to get an injunction against the tents. Yet again, grassroots housing protests are front and centre as voting day nears.

Vision's strategy to rein in housing costs by encouraging developers has also hit a rough patch, as home prices keep rising faster than inflation. A house on a

33-foot lot in a typical east side neighbourhood was recently purchased for over \$2 million!

Vision's "Short Term Incentives for Rental" (STIR) program gave breaks for developers who promised "affordable" rental units in new buildings. From 2009 to 2011, STIR reduced development cost levies, fast-tracked applications, and allowed increased density. At one news conference, developer Dale Bosa was joined by the mayor to announce that 106 tiny studio apartments (320 sq. ft.) would rent for \$950-1000 per month. Four years later, those rents range from \$1260 to \$1400. The story is similar in other STIR projects.

The Vancouver Courier (Oct. 1, 2014) reports that 19 STIR projects resulted in construction of 1,329 market rental units, a five-fold increase over the five previous years. But rents still rise, and the city gave up \$8.9 million in development cost levies, money that would have been used for parks, daycares, and social and non-profit housing.

Regardless of who controls City Hall, housing in Vancouver has shifted from a human need to a golden investment opportunity. Huge numbers of middle-income earners have sought cheaper housing in the suburbs, driving to jobs in the urban core.

Vision came to office largely by promising to tackle homelessness, a problem which is deeply rooted in the global capitalist economy. While the Mayor and his colleagues often call for assistance from senior levels of government, their claims



Affordable housing has been a serious issue for decades in Vancouver. This photo from the January 4, 1946 issue of the *Pacific Advocate* (one of the predecessors of *People's Voice*) shows WW2 veteran members of the Communist Party (known as the Labor Progressive Party at that time) picketing the old Hotel Vancouver. The protesters demanded to turn the hotel into a hostel rather than be demolished as planned by its owners, the CPR. The campaign won wide support and helped to achieve post-war housing reforms. From left to right in the photo: Sid Zlotnik, Gordon Martin, Jack Phillips, Duane Pritchett, Austin Delany, and Alan Anderson.

Remembering the anti-fascist, socialist GDR

**Commentary by the German Communist Party,
Oct. 3, 2014: "65 years after the foundation of
the GDR - 25 years of demonizing the attempt
to escape from capitalism"**

"A spectre is haunting Europe - the spectre of communism." These words from the Communist Manifesto are almost 170 years old, written by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. "

"All the powers of old Europe have entered into a holy alliance to exorcise this spectre ...", the text continues. But this "spectre" has stayed alive and will never die - and can neither be killed by silence nor shooting.

Many have already tried: Prussian Junker and chancellor Otto von Bismarck tried to fight the time's still-revolutionary Social Democrats by banning the party and expelling members from Germany. The "greatest Führer of all times" and chancellor of the Reich, A. Hitler, wanted to eradicate the Marxist "spectre" completely, root and branch.

After 1945, the next chancellor Konrad Adenauer, in capitalist West Germany, tried other, but not really new methods: another ban of the KPD (1956) and - already in 1951 - of the Free German Youth (FDJ). And as if all that hadn't been enough, his successor, social democrat Willy Brandt, stepped up his efforts against the newly formed German Communist Party-DKP: again, there were thousands of politically motivated trials, plus thousands of "Berufsverbot" cases against professionals and apprentices.

But most of all, the postwar rage of German capitalists was directed at the smaller and poorer part of Germany that had become an antifascist and socialist state: the German Democratic Republic, founded in 1949.

Their rage was directed against a state that let itself be guided by the ideas of Marx and Engels, by the experiences from the struggles of the international communist and labor movement, and by the aim of building up an anti-capitalist and anti-fascist alternative to the rule of monopolies and banks, arms industry bosses and wartime profiteers, which had financed the Hitler party even before 1933. The agents of the old capitalist and imperialist order tried to sabotage this state, trying to erase it from the map of Europe. "All powers" of old capitalist Europe plotted against this escape. They tried boycotting the economically weaker anti-fascist and socialist Germany, isolate it politically, and finally tried to strangle it. Over forty years, they hadn't succeeded.

The GDR's partners were neither the millionaires and multi-millionaires from Wall Street nor the huge American companies nor the banking industry. The Soviet Union had won the war, but was actually depleted and on the brink of its existence, and was thus forced to have the GDR compensate at least a part of the war damages caused by Nazi Germany. The richer West of Germany did not pay a penny. The FRG (West Germany) thus was made the "shop window of the West". From the so-called Marshall Plan, it received enormous reconstruction aid worth 1,412.8 billion US dollars. That meant that West Germany received

the third largest economic aid among Europe's postwar countries, only France and the UK getting more.

The aim of German and Soviet socialists and communists was initially to maintain Germany as a whole, to promote a new democratic beginning, as well as a change in all of Germany without fascists, wartime profiteers, and capitalists, to build a truly democratic and peaceful Germany. That is also what the Potsdam Agreement between three of the Allies of World War II stipulated.

But things turned out differently: "I'd rather have half of Germany all the way, than all of Germany only half-way" - this was Adenauer's motto that led to splitting up Germany.



The GDR emblem

The Soviet offer of a peace treaty with a democratic and anti-fascist Germany was dismissed in favour of the "integration" into the capitalist West and its aggressive military alliance NATO. West Germany was thus - first and foremost guided by the USA - to become a "bulwark" of anti-sovietism and anti-communism.

While fascists, Nazi generals, Nazi judges, and war economy leaders of all levels swiftly took over leading positions in the new West German state again, building up an anti-fascist and socialist alternative in the East started with lots of struggle: the generation building up the GDR were mostly politically inexperienced sons and daughters of workers and peasants who never belonged to the bourgeois elites.



In 1946, the various anti-fascist youth committees in the Soviet occupation zone merged to form a single organization, the Free German Youth (FDJ). The FDJ championed fundamental democratic rights as well as opportunities for young people to participate in political and social life. It soon became a mass organization that was represented in the People's Parliament [Volkshammer] of the GDR. The FDJ was banned in the Federal Republic of Germany on June 26, 1951. Photo by Herbert Hensky shows an FDJ rally at the Marienborn Zonal Border Crossing, Saxony-Anhalt, October 1, 1949.

But in the end, they managed to create an anti-fascist alternative to the capitalist West. They turned the smaller part of Germany into one of the top ten industrial countries of the world. They set sail for a longstanding socialist alternative to capitalism, creating an internationally recognized state - and its foreign policy was characterized by internationalism and the struggle for peace.

In many countries around the globe, the GDR was respected for its solidarity with peoples fighting for their national and political freedom. And the GDR had become a new home for many who had been pursued by fascism and imperialism.

The GDR was not the land of milk and honey - but it proved that the working people are able to achieve great results, even without capitalists. They built up a country where more than only the most substantial and essential conditions of living were ensured for the masses. They created an internationally recognized system of education, culture, and public health that has rarely been matched. The GDR became a country where working women and mothers could feel what gender equality means, still exemplary today. They created a state where nobody had to live in fear about a heated and affordable apartment, without fear about their professional future or family. The GDR became a country where not the interest of the millionaires, but the millions of people, had been the center of interest for the governing politicians. A country that didn't participate in wars against its neighbours or in far-away neo-colonialist wars - which the "new" Germany has done since 1990.

This was no "supposed workers' paradise", as the anti-communist propaganda machine keeps mocking about it in pejorative terms. It was not a land of plenty. That was due to the economic preconditions as well as to the political framework. Some things remained scarce and imperfect. And some democratic and future-oriented impulses not only failed due to "objective conditions".

But the GDR could nevertheless boast a lot in this respect as well, which is why - according to the German capitalists and imperialists - it had to "disappear". No longer was there capitalist private

ownership of means of production, and East Elbia's dominating Junkers with their large estates had become a thing of a distant past. The companies had been transferred into the hands of the people: they had become "people's enterprises". The land belonged to those who farmed it: the members of agricultural cooperatives. The power of the state - as exercised by the People's Chamber and the "National Front" - was no longer in the hands of millionaires and billionaires. The fat cats had lost their powers: the Siemens, Henkel, Porsche, Quandt, and Piech families. Now reigned the normal people, often referred to as Muller and Krause, Schulze and Schmidt.

The GDR was created as a country where the working people should have the power in their own hands, and exercise it, not the rich people. As the capitalists had been expropriated and thus disempowered, the new anti-fascist democratic order with a new form of power could be created, the "Workers' and Peasants' Power". It developed different standards in fields such as economic and social policy, education, justice, culture, the relations between the sexes and the generations, foreign and defense policy, compared to what had been possible under capitalism. And some things didn't exist: millions of chronically unemployed people, low-paid part-time jobbers without a future, people on welfare ("Hartz IV") marginalized forever. The GDR was thus a thorn in the flesh of German capitalism and imperialism.

The end of the GDR cannot be attributed to a single factor. There were causes from within and from outside, some its own fault, some avoidable, which were related to the increasing estrangement between the leading party and its people, contradictions between propagandized aims and actual real life, and speechlessness when confronted with questions and airings of displeasure from among the population. The working class and its party had ceased being a living unity, especially the connection between the socialist state and the youth was torn apart. The working class party had been losing - also by its own mistakes and deficits - the political and ideological hegemony and capacity to act. Thus, illusions about a future with the social safety of the GDR, as well as the standard of living of the FRG, became widespread.

Due to the loss of authority and the collapse of power during the months of crisis in 1989, which preceded the counterrevolution of the month of November, the SED [Socialist Unity Party of the GDR] leadership acted headlessly. The party was no longer capable of defending the achievements of forty years of revolutionary build-up by applying adequate policies or using the means of power at hand. On top of that, there were existential, but also inevitable factors, related especially to the particular role the GDR played as an outpost of the alliance of socialist countries dominated by the Soviet Union.

Finally, the GDR was last, but not least the victim of "horse trading" between the two superpowers of the imperialist

"West" and the socialist "East", with active participation of the German capital and its political leaders. The historic figures to blame for the time's betrayal was the Soviet leadership under M. Gorbachev: the GDR - just as all other socialist countries in Europe, as well as its alliances - became, in this time of crisis, a pawn sacrifice in the geopolitical chess game, part of an arrangement between the Soviet Union and the USA, both in a deep crisis at the time.

And now? If today's benchmark is the renewed media campaign to mark the jubilee of the "fall of the Berlin Wall", the GDR is as vivid as 25 years ago. In spite of all attempts to "delegitimize the GDR", as



Women in the GDR won major gains towards equality in the workplace and domestic life.

proposed by former German minister of Justice Klaus Kinkel, these attempts have failed to eliminate forty years of socialism in Germany. On the other hand, you might ask: "Who's still talking about the liberal party? No one! But they all keep talking about the GDR".

After 1990, the DKP often fixed its basic understanding concerning the basics of the first socialist state on German soil in documents and resolutions. We stand by our opinion, now and in future, that the GDR was the greatest achievement of the revolutionary workers' movement in Germany. Under the impression of the deepest economic crisis of capitalism in the years since 2007, we find our assessment confirmed that German imperialism has played a fatal role in igniting and aggravating political crises and military conflicts.

Facing the menacing situation in Eastern Europe and the Middle East, the 40 years of the GDR and its 65th anniversary are an additional reason to keep the memory of the anti-militarist and antifascist role model of the GDR alive.

From German soil may never again emanate a threat against other peoples. All the current plans for extending the military component of German foreign policy have to end now and for all. All German soldiers have to return immediately from their assignments abroad. The FRG has to leave NATO, the imperialist military pact. All citizens of the GDR who have suffered professional, judicial, and political harassment, imprisonment, and other material detriment (e.g. pension-wise) due to their "special proximity to party and state", must be rehabilitated, as to regain the same pension claims as all other citizens.

The GDR's 65th anniversary of its foundation reminds us of our commitment: "Never again fascism, never again wars!" And: "Our future is socialism!" ●

Engineers report on Malaysian Air downing

The tragic crash of Malaysian Airlines Flight 17 has disappeared from the corporate media in recent weeks, except for the occasional unsupported claim by pundits or politicians that the plane was shot down by Russia. This Sept. 22 commentary by Vancouver-based anti-war activist Roger Annis may indicate why there has been little investigation into this subject. For more articles by the author, visit his website at www.rogerannis.com.



This photo of a piece of the MH17 fuselage appeared with a July 25, 2014 *International Business Times* article by reporter Lydia Smith. Here is an excerpt: "Investigators have discovered more human remains and machine-gun-like holes in a section of wreckage from the downed Malaysia Airlines flight MH17, a week after the airliner was shot down over eastern Ukraine. Two Australian diplomats and a forensic expert understood to be part of the Australian Federal Police, joined Dutch investigators at the crash site near the hamlet of Grabovo, in the rebel-held Donetsk region. Michael Bociurkiw, spokesperson for the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), confirmed that key pieces of evidence that had been previously unaccounted for had been located." To view the full IBT article, visit <http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/malaysia-airlines-flight-mh17-extraordinary-new-wreckage-discovered-machine-gun-type-holes-1458258>.

The website VineyardSaker has translated and published a 16-page study into the July 17, 2014 crash of Malaysian Airlines Flight 17 that was conducted by the Russian Union of Engineers.

The Russian engineers conclude that the flight was brought down by a fighter aircraft operating in the vicinity of the passenger plane and that the only likely candidate for such an attack was an Su-25 or MiG-29 aircraft of the Ukraine armed forces.

The report noted pro-autonomy rebels in east Ukraine do not possess or operate a fighter aircraft. The doomed passenger flight had 298 people on board.

The engineers' report said the commercial aircraft left Amsterdam for Kuala Lumpur and was flying at 10,100 metres in Ukrainian airspace near Donetsk, likely on auto pilot, when it was attacked by a combat aircraft with 30mm caliber cannon. The cockpit area of the Malaysia Airlines jet was struck, likely killing its crew and depressurizing the aircraft.

Since the plane was on auto pilot, it continued to fly but began to lose altitude. The attacking aircraft flew to the rear of MH17 and launched R-60 or R-73 missiles that caused loss of cabin pressure, destruction of the jet's control system, failure of auto pilot and loss of ability to maintain its level flight path, leading to a tailspin.

The report said the jet broke up at a high altitude, resulting in the plane's wreckage scattered over an area more than 15 square kilometres. It says no combat jet of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation breached Ukrainian airspace. Ukraine and third party air surveillance reports confirm that.

According to an agreement signed on Aug. 6 between Ukraine, The Netherlands, Belgium and Australia, all four parties must give their consent to the release of formal reports of the investigation of the crash. The Netherlands has been assigned the lead role in the international investigation by the country where the plane came down, Ukraine, which happens to vigorously accuse Russia of the tragedy. Dutch authorities released a preliminary report on September 9 that answers few questions and dodges many.

Russian Defence Minister Sergie Shoigu has blamed Ukraine for the air tragedy, saying, "The catastrophe happened in the airspace belonging to Ukraine, which bears full responsibility for what happened".

The UN Security Council held a special debate on the downing of MH 17 at Russia's request on Sept. 17. The debate featured U.S. representative Samantha Power repeating tired phrases that maybe pro-autonomy rebels in eastern

Ukraine had some role in the downing of the flight.

The Russian engineers' report is consistent with the visual images of the destroyed aircraft exterior panels that are visible on many website reports of the crash. It also fits the inadvertent statement of the spokesperson of the Organisation for Economic Security and Cooperation, the Canadian of Ukrainian origin Michael Bociurkiw.

Bociurkiw is an eyewitness to the aftermath of the MH17 crash and he told a CBC Television interviewer on July 29 that several sections of the fuselage were pockmarked with "what almost looks like machine gun fire. Very, very strong machine gun fire that has left these unique marks that we haven't seen anywhere else [on the plane]."

Bociurkiw specifically refuted the missile theory. "We've also been asked, for example, have we seen any examples of a missile [strike]? Well, no we haven't."

Witnesses told BBC Russia they saw no signs of a missile fired from the ground. That report was later pulled from BBC.

The Russian Union of Engineers is a highly reputable consulting organisation that does a lot of technical studies for paying clients. To prepare this study, they engaged specialists who have extensive direct experience of missile systems and their effects on aircraft. Further bolstering the conclusions of the engineers' report is the fact that the U.S. military has released none of its satellite observations over eastern Ukraine on July 17.

This article by Roger Annis concludes with this excerpt from a *Democracy Now!* radio program interview with Professor Stephen Cohen, Sept 5, 2014:

AMY GOODMAN: What do you mean there seems to be an agreement between the major countries?

STEPHEN COHEN: Well, in addition to the insurance company for the airplane, which technically has legal responsibility, the major countries that are doing it - Britain has the black boxes, the Netherlands are involved. There was a report the other day that these parties, these states, have agreed that they would not divulge individually what they have discovered. Now, they've had plenty of time to interpret the black boxes. There are reports from Germany that the White House version of what happened is not true, therefore you have to look elsewhere for the culprit who did the shooting down. They're sitting on satellite intercepts. They have the images. They won't release the air controller's conversations in Kiev with the

doomed aircraft. Why not? Did the pilot say - let me speculate - "Oh, my god, we're being fired on by a jet fighter next to us! What's going on?" Because we

know there were two Ukrainian jet fighters. We don't know, but somebody knows. You might ask - you might get somebody on who's been investigating this to

find out what they actually know.

Stephen Cohen is professor emeritus of Russian studies and politics at New York University and Princeton University. ●

War without end

Editorial from the Oct. 1, 2014 issue of *The Guardian*, weekly newspaper of the Communist Party of Australia

Listening to US President Barack Obama's UN address to the General Assembly on September 24, it felt as though he was living in another world where the only threats to peace were Russia and Muslim terrorists. The rhetoric, hypocrisy, deception and language are a reminder of George W Bush and his war on terrorism. "The shadow of World War that existed at the founding of this institution [UN] has been lifted, and the prospect of war between major powers reduced," said Obama.

This is rich coming from a President preparing for war against Russia and China. Obama went on to praise the post-World War II formation of the United Nations, "The very existence of this institution is a unique achievement - the people of the world committing to resolve their differences peacefully, and to solve their problems together." Who could disagree? He then has the gall to describe the UN as having failed, not mentioning that it is the US that has continually breached its Charter, ignored its decisions (Cuba, Israel, etc) and waged illegal wars and blockades while bypassing the UN system.

The UN Charter declares that, "All Members shall settle their international disputes by peaceful

means in such a manner that international peace and security, and justice, are not endangered." (Article 2.3) "All members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state ..." (Article 2.4) Both the US with Australia in tow, have repeatedly breached the Charter. The self-appointed role of global policeman usurps the role of the UN; no wonder there are shortcomings.

"Russian aggression in Europe recalls the days when large nations trampled small ones in pursuit of territorial ambition," Obama says, as if those days have ended. The portrayal of Russia is pure fiction and the remainder hypocrisy coming from a mighty military power trampling anyone or any nation standing in the way of its pursuit of global domination.

"The brutality of terrorists in Syria and Iraq forces us to look into the heart of darkness," Obama says, failing to acknowledge that it is the US and some of its allies who have funded and still do fund and train these forces. "When nations find common ground, not simply based on power, but on principle, then we can make enormous progress."

How true, but lacking credibility from the President of a country with its history of wars, regime changes and assassinations. Ukraine was the latest in



see WAR, page 9



GLOBAL CLASS STRUGGLE

Greater risks and lower wages

Three out of four workers killed in September at a mine in Indonesia partially owned by Rio Tinto were precarious workers. On October 7, IndustriALL affiliates at Rio Tinto joined the global campaign to "Stop precarious work", demanding respect for workers' rights, and a healthy and safe workplace.

The majority of Rio Tinto unions surveyed on the situation at their worksites report the increased use of precarious work. In France, precarious workers represent around 25 per cent of the workforce, up from five per cent a decade ago. At Qit Madagascar Minerals in February 2014, two-thirds of the workforce were in the precarious category. The layoff of permanent workers at the Hail Creek mine in Australia in May 2014, while keeping casual workers, illustrates Rio Tinto's race to maximise profits by replacing its permanent workforce with precarious workers.

The accident in Indonesia shows again that precarious workers are more likely to be victim of a health and safety accident. Outsourced workers often receive lower wages and use antiquated protective equipment. In South Africa the wage gap is reported to be huge between direct employees and outsourced workers, who do not get any bonuses.

In Alma, Quebec, the precarious workers earn 50 per cent less than permanent and direct workers. In 2012, after a six-month lockout at Rio Tinto in Alma, the United Steel Workers won a collective agreement limiting the use of outsourced workers to 10 per cent of the worked hours.

Train drivers in pay dispute

A union representing train drivers at Germany's national railway says its members have voted overwhelmingly to strike over a pay dispute. GDL union spokesperson Gerda Seibert said on Oct. 2 that 91 percent of members voted in favour of strike action.

No date was immediately set for walkouts. GDL is seeking a 5 percent increase for Deutsche Bahn's train drivers, along with shorter working hours. The dispute has been complicated by a standoff between GDL and another rail workers' union, EVG. GDL is claiming the right to negotiate pay for other railway staff traditionally represented by its larger rival, as well as for train drivers.

SA public sector bargaining

South Africa's main public service unions, which collectively represent about 1.3 million workers, have a common position in demanding a 15% salary hike from the government. Workers also want a R3,000 monthly housing allowance and a 28% rise for medical aid contributions, their unions said on October 3.

The National Education Health

and Allied Workers Union (Nehawu), which is part of the alliance, has announced that it wanted the same deal for its members. The bargaining council also includes the Public Servants Association (PSA), the largest non-affiliated public service union with about 230,000 members; the Police and Prisons Civil Rights Union (Popcru); and the South African Democratic Teachers Union (Sadtu).

"All the major unions ... have a common position, demanding a 15% wage increase," PSA deputy general manager Manie de Clercq said.

The government is expected to



respond within a few days to the opening wage demand. A lengthy negotiation process could run until December.

Mass action if wage deal curbed

The Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) is threatening mass action if a Labour Court rules next month that a wage deal signed in the metal and engineering sector cannot be extended to all employees.

COSATU spokesperson Patrick Craven said on Oct. 2 that the federation would down tools, and consider lodging a complaint at the International Labour Organisation if the extension was dismissed.

The National Employers' Association of SA (NEASA) approached the court to stop the Metal and Engineering Bargaining Council from asking Labour Minister Mildred Oliphant to extend the wage deal to all parties, as legally required. Unions and the Steel and Engineering Industries Federation of Southern Africa (Seifsa) agreed to a 10 percent pay hike.

But NEASA said it would only pay 8 percent, and believes it stands a good chance of winning the court case. NEASA is backed by the Free Market Foundation, which says it is unconstitutional to extend collective agreements to non-party employers.

COSATU and the National Union of Miners of South Africa fear that if the court rules in NEASA's favour, employers could cut wages to well below those set in bargaining councils. "It will lead to a free-for-all, where employers can pay whatever wages they can get away with. It will lead to a race to the bottom, as firms compete to cut their labour costs, ending with starvation wages, no protection of workers' human rights and naked exploitation across the sector," Craven said.

Garment workers face malnutrition

The health and productivity of Cambodian garment workers have declined due to malnutrition, says a study by the International Labor Organization (ILO), adding concerns to the plight of the workers campaigning for higher salaries. Factory owners did not dispute the study but asked the ILO to share all the findings.

The study, a joint effort by the ILO's Better Factories Cambodia project, the French Development Agency and local analysis firm Angkor Research and Consulting, found that 43 percent of garment workers suffer from anemia, and 16 percent are underweight. It also found that garment workers, whose current monthly minimum wage is US \$100, spend about \$9 a week on food, or \$1.30 a day.

The survey also determined that garment workers experience high levels of anxiety and uncertainty about food supplies. About two-thirds were "food insecure," meaning they didn't always have access to safe, nutritious food. About 8 percent were said to be "severely food insecure."

"Anemia and food insecurity can contribute to wide-ranging health problems," said Jill Tucker, program manager of Better Factories Cambodia. "Anemia often leads to chronic fatigue, difficulty concentrating and low productivity. Addressing these anemia levels will be complex, but is key to improving productivity and business outcomes in the garment sector."

Yang Sophoan, president of the Cambodian Alliance of Trade Unions, told the media that wages should be increased so garment workers can buy healthier food. She said the garment workers need at least US \$170 monthly to have enough money to spend on food, based on a recent study conducted by a government task force.

About 1,000 garment workers demonstrated in September outside factories in Phnom Penh's Canada Industrial Park to seek an increase in wages to US \$177. Employers had rejected a previous demand for a wage hike to \$160, after raising salaries to \$100 from \$80 this year.

Moeun Tola at the Community Legal Education Center in Cambodia, said workers who spend \$1 to 1.50 a day on food cannot buy enough to maintain their energy, especially when they travel to work in overcrowded trucks and remain in hot factories all day.

The Cambodian garment industry employs around 600,000 workers in more than 500 registered factories. The ILO is conducting the three-tier survey as part of its Better Factories Cambodia Project aimed at improving work conditions and productivity. The first part of the survey draws on results from nearly 4,000 garment workers in 10 factories.

Cleaners take fight to Strasbourg

A group of 30 Greek cleaners attended the European Parliament session in Strasbourg last month,

one year after they were fired by the Greek Ministry of Finance. Wearing matching pink T-shirts, they raised their red-gloved fists to call for European solidarity in support of their struggle to win their jobs back.

"One year ago someone decided to ruin our lives. Someone decided that we are just numbers not human beings," said Dimitra Manoli. The cleaners are among 595 workers, mostly women between 45 and 60, who worked for the Ministry of Finance until they were laid off in September 2013 and replaced by a private contractor.

Their wages ranged from 205 to 757 euros a month, and their layoffs were part of spending cuts imposed by the Troika of Greece's international lenders (the European Union, the International Monetary Fund and European Central Bank). Since then, the cleaners have protested daily outside the ministry building, becoming a symbol of resistance against EU austerity policies. Riot police have repeatedly attacked the cleaners, sending many to the hospital covered with bruises.

"We came to Strasbourg to make our issue known and to ask for help. Because in our country, in Greece, we only receive violence as a response to our struggle," said Evaggelia Giannaki, a 45-year-old woman who was laid off after working at the ministry for 13 years. "The biggest problem is that at our age and in the context of rampant unemployment we are completely unable to find new jobs. In my mid 40s I want to work and I am doomed to unemployment. Even the European Social Fund is mainly targeted to the young unemployed. What about us?"

Earlier this year a court ruling ordered the finance ministry to rehire the cleaners, as their layoffs

were judged to be "contrary to the public interest." Instead, the Greek state appealed to the Supreme Court, whose verdict is due in February 2015.

A leaked recommendation by the responsible Supreme Court judge Christoforos Kosmidis overturned the first ruling, suggesting that the permanent retrenchment of the cleaners is "the Greek state's legal right to abolish existing jobs in the public sector and suspend civil servants when it is driven by reasons of public interest and rational criteria."

No complaining!

In a letter from Iceland's Straeto bus company, drivers have been told that complaining about a new on-board video camera policy will lead to termination.

"Employees have the right to file a grievance [over the policy], but if they use it, it can lead to termination of employment," reads part of a letter from management over a new policy to install active surveillance cameras on all buses. Currently, only 30 buses in the fleet have the cameras.

Reynir Jonsson, the managing director of Straeto, told reporters that the policy will not work if some bus drivers are allowed to be exempt from it. This policy was underlined in a second letter to employees, which was essentially a re-wording of the first.

Straeto employees told reporters that their work environment is bad, and that their union deals with many complaints. Drivers are placed under a great deal of pressure, and their supervisors are reportedly out of touch with their own workers.

The company is jointly managed by representatives of several capital area municipalities.

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

Join the Communist Party of Canada



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

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Parti Communiste du Quebec (section du Parti communiste du Canada)
5359 Ave Du Parc, Suite "C"
Montreal, QC, H2V 4G9
Email: pcqccc@gmail.com Tél: 438-338-8890

B.C. Committee CPC
706 Clark Drive, Vancouver, BC, V5L 3J1
604-254-9836 <cpinfo.bc@gmail.com>

Edmonton CPC
Box 68112, 70 Bonnie Doon PO
Edmonton, AB, T6C 4N6
Tel: 780-934-7893

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Manitoba Committee CPC
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Tel/fax: 204-586-7824

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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

Eritrea: "the Cuba of Africa"

By T.J. Petrowski

There exists in the Horn of Africa a small nation that few living in the West have heard of. A former Italian colony, Eritrea is only reported on in the mainstream media when the U.S. imposes further sanctions on this small country of six million, or when Hollywood makes a movie about a dictator in a fictitious country that shares its exact borders. But for those journalists living in Eritrea, the country is the "Cuba of Africa."

During the "scramble for Africa", Italy colonized the port of Asseb in modern day Eritrea in 1869, to compete with French and British control of the Red Sea shipping lanes. Britain administered the colony of Eritrea and Italian Somaliland following the defeat of Italy and the Axis powers in WW2, and a United Nations resolution, backed by the U.S., made Eritrea an autonomous territory of Ethiopia in 1951. When Haile Selassie I, the feudal emperor of Ethiopia, unilaterally revoked Eritrea's autonomous status, separatists led by the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF) fought a 30 year war of independence.

When Eritrea achieved formal independence in 1993, its infrastructure had been devastated. A third of the population was in exile, agricultural and industrial production was in a state of collapse, and the ruling EPLF had to begin rebuilding the country in a state of ruin. The National Democratic Program outlined socialist development in four pillars: food security, water, health, and education.

Agrarian reforms radically transformed food security. Peasants were allocated small plots of land and provided with more modern tractors to work their farms. But the construction of a micro-dam irrigation system had the greatest impact on food



An Eritrean health worker measures a toddler's mid-upper arm circumference to gauge his nutrition status. (Photo from UNICEF.)

security. These micro-dams broke the age-old dependence on the rains in this arid region of Africa. In 2011, the United Nations Famine Early Warning System predicted millions would starve in capitalist Ethiopia, despite being the birthplace of the Nile River and the Zenawi regime exporting 10,000 tons of rice to Saudi Arabia that year. But the people of Eritrea were able to survive the worst of the drought.

Access to clean drinking water has improved dramatically. In 1990, according to the World Health Organization (WHO), only 43% of Eritreans had access to safe drinking water; by 2013 that number had risen to 85%, compared to 48% in Ethiopia. The government has supported a variety of methods to provide safe drinking water, including harvesting rainwater through roof collection and solar-powered pumps to extract ground water reserves.

Eritrea's "existing national health policy aims to ensure equity and access by majority population to essential health services at affordable cost, consistent with the Universal Health Coverage principles," the WHO reported. Eritrea is one of only three countries

in Africa on target to reach the United Nation's Millennium Development Goals. Eight major vaccine-preventable diseases have been eliminated, life expectancy is 66 years, the country is moving towards eliminating malaria, and HIV/AIDS infections in the general population is less than 1%. By comparison, HIV/AIDS in Washington, D.C. is around 3%, and Eritrea's life expectancy is equivalent to the state of Mississippi, in the richest country in the world. In Ethiopia, hailed as the "African lion" by pundits for its creation of millionaires, the WHO reports: "The main health concerns in Ethiopia include maternal mortality, malaria, tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS compounded by acute malnutrition and lack of access to clean water and sanitation. The limited number of health institutions, inefficient distribution of medical supplies and disparity between rural and urban areas, due

to severe under-funding of the health sector, make access to healthcare services very difficult."

Adult literacy in Eritrea is 80%. Education is provided free to all students, including university and college, and the government spends 45% of its budget on education.

When it became clear that Eritrea would not adhere to Western neoliberalism, imperialism launched a campaign of demonization and economic sabotage, calling it a "rogue" state, a "dictatorship", and an "international sponsor of terrorism." Ethiopia invaded Eritrea in 1998 with the support of U.S. imperialism. Hundreds of thousands of troops were deadlocked in trenches along an 800 kilometer front, the largest and deadliest conventional war since the Iran-Iraq War.

Allegedly the war was the consequence of Eritrean territorial expansion into Ethiopia, but this can easily be disproven. Ethiopia unilaterally superimposed its Tigray administrative zone into Eritrea. This change can be seen in maps created by the Ethiopian regime in 1997, compared to those by international organizations. The change was even visible on Ethiopian currency issued in 1997 showing an enlarged map of Ethiopia. A peace agreement was signed in Algeria in December 2000, establishing the Eritrean-Ethiopian Border Commission (EECB), a UN body tasked with identifying a "final and binding" border between the two countries. In 2002, the EECB released its findings, awarding the controversial village of Badme to

Eritrea, infuriating Ethiopia's leaders, who have rejected the ruling. To this date Ethiopia continues to militarily occupy Eritrean territories with U.S. support.

But the war wasn't about a border dispute. In a secret cable published by Wikileaks, Meles Zenawi, the former prime minister, tells Susan Rice, the former US Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs: "The outbreak of hostilities ... was never about the border dispute in Badme and Zelambessa... It was about economic and political differences". Smaller "border conflicts" also occurred between Eritrea and U.S.-backed Yemen and Djibouti.

Now the U.S. has imposed crippling sanctions on Eritrea for its alleged support for al-Shabaab in Somalia. Wikileaks also disproved this claim in its "Ethiopia Files". In a secret cable, former U.S. ambassador to Ethiopia Donald Yamamoto said, "The role Eritrea plays in Somalia... is probably insignificant." The United Nations monitoring group in Somalia admitted it "has found no evidence to substantiate allegations that Eritrea supplied Al-Shabaab with arms and ammunition by air in October and November 2011," even though this was used to justify Resolution 2023, imposing sanctions on Eritrea's mining development.

Canadians should be aware of Western imperialism's violent policies, and support the right of all people, whether in Eritrea, Cuba, Venezuela or Korea, to self-determination. •

Left Front launches attack on spending cuts

By Ben Chacko, UK Morning Star, Oct. 1

France's Left Front leader Jean-Luc Melenchon has slammed "an economic policy that has never worked in any country and will never work", after huge spending cuts were unveiled in the country's annual budget.

Finance Minister Michel Sapin bragged about "unprecedented" savings while claiming the government "refuses to implement austerity."

EU chiefs were unimpressed with a plan that asks for further delays before France gets below the arbitrary Brussels deficit cap of 3 per cent of GDP, but Sapin claimed spending cuts of 21 billion euros - mostly to healthcare, local government grants and child allowances - showed he was "aware of the seriousness of the budgetary situation."

He also said the sale of 4 billion euros in public assets would help France pay off its debts.

President Francois Hollande, whose capitulation to the EU on cuts to tax and public spending has made him the least popular French president in history, is planning to break up state monopolies, cut public-sector jobs and cap pay rises.



It's not enough for Brussels, which is calling for France to emulate the catastrophic attacks on working conditions and welfare seen in southern European countries such as Greece and Spain. EU-enforced austerity programmes in both countries have ruined their economies and caused unemployment to soar.

Melenchon said the French economy would "pay dearly" for dancing to the bankers' tune.

"Scaremongering" over debt was "an absurd way of counting which takes no account of the use made of the money," he said.

Slashing allowances for all but first-born children was "totally cruel and absolutely stupid," he warned, arguing it would negatively affect a stagnant birth rate.

And he laid into a president who was cutting vital public services at home while wasting money by "declaring war [on Isis in Iraq] without asking anyone. One day he declares war, the next we're bombing, four days later the National Assembly meets - and doesn't vote on it."

Melenchon called for a "new alliance" of trade unions and parties to build a "left opposition" to the Socialist Party government.

[The Left Front (Front de gauche) electoral coalition includes the French Communist Party, the Left Party, the Unitarian Left and other radical and anti-capitalist groups. As a presidential candidate in 2012, Melenchon received 3.9 million first round votes, or 11.1% of the total.] •

War without end...

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a series of regime changes, overseeing a coup against a democratically elected government and its replacement by pro-US, reactionary (including fascists) anti-Semitic, anti-communist regime. "And I stand before you today committed to investing American strength to working with all nations to address the problems we face in the 21st century." Really!

"America is and will continue to be a Pacific power, promoting peace, stability, and the free flow of commerce among nations. But we will insist that all nations abide by the rules of the road, and resolve their territorial disputes peacefully, consistent with international law." America is a Pacific power, but as for promoting peace, etc, this is nonsense coming from the mouthpiece of the largest military industrial complex in the world which relies on war to boost profits. Obama omitted to mention that it was referring to its own rules, not those of the UN.

"But as we look to the future,

one issue risks a cycle of conflict that could derail so much progress, and that is the cancer of violent extremism that has ravaged so many parts of the Muslim world. Of course, terrorism is not new..." It certainly is not new, nor is the war on terror. George W Bush in a speech to Congress on 21-09-2001 (10 days after the bombing of the World Trade Centre) said, "Our war on terror begins with Al-Qaeda, but it does not end there. It will not end until every terrorist group of global reach has been found, stopped and defeated." This later became Bush's "war without end" and is now Obama's.

There is one big difference - in the lead-up to the war on Iraq there were mass demonstrations around the world, including hundreds of thousands of protesters around Australia. Since then the peace movement has become all but invisible to the majority of people in Australia, despite the efforts of a relatively small number of committed activists. As a crucial task, we must work together - peace groups, trade unions, community organisations - to re-energise the peace and anti-war movement.

Outrageous attack on press freedom in Australia

The Media, Entertainment & Arts Alliance (MEAA), the union and industry advocate for Australia's journalists, has described the National Security Legislation Amendment Bill No 1 which has been passed by the Senate, as an outrageous attack on press freedom in Australia.

MEAA federal secretary Christopher Warren said: "This Bill has been rushed through in undue haste without proper discussion or debate of the implications it has in denying long-held freedoms in Australia. In a healthy functioning democracy this assault on the public's right to know and the penalties applied to the media for scrutinising power must be condemned. The Bill muzzles the media from doing its job."

Warren said: "The Bill criminalises legitimate journalist reporting of matters in the public interest. It overturns the public's right to know. It persecutes and

prosecutes whistleblowers and journalists who are dealing with whistleblowers. It imposes ludicrous penalties of up to 10 years jail on journalists. It imposes outrageous surveillance on journalists and the computer networks of their media employers. It treats every Australian as a threat and denies their rights of access to information and freedom of expression...

"The parliament has now passed legislation that hands extraordinary powers to the government and its spy agencies while preventing legitimate scrutiny of those powers. At a time when the parliament should be defending and promoting freedoms in our society it has instead chosen to strip them away," Warren said.

MEAA has repeatedly raised its concerns over section 35P of the Bill which imposes a jail term of up to 10 years on journalists for "unauthorised disclosure of information" - criminalising the

work of journalists if they receive information about a special intelligence operation, particularly from whistleblowers or "trusted insiders" as the Bill notes in its Explanatory Memorandum. The penalty in the Bill is a jail term of between five and 10 years.

The offences outlined in section 35P would apply to "disclosures by any person" and "persons who are recipients of unauthorised disclosure of information, should they engage in any subsequent disclosure".

This would capture legitimate reporting by journalists and media organisations of activities in the public interest. For example, this legislation would have made illegal the legitimate reporting of Edward Snowden's revelation about the phone tapping of the wife of Indonesian President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono.

Late amendments to the Bill would also apply a "recklessness"



test to prosecuting media organisations for publishing or broadcasting information. This is countered by a requirement on the Commonwealth Director of Public Prosecutions "to consider the public interest in the commencement or continuation of a prosecution" but the definition of the public interest from the DPP's perspective may differ greatly from that of journalists, the media and, indeed, the public.

Warren said: "It is clear that rather than seeing Edward Snowden as a legitimate whistleblower who exposed massive illegal misuse of metadata, this legislation ensures that anyone seeking to also expose wrongdoing by Australia's spy agencies will be muzzled, unable to get their story out to the wider community despite the obvious public interest, and will be punished with a jail term of up to 10 years."

The Bill can also deem journalists and their employers to be a "third party" if they interview persons of interest to the Australia Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO). Consider the example of barrister Bernard Collaery and his allegations that ASIO agents raided his office and seized electronic and paper files relating to the alleged bugging of the Timor Leste's government's Cabinet offices during negotiations for a treaty relating to the Timor Gap.

Journalists who interview persons of interest to ASIO like Collaery can be subjected to powers of surveillance, investigation and punishment which may undermine a journalist's ethical obligations to never disclose the identity of a confidential source. It also sits at odds with shield laws that protect journalists from having to disclose the identity of confidential sources.

The Bill's new definition of "computer" (to include a computer system or network) has grave implications for people and organisations designated "third parties". As a third party, the journalist's computer and their media organisation's computer network could be monitored, have information taken, and be "disrupted".

The Bill's overview regarding intelligence collection powers states the Bill enables ASIO to: "obtain intelligence from a number of computers (including a network) under a single computer access warrant, including computers at a specified location or those which are associated with a specified person".

The Bill's amendments also alter "the current limitation on disruption of a target computer". Under the Bill's proposed amendments "disruption" can include the addition, copying, altering or deletion of data if ASIO deems it necessary. This can happen to a third party's computer and/or communications in transit. This again threatens the relationship journalists have with their confidential sources and the preparation of news stories.

In a late amendment, journalists now face 10 years' jail if they identify an ASIO officer. MEAA notes that ASIO has been able to inoculate itself from scrutiny so successfully that any wrongdoing by an ASIO officer could result in two years' jail but if a journalist reported the officer's abuse of power, the journalist faces five times that penalty.

"The outcome of this legislation for journalists is two-fold: a muzzle has been applied to the media that will have a chilling effect on legitimate journalism while at the same time journalists will be compelled to resort to the tools and techniques of espionage to protect their news sources and stories from being interfered with by the government and its agencies," Warren said.

"Those two outcomes are not healthy in any democracy. But they are even more galling when the government responsible claims to be implementing these in order to protect our freedoms and our way of life," he said.

"As Prime Minister Tony Abbott, a former journalist, has said in relation to the arrest, detention and jailing of Australian journalist Peter Greste in Cairo: 'Peter Greste would have been reporting the Muslim Brotherhood, not supporting the Muslim Brotherhood. Because that's what Australian journalists do.' That distinction about the work that journalists do needs to be considered by the Australian Parliament and should have been recognised in this Bill," Warren said.



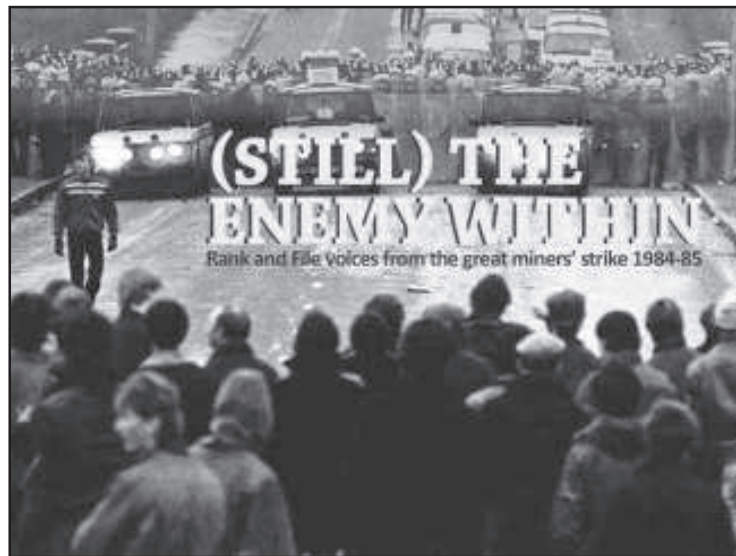
A powerful class war chronicle

Still the Enemy Within, directed by Owen Gower, 112 minutes, documentary on the 1984-85 miners strike, review by Jeff Sawtell, from the Morning Star (Britain)

We know from government documents how far Margaret Thatcher would go to break the National Union of Mineworkers during the strike of 1984 by harnessing the full power of the state. It wasn't simply a revenge attack after the Tory government led by Edward Heath was defeated - war was declared on the whole working class.

The strategy was simple. Smash what was deemed the vanguard of the working class and others would follow suit, so opening up Milton Friedman's road to economic exploitation.

That's why this film is so acute. Directed by Owen Gower, working with a sympathetic crew, it's the story of the miners' strike from the point of view of those involved in the mass acts of solidarity. It shows how the vote for strike action sparked a wave of support throughout the coalfields that forced the ruling class to split the miners and their most likely supporters.




Apart from setting up the so-called Democratic Union of Mineworkers and a network of informers they recruited right-wing Labour while their media mates peddled their mendacity. The notion of a national ballot was nonsense.

The response to this onslaught required inventive approaches, from circumventing roadblocks to harnessing the power of the Women Against Pit Closures movement.

Still the Enemy Within is thus a

most powerful documentary reminder of the strength and weaknesses of the strike. It's captured with exceptional photography and a sympathetic soundtrack that includes the Specials, whose music is very much of the Thatcherite era. But above all, the film is a timely reminder that the Tories and their collaborators are the true "enemy within." ●



La Trova Nuestra

Friday, Oct. 31, 8 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.'



Toronto lane named for Oscar Ryan

Legendary writer, theatre critic and cultural organizer Oscar Ryan (1904-1988) now has a lane named after him in downtown Toronto. The lane honoring the director and co-author of the historic 1933 play *Eight Men Speak* is next to the Palmerston Public Library, a short walk from the apartment where he lived for decades with his partner (in life and theatre) Toby Gordon Ryan. Pictured above at the Sept. 18 unveiling ceremony are guest speakers (L-R) Robin Endres Pacific, Brian Davis and Alan Filewod, emcee Wally Brooker (in the middle) and Toronto Councillor Ceta Ramkhalawansingh (at right).

Ontario civic elections Oct. 27....

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services, affordable social housing and rent controls, good transit planning and lower fares, accessible and affordable quality public childcare, civilian control of police and racial profiling, expanded local democracy and autonomy, and a new financial deal for cities from Queen's Park.

Former Toronto Mayor David Miller initiated a broad based fight for a new financial deal for cities across Canada. That important contribution was derailed by the City of Toronto Act. But in light of the bankruptcy announced by Detroit earlier this year, this is a big issue that Chow could and should take up.

The election of progressive majorities at City Councils across the province is also very important. Toronto has had a right-wing majority since 2010. Can it be replaced by a progressive majority on Oct. 27? We certainly hope so.

In Ottawa, Larry Wasslen is a good pick for Council in Kitchissippi Ward. A neo-natal nurse who organized the Children's Hospital of Ottawa (ONA), Wasslen is an advocate of good planning policy and an opponent of greedy developers. He is advocating more affordable housing and rent controls, lower OC Transit fares for all, and free fares for social assistance recipients, the unemployed and seniors. He's also fighting for property tax reform to provide relief for homeowners and tenants, and for the province to provide adequate transfer payments to cities across Ontario.

School Board elections are also taking place. The Toronto Star is campaigning to defeat the city's entire public school board, including a significant number of

Trustees who have campaigned hard for the long-promised, but never delivered needs-based provincial funding formula for education.

Among these is Howard Kaplan, an incumbent in Ward 5, TDSB. Kaplan has fought school closures and land sell-offs dictated by the province, successfully blocking closure in his riding, and continues to fight for adequate provincial funding, and uploading the costs of education off the property tax. He is also a strong supporter of the Africentric high school located in his Ward.

Juanita Burnett, running for Trustee in Wards 1 and 5 in Guelph, is also campaigning for a new provincial funding formula. A library worker at the University of Guelph where she organized library workers into CUPE, Burnett is a delegate to the Guelph labour council. She is a parent and a strong advocate for students with special needs, and for school nutrition and food programs.

In Peel, Harinderpal Hundal is campaigning in Wards 9 and 10, and has developed a big base of community support. A certified teacher, with degrees in business administration and economics, Hundal is active in the South Asian

community and is Secretary of the Indo-Canadian Workers' Association. A father of two young children, he is married to a health care worker. Hundal is fighting for more capital funding to build new schools in Peel, an area with a growing population of young families. He wants the Board to offer Punjabi and other language programs, where numbers warrant, as accredited courses. He also supports a university for Brampton, and advocates voting rights in municipal and school board elections for Canadian residents.

Most Labour Councils have a list of candidates that they support, and many unions are actively working for these candidates. PV readers can check with Labour Councils to see their lists, and can contact the candidates mentioned in this article as follows:

Larry Wasslen, Councillor, Kitchissippi Ward (Ottawa), 613-220-6843

Howard Kaplan, Ward 5 Trustee, Toronto, 416-654-7105

Juanita Burnett, Wards 1 and 5 Trustee, Upper Grand River (Guelph), 519-803-8996

Harinderpal Hundal, Wards 9 and 10 Trustee, Peel (Brampton), 647-818-6880



Harinderpal Hundal



Juanita Burnett

Inquest into refugee death...

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down the holding cells below the Vancouver International Airport, free phone calls, access to interpreters, fresh air, free multilingual reading material, and increased legal information.

10. As with so many of the changes that have already been made, a number of proposed recommendations are troubling. These include: increased staffing at the prison and holding center, a longer detention period for detainees to have appropriate mental health

screening prior to their deportation, and increased information-sharing of mental health records between agencies.

The notion of a more 'humane prison' with more staffing (i.e. increased management and control of detainees) and better services detracts from the critical question of why an increased number of migrants are being detained and deported, and does nothing to challenge the federal government's plans of prison expansion (and by extension, prison populations). Although critical, appropriate mental health

assessments, for example, would not change the underlying reason for Lucia's anxiety: her detention and deportation.

When detached from an abolitionist and decarceration analysis, prison reform strategies actually, as former political prisoner Angela Davis argues, "render the prison more impermeable to change." Therefore advocating for detention reform strategies through this inquest must be consistent within the ultimate vision towards ending migrant detentions and deportations. ●

Vancouver civic election...

continued from page 5

to be able to resolve the crisis inflated expectations beyond any reasonable level.

The contradictions of this strategy may hurt Vision's vote on Nov. 15. COPE is calling for higher taxation on non-occupied housing units, i.e. speculative properties. This is a popular position in a city where people stare up at darkened windows in the condo towers, although the percentage of empty living spaces here appears to be close to the Canada-wide average.

Another approach is advocated by the new OneCity party, which includes many progressives with closer ties to the labour movement.

OneCity is calling for a "20 over Five" policy, meaning that 20 percent of units in housing developments of five or more units would have to be made available at truly affordable rates, i.e. a maximum of 30% of family income.

But better development and zoning policies are not enough. British Columbia's starvation social assistance rates and the \$10/hour minimum wage leave hundreds of thousands scrambling to eat, let alone pay rent. Federal cuts to social and co-op housing programs put renters and would-be homeowners at the mercy of developers, landlords and banks.

During a civic election, it's easy

to blame City Hall for the housing crisis. Of course, local governments must be part of the solution. But what's really needed is a Canada-wide plan to build affordable housing for everyone. A country which can give enormous tax breaks to the wealthy and the big corporations, and still spend tens of billions on new military hardware, could certainly make it a priority to build a million new social and low-income housing units. The parties in Vancouver's municipal campaign should be challenged: what's your plan to light a fire under the higher levels of government which have the authority and the power to adopt such a strategy? ●

What's Left

Vancouver, BC

Stepping Up The Anti-War Movement, speakers and discussion on Canada's military involvement in Iraq/Syria/Eastern Europe. Thurs. Oct 16, 7:15 pm, Mt Pleasant Community Centre, 1 Kingsway @ Main, 2nd floor. Sponsored by Stopwar.ca, 778-870-2448.

Celebrate the 70th Anniversary of the Guatemalan Revolution, Sat., Oct. 18, 7 pm-midnight, Centre for Socialist Education, 706 Clark Dr. Donation \$10, music with DJ Carlitos Tun Tun, delicious authentic Guatemalan food. Organized by Otto Rene Castillo Club CPC.

Left Film Night, "Weight of Chains", 7 pm, Sunday, Oct. 25, documentary on the NATO destruction of Yugoslavia, Centre for Socialist Education, 706 Clark Drive. Ph. 604-255-2041 for details.

La Trova Nuestra, evening of Latin American music, admission \$10, 8 pm, Oct. 31, Centre for Socialist Education, 706 Clark Drive.

Winnipeg, MB

7th Annual Anarchist Bookfair and Canzine DIY Fest, weekend of Oct. 24-26, at the University of Winnipeg ("The Hive" in Lockhart Hall,

and Bulman Centre). For info and to reserve tables, <http://wpgbookfairdiyfest.com/>

Toronto, ON

CCFA Toronto's CAFE CUBA, Thursday, Oct. 16, 7 pm, free admission, at Ellington's Music and Cafe, 805 St. Clair Ave. West. To celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Beatles in North America, Luis Garcia will show his film "John Lennon in Havana", and Hidden Brook Press presents Window Fishing, an anthology on the influence of the Beatles, edited by Poet Laureate John B. Lee. For info contact Elizabeth Hill, 416-654-7105.

Montreal, QC

The October Fest, 6:30 pm, Sat., Oct. 11, Greek Workers Assoc., 5359 ave. du Parc, music and speeches in honour of Che Guevara, tickets \$15 advance/\$20 door, includes dinner. Organized by Parti communiste du Quebec (Section du PCC).

Public services and programs under attack! Halloween demo against Liberal austerity carnage, Friday, Oct. 31, 11 am, gather at McGill College Ave. and Sherbrooke (near Metro McGill).

People's Voice deadlines

November 1-15 issue: Thursday, October 16

November 16-30 issue: Thursday, Nov. 6

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

<pvoice@telus.net>



The Fifth of the Month to Free the Five

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

E-mail: president@whitehouse.gov

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

Phone 1-202-456-1111 Fax 1-202-456-2461

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

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

Hollow Cast

Hollow cast

A play on empty words

Acts of genocide

A powerful work of hate

Justifying a repeat performance

Appearing in the lebensraum.

Just desert

Now scene of the crime.

An epic

Of Zionist proportions,

based on a Nazi true story.

With a background of oppression,

Staged for your jingoistic pleasure.

At a cost of

many Palestinians and their homes.

No intermission.

Curtain call.

Peter Marcus, 1992

This poem is in a collection of writings called *A Small Lamp*, which can be purchased at *Spartacus Books (Vancouver)* or from the author at \$5. All proceeds go to *People's Voice*.

Beware! India's new regime carries deadly virus

By Baldev Padam

India is a "Secular Socialist Democratic Republic" as per its constitution, and its citizens are equal before law, irrespective of caste, colour, or creed. But its secular feature may come under stress after Narendra Modi and his BJP (Bharatiya Janata Party) formed the government in May 2014.

There is nothing unusual in rulers changing through the democratic process, but power this time passed to the political arm of a dogmatic Hindu organization, RSS (Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh) whose mantra is to make India a Hindu Nation (Rashtra). The RSS founders opposed the concept of a secular Indian state, and also admired Hitler's theory of purity of race. Long-time RSS President Guru Golwalkar, in his book *We, Our Nationhood Defined* (1938) wrote, "Germany has also shown how well nigh impossible it is for races and cultures, having differences going to the root, to be assimilated into one united whole, a good lesson for us in Hindustan to learn and profit by." Such noxious thoughts prompted ardent followers like Modi and BJP to target India's non-Hindu minorities, the Muslims in particular. Hence the alarm!

Why Modi succeeded

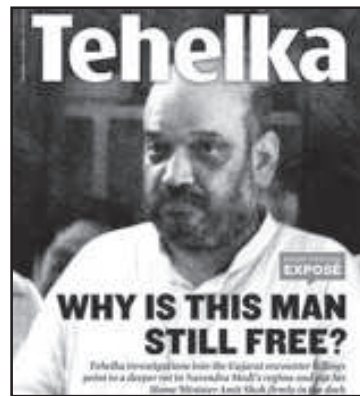
Why did secular India throw its destiny for the next five years into the hands of a political outfit fundamentally opposed to a secular state? The answer isn't far to seek. The ever-rising cost of living, unemployment, corruption, and the lack of concern on the part of the Congress Party-led coalition to tackle the malaise, brought Narendra Modi in, and kicked Congress out. A smart BJP politician, Modi artfully exploited people's disgust with the Grand Old Party. By promising to bring Achche Din (good times) he won the election hands down.

Modi's campaign pledged to uplift India's poor, but paradoxically was financed by big business and supported by their print and electronic media. Besides selling dreams of Achche Din, the media highlighted the "exceptional" growth of Gujarat province achieved under Modi's rule; rebuttals by Chief Ministers of some other provinces with facts and

figures went mostly unnoticed. To coax millions of the poor to support Modi, the media painted him a poor tea boy, who in his youth sold tea at railway stations to help his family financially. Relying on truths, half-truths and lies, Modi with the media's help won support of all sections of society and became India's 15th Prime Minister. No other party, not even the Indian National Congress which ruled most of the time since independence, could match Modi's theatrical display of humility, or his electrifying speeches at numerous election rallies.

Polarized people

Yet controversies have followed Modi, within India and internationally, because his government in Gujarat did little to stop 2002 riots in which hundreds of men, women, and children, most of them Muslims, were killed and thousands more displaced from their homes. Amit Shah, Modi's right hand and his junior home minister, implicitly supported the rioters. His police watched the mayhem mutely and didn't



Despite his criminal past, Amit Shah was a major player in the BJP election victory.

intervene to stop that massacre.

India's populous UP (Uttar Pradesh) province, which elects the largest number of lawmakers to Parliament, was eyed by the BJP this time to win the seats needed ensure their majority in the Lok Sabha (Lower House). Pre-poll riots between Hindu and Muslim communities were triggered by BJP leaders in Muzaffarnagar and other UP towns, to polarize people on religious lines so as to pocket majority Hindu votes. Many BJP leaders were arrested by UP's

Akhlesh Yadav government.

As the BJP's campaign manager in UP, Amit Shah's speeches told people that the time had come to take Badla (revenge) and teach lessons. The BJP won 71 out of 80 seats in the province. Shah was hailed as a modern day Chanakya (teacher, tactician, and royal advisor), and promoted as the ruling BJP's National President.

On the eve of Modi's victory, Kuldip Nayar, a veteran journalist and syndicated columnist, wrote, "I didn't want Narendra Modi to be India's Prime Minister for ideological reasons. His effort to polarize the country is not in the nation's interest..."

The fate of India as a secular state under the Modi regime is anybody's guess. He is an ardent follower of the RSS, whose *raison d'être* was to make India a Hindu Nation (Rashtra). Modi was introduced to RSS fundamentals in the heat and dust of its *shakha* (basic unit), which he joined as a Volunteer in his youth, and graduated in its philosophy.

Making the concept of the Hindu Nation clear, Guru Golwalkar wrote, "Non-Hindu people of Hindustan must adopt Hindu culture and languages, must learn and respect and hold in reverence the Hindu religion... may stay in the country, wholly subordinated to the Hindu nation, claiming nothing, deserving no privileges, far less any preferential treatment - not even citizens' rights" (Wikipedia). In his book "Jyotipunj" Narendra Modi mentioned that Golwalkar inspired him.

Mohan Bhagwat, the current RSS chief, stated "...every citizen of Hindustan must be called a Hindu and not be identified as Muslim, Sikh, Christian or any other faith he or she followed." Such an odd definition of "Hindu" invited criticism from all quarters. While academicians opined that citizens of Hindustan should better be known as Hindustanis, not Hindus, political parties like Congress, SP and CPM have called it a plan to impose Hindu majority rule. Some compared Bhagwat to Hitler. Dal Khalsa, a radical Sikh organization, has declared that it would not allow the RSS to "foist its fascist agenda on Punjab".

Dazed by victory, BJP supporter Deepak Dhavalikar, Goa's Cooperation Minister, said

that Modi would make India a "Hindu State" before his term ends. Another colleague admonished foreign visitors, "Wearing bikinis should be banned on Goa's beaches... and the young girls going to pubs in short dresses should be banned as that was against Goa's culture".

Ashok Singhal, the President of VHP (an affiliate of RSS), recently said that with the Babri Masjid at Ayodhya gone (the historic mosque was demolished by RSS volunteers in 1991), "the Muslim community should willingly give up two other mosques in the holy cities of Varanasi and Mathura", i.e. allow the mosques to be vandalized.

Viewing such developments, journalist Inder Malhotra wrote in *Indian Express* that "India must never be a 'Hindu Pakistan' Modi should restrain Bhagwat and others".

"Love Jihad"

Love Jihad is the term coined by RSS think tanks to oppose Hindu women marrying Muslim men. According to them, it is an Islamist strategy to seduce and convert Hindu women. The term was often used by saffron-clad BJP leaders like Sakshi Maharaj and Yogi Adityanath to raise anti-Muslim sentiments and get Hindu votes. RSS cronies have floated an association in western UP called "Hindu Behen Beti Bachao Sangharsh Samiti" (Save Hindu sister and daughter committee). Volunteers attend calls, upload Facebook messages, go door-to-door and hold protests against "love jihad", armed with Google Maps, WhatsApp and lawyers. It is their Love Patrol to keep Love Jihad under control.

Temperate parents in India have long endorsed inter-religious wedlock of their offspring. India's late PM Indira Gandhi (a Hindu Brahmin) was married to Feroze Gandhi, a Parsi. Even the BJP's current federal HRD minister Mrs. Smriti Irani (Hindu) is married to Zubin Irani, a Zoroastrian, but no finger was ever raised. Why then a hullabaloo over Hindu-Muslim marriages? Indeed fanaticism and logic stand poles apart!

If it suits politically, BJP people oppose even a Muslim marrying a Muslim. For example, Sania Mirza, India's celebrated tennis star (she won the 2014 US Open mixed doubles) is a Muslim woman married to the famous Pakistani cricketer Shoaib Malik, and was appointed "brand ambassador" of Telangana province by its government. Raised in Hyderabad, the capital of the newly created province, she brought fame to the city, state and country in sports. But K. Laxman, the province's BJP opposition leader, criticized the appointment, saying that Mirza is a daughter-in-law of Pakistan who lacked credentials to be

Telangana brand ambassador. Mirza strongly refuted Laxman's claim that she was an outsider.

In the end

After Modi formed his government, Arundhati Roy, India's well-known human rights activist and author, said "Now, we have a democratically elected totalitarian government". She wasn't far from the truth.

The Modi government was soon in conflict with the judiciary on the issue of appointment of Supreme Court judges, and also for excluding the main opposition party from the committee that appointed an ombudsman to investigate public complaints of corruption against the Prime Minister or his colleagues.

The country also witnessed organized hooliganism, where some provincial Chief Ministers belonging to opposition parties were hooted down by BJP workers in the presence of the Prime Minister. Haryana Chief Minister (CM) Bhupinder Singh Hooda was the first to be heckled during an official function in Kaithal on August 19. Then it was the turn of Maharashtra's Prithviraj Chavan, who astutely skipped a joint function with Modi in Nagpur. But Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren wasn't lucky enough to escape humiliation at the hands of BJP activists in Modi's presence in Ranchi on August 21. It reminds us of the Hitler era in Germany, where Nazi Party workers were often let loose against the dictator's opponents. All that speaks louder than words about BJP plans to take the country backward from the new liberal world of the 21st century.

About the good times Modi promised, the prices of gas, essential commodities, and rail fares, were hiked just days before the annual budget. Prepared by the earlier Congress regime, the budget was placed before Parliament with some cosmetic changes. On the economic front, *The New York Times International Weekly* (Aug. 23-24) dealt with the subject in detail, under the caption "Slow Start by Modi Frustrates India's Hope."

People's frustration is evident from by-elections held after Modi assumed power. Out of 50 by-elections across the country, the BJP and its allies have won only 18. In Uttar Pradesh, the "Hindi Heartland", the BJP has lost eight of eleven assembly seats to the SP-Samajwadi Party that rules the state. While it has no better record, people accepted the Samajwadi Party as a lesser evil than Modi's BJP.

While the BJP may have to deal with the mess of their own making in days to come, Indians wait for "Achche Din" after they get rid of Modi's disruptive regime, which endangers India's peace and harmony like never before. ●

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