Ontario votes on June 7th

DEMAND A PEOPLE’S ALTERNATIVE!

VOTE COMMUNIST

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300 Steelworkers at Rio-Tinto-IOC’s mine in Labrador have been on the picket line since March. Now the company has cut their medical benefits.

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Ignored by the corporate media in North America, ultra-right forces which dominate the regime in Kiev are making new moves against democracy and human rights.

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Communist candidates in Ontario election

Brampton West
SURJIT SAHOTA
Surjit Sahota, a long time active member of the Indo Canadian workers Association, is currently serving the organisation as its secretary. Surjit’s social and political activism in the Indo Canadian community has spanned over two decades. Surjit demands public auto insurance to control rising auto insurance rates, a quality well funded health care system in Brampton and another public hospital to serve the rising health needs of the people, a full fledged university in the city, better and affordable transit services.

St Catharines
SALEH WAZIRUDDIN
Saleh Waziruddin is a call centre worker active in the Cuba solidarity movement. He is running to represent the majority of people who have been conscripted into poverty and unemployment. Saleh is calling for plant closure legislation to prevent relocation to low-wage jurisdictions.

Davenport
DAVE MCKEE
Dave McKee has been the Ontario Communist Party leader since 2016. He is a printer by trade, and spent many years as a steward for the Graphic Communications Union. Dave is a longtime peace and anti-war activist, first with the Canadian Peace Alliance and later with the Canadian Peace Congress. He is a past executive member of the World Peace Council. Dave has lived in the Davenport riding since 1996.

Guelph
JUANITA BURNETT
Juanita Burnett has been an activist in Guelph since the mid ‘90s, when the Tories were last elected in Ontario and threatened to close daycare. Since then she has been involved in many local struggles concerning poverty and housing, education, better working conditions, and equality. Juanita is a library worker, and a proud trade union member.

Guelph
MARY ELLEN CAMPBELL
Mary Ellen Campbell is a trade unionist active at McMaster University and with the Hamilton and District Labour Council. She is fighting for a full employment economy that works for people’s needs, not corporate greed. The loss of 500,000 manufacturing jobs in Ontario, with thousands of those jobs disappearing in Hamilton, has meant poverty and precariousness for millions. Mary Ellen demands the government stands up to corporate job-destroyers.

Hamilton Centre
MARTY SUTER
Marty Suter is an anti-poverty activist and advocate of labour rights. He is a member of the Young Communist League fighting for a minimum living wage of $20/hr and for post-secondary education along with the cancellation of student debt.

Kitchener Centre
IVAN BYARD
Ivan Byard is a student and young worker living in East Toronto. He is a member of the Young Communist League fighting for a provincial social housing program, including the building of 200,000 new units.

London North Centre
CLAARA SORRENTI
Clara Sorrenti is a student, activist and member of the Young Communist League in London. She has been active in the fight against ultra-right and fascist groups and calls on the government to strengthen enforcement and penalties for hate crimes, the banning of hate groups and increasing funding for anti-oppression and equity seeking programs.

London West
MIKE LEWIS
Michael has lived in the riding of London West for almost thirty years and has been active in defending public healthcare and organizing against racist and fascist groups. Michael owns a small business and is the organizer of the Forest City Club of the Communist Party of Canada.

Ottawa Centre
STUART RYAN
Stuart Ryan has been a resident of Ottawa Centre for the last 19 years. For almost 33 years he worked as a union representative of a local of the Canadian Union of Public Employees at Carleton University and was a delegate to the Ottawa and District Labour Council until his retirement in 2015. He has continued his activism in such local organizations as Ottawa Fight for $15 and Fairness, the Ottawa Committee for Pension Security, Solidarity Ottawa and the Ottawa Health Coalition. He continues his long-time interest in international solidarity work with countries in Latin America and the Philippines.

Ottawa South
LARRY WASSLEN
Larry is from a working class family from Winnipeg. He moved to Ottawa in 1979 and was a Registered Nurse until his retirement. Larry is active in the peace and Latin American solidarity movements. He is fighting to reverse privatization and delisting, enforce the Canada Health Act and expand universal health care to include dental care, pharmacare, eye care and longterm care.

Parkdale–High Park
JAY WATTS
Jay Watts is a 37 year old freelance worker living in the Parkdale High Park riding with a background in project management. Of Ojibew and settler origin, he was raised in northern British Columbia on Saik’uz Dakelh territory along the Highway of Tears and became politicized in high school, when the Ts’ten defenders stood at Gustafsen Lake and the Nisga’a Treaty negotiations exposed the racism of the corporate media. Jay is a member of the Parkdale Tenants Association and is fighting for a provincial social housing program, including the building of 200,000 new units.

Toronto Danforth
MARTY SUTER
Marty Suter is an anti-poverty activist and advocate of labour rights. A former truck driver now on an ODSP disability pension, he has run in several federal and provincial elections as a candidate for the Communist Party. He has been an active member of local anti-poverty groups for many years and has fought to raise social assistance rates to above the poverty line.

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Due to extended coverage of the Ontario provincial election, our next report on the 2018 People’s Voice Fund Drive will appear in our June 1-15 issue. Thanks to our supporters for recent fundraising events, such as the annual Mother’s Day Pancake Branch organized by the Burnaby Club, and the Karl Marx 200th birthday party in Edmonton. We look forward to seeing BC readers at the PV Banquet in Vancouver - Saturday, June 2, 5:30 pm at the Russian Hall!
Commentary from cupew.ca, by Mike Palacek, National President, Canadian Union of Postal Workers, May 4, 2018

Canada Post’s 2017 Annual Report came out yesterday, and it confirms the position that we’ve taken for many years now: there is no financial crisis at the Canada Post Corporation (CPC). There’s plenty of room for growth yet, and expansion and innovation mark the way to long-term viability for the service.

The Canada Post segment made $1.4 million before taxes, on revenue of $6.4 billion – that’s revenue created by your work. The surplus was driven by increased revenue from parcels, which grew faster than the lettermail revenue declined in 2017 and has now exceeded $2 billion. Lettermail revenue is now less than half of Canada Post’s revenue. In 2016, parcel revenue rose faster than lettermail revenue declined in one quarter.

Now it’s done so for the year as a whole – this is promising, but it’s a trend that we have to adapt to in order to address overburdening and to ensure proper route structures, and appropriate staffing for inside workers.

For the first time in a while, the pension fund’s balance is not negative. CPC’s release about the 2017 report. Maybe that’s because it’s only good news: on both a going-concern basis, and on a solvency basis, the fund’s position is boosted by 64% on a going-concern basis.

Meanwhile CPC’s temporary exemption from special solvency payments continues, so we will stand firm that they can’t use that threat to attack our hard-won pension and other benefits.

We hope that this annual report, along with today’s new appointments to the CPC Board of Directors, signals a change in direction from the top down.

Many of the senior management changes to the Pay Equity Act, which undermined women’s rights to equality, as unconstitutional. The court sided with CUPE, affirming that re troactive pay equity and access to information for female employees must be guaranteed by the legislation.

“This marks a major victory for tens of thousands of women in Quebec. The Supreme Court of Canada recognizes that the changes to the Pay Equity Act denied women the right to be paid fairly and according to the value of their work, a right that men enjoy. Finally, after nine years of pointless waiting, the Quebec Liberals have been proven wrong,” said CUPE National President Mark Hancock.

“The ruling clearly states that pay equity is a fundamental right. The Supreme Court acknowledges that women’s compensation is still held back by systemic discrimination even today. It has to stop. Today’s ruling represents a major breakthrough,” added CUPE National Secretary-Treasurer Charlies Fleury.

The Supreme Court confirmed the Quebec Court of Appeal’s October 2016 ruling in favour of CUPE and its union and community allies. The Court of Appeal ruled that the “reform of the Pay Equity Act started by the Liberals in 2009 was unconstitutional, as it infringed on the equality rights of women employees.”

The “reform” ended retroactive adjustments to maintain pay equity, effectively allowing employers to pay discriminatory salaries for successive periods of up to five years. Moreover, the Pay Equity Act prevented female employees from asserting their rights. Unfortunately, the Couillard government then petitioned the Supreme Court to challenge this ruling that favoured women in Quebec.

The Pay Equity Act was passed more than 20 years ago, to eliminate systemic gender-based discrimination against persons in female-dominated job classes. The Act also compels employers with more than 10 employees to implement pay equity in their company.

On strike since March 26, steelworkers at Rio Tinto-IOC’s mine in Labrador City are still at the picket lines with no end in sight. A tentative offer in April was soon rejected by 75% of members.

The nearly 300 steelworkers at IOC has also heartlessly cut off its community investment with the Sept-Iles Local 9344 the railway and IOC decided to they count as essential service.

Relations Board debates whether non-war with Syria,” says VDLC

The April 24 meeting of the Vancouver and District Labour Council adopted the following resolution:

The Canadian government, accompanied by Britain and France, launched airstrikes on Syria, on April 13.

Because on April 9 Israel launched missiles at a Syrian airbase near Homs, killing at least fourteen people; and

Because there is an intensifying danger of further intervention on behalf of the United States and its allies, which is aimed at regime change and the destruction of any peace negotiations in the region; and

Because Canadian intervention threatens to expand and intensify the existing conflict dangerously in the Middle East, the region or even global scope; and

Because Prime Minister Trudeau’s government has broken favourably of the actions of the United States and its allies, and has not ruled out Canadian involvement in the conflict in the future, our fair share of the service’s revenues. And it strengthens our resolve to find solutions to existing problems in the workplace that are brought on by part in the increase in volumes, which we advocate for the kind of innovation and expansion that the federal government and CPC’s new CEO are now talking positively about.

Once again, we see that the postal service is as valued and viable as ever, and it’s all based on your work. Our challenge is to make the workplace fair and safe amid the changes. Please show your support!
Another Israeli massacre in Gaza

Yet again, Israeli troops massacred Palestinian protesters on May 14, this time killing at least 52 (the numbers are still rising as we go to press) and wounding over 2,400 people in a calculated act of cold-blooded mass murder. The sickening slaughter was committed by IDF forces using air strikes, tanks, assault weapons, and tear gas to attack Palestinians wielding burning tires, stones and handmade bombs.

As always, the Zionist butchers who ordered this massacre shrug and talk about “defending their borders,” confident that US imperialism will protect them from the wave of international anger.

And as usual, the Canadian government of PM “Sunny Days” Justin Trudeau refuses to condemn either the Netanyahu regime or the bully in the White House who sparked the latest dangerous developments by moving the US embassy to Jerusalem. Instead, Trudeau mouthes platitudes about “opposing violence” – as though this is a couple of schoolyard gangs fighting with sticks, not a heavily armed state regularly murdering with complete impunity the people whose lands Israel occupies illegally.

Neither the Canadian government condemns Israel a few days earlier when it committed blatant military aggression by firing dozens of rockets into neighbouring Syria. Mr. Trudeau has also stayed silent as Donald Trump openly talks about launching war against Iran, an act which would likely become the most terrible mass killing in the history of the planet.

The Trump and Netanyahu governments are pushing the world towards a regional war, one which could escalate quickly into a catastrophic global conflict. Now more than ever, people who understand the terrifying implications of this drift towards disaster must speak out for peace and Palestinian rights. This is also a moment to urgently build support for the BDS movement to isolate the Zionist killers who understand the terrifying implications of this drift towards disaster.

We will continue to call for unity among all the forces which offer clarity, and to refuse to print letters which may be libellous or which contain personal abuse. As always, the Zionist butchers who ordered this massacre do their basic conclusion that capitalism creates all the conditions in which the global environment could be destroyed the planet as a liveable home for the human race before capitalism can be defeated. But that tragic outcome is far from inevitable. It’s up to the working class to save our world – and our own future.

Capitalist production, therefore, develops technology, and the combining together of various processes into a social whole, only by sapping the original sources of all wealth - the soil and the labourer.

(Karl Marx)

Marx’s 200th Birthday - relevant for workers in Canada

The 200th anniversary of the birth of Karl Marx on May 5, 1818, drew huge attention around the world, and the debates are far from finished. One interesting indication of this development is on the cultural level, as large numbers of people turn out whenever screenings are held of the new August Diehl film biography, The Young Karl Marx.

Later this month, the Communist Party of China will host representatives of many other Communist and Workers’ parties (including Canada) at a special conference to consider the relevance of Marx’s scientific and political contributions. At a time when global imperialism remains mired in frequent economic crises, this event will be a unique occasion to deepen the revolutionary working-class understanding of Marx’s significance.

As a contemporary, the legacy of Karl Marx remains crucial for the working class of all countries. His original research academic and practitioners used the setbacks to socialism during the 1990s and shifts in the structure of the capitalist as opportunities to proclaim the end of the working class struggle for revolution, life has instead strengthened the arguments raised by Marx and his collaborator, Frederick Engels.

In total, the number of industrial workers on a global scale is now estimated to have grown from about 200 million years ago, to about one billion today. Even in countries like Canada where the composition of the working class and the forms of labour have shifted dramatically, workers remain by far the largest section of the population, with the potential to engage in massive, dramatic struggles for their collective interests.

Faced with relentless efforts by capital to undercut labour rights and to impose precarious employment, workers in Canada and other “advanced” capitalist countries are seeking new ways to fight back, and showing increasing interest in the ideas of socialism. This includes millions of employees in the retail and fast food sectors, the tech industries, and university campuses, where labour organizing and resistance is on the rise.

All of this exposes the lie that Canada is some kind of socialist society - a concept which is based on the argument that a relatively high average income level and certain elements of a social safety net outweigh the reality of private appropriation of the wealth created by the collective labour of working people. The exploitation of labour described in such detail by Karl Marx is still the fundamental economic process in Canada and other capitalist countries. Actually, the rate of exploitation continues to rise as the employers invest in new technologies which allow them to squeeze larger profits out of the same or even fewer numbers of workers.

Marx and Engels’ projections about the concentration of wealth in fewer hands, the inevitable creation of a large surplus army of unemployed workers, the impoverishment of millions of people, all remain valid today in Canada, where the rapid increase in corporate profits far exceeds the growth of employment incomes. So too
On May 27th, Venezuelans will exert their right to elect their president and other local officials. It will be the fifth presidential election since 1998 (and the third if any type) to take place since 1998 when Hugo Chavez was elected president. Venezuelans take great pride in this fact, in a region that has seen far too many coups, military and otherwise.

However, there is a persistent campaign, endorsed by the US and Canadian governments, that this election will be a fraud. They will not give any proof for their assertion. On the other hand, I decided to learn more about the Venezuelan electoral system, to see if it is a deception is even possible. For that purpose I interviewed Wilfredo Perez Blanco, Consul General of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela in Vancouver, BC. What follows is my report from our conversation.

The first thing that Perez pointed out was that in order to understand the functioning of the right of all Venezuelans to fairly elect their representatives, two articles of the constitution need to be kept in mind.

Article 3 of the Venezuelan constitution of 1999 establishes the democratic foundation of the electoral process. The first paragraph states: “All citizens have the right to participate freely in public affairs, directly or through their elected representatives.” And the last paragraph concludes, “It is a duty of the State and society to facilitate the generation of the most favorable conditions for its practice.” It is significant that both State and society have a role in this process.

Article 63 in turn establishes, “ Suffrage is a right. It is exercised through free, universal, direct and secret elections in which the voter will guarantee the principle of individual and collective participation and proportional representation.”

The Venezuelan Electoral Power (CNE) was created by the 1999 constitution, the Organic Law of the Electoral Power, the Organic Law of the Electoral System, the Organic Law of the Organized and the Organic Law of the Civil Registry. According to the division of powers established in the constitution, it has functional and budgetary autonomy, which guarantees its independence from other State bodies.

“Its governing body is the National Electoral Council (CNE for its name in Spanish), responsible for the transparency of the entire electoral process. It is composed of four members who are elected by political parties to perform the tasks that guarantee to all Venezuelans, the efficient organization of elections and the events that take place in their country,” stated Perez. “It is their responsibility to regulate, direct and supervise the activities of their subordinate bodies, as well as guarantee compliance with the constitutional principles attributed to the Electoral Power.”

Currently, the voting system in Venezuela is a fully automated process and can be audited in all its phases. In 2004, Venezuela became the first country in the world to hold national election with machines that printed the voucher or receipt, and in 2012, it added a biometric authentication of the voter and the subsequent validation of the signature, also to be kept in mind.

This technological platform allows the use of a conventional voting (electronic) ballot where the voters press the name, face or party affiliation of the candidate for the election office. This method of voting was further strengthened with the use of the Integral Authentication System (SAI), the last phase of automation, which allows the voter to activate the machine with their fingerprint. “This represents another guarantee for the integrity of the vote.”

Once the fingerprint is authenticated, the machine is activated so that the voter can vote directly on the screen or on the electronic ballot. The selected option appears on the screen and the voter has the possibility to confirm their vote by pressing the VOTE option.

This vote is stored randomly in memory of the machines, and at the end of the day is recorded in the printed totaling records, and a copy is sent electronically to physical vouchers of the receipt box in the subsequent audit.

Perez emphasized, “The voting package of each machine travels encrypted through a secure network provided by the state telecommunications company CANTV. The network is isolated from the Internet and has multiple levels of security and authentication. No external company can penetrate the election results.”

The totaling system rests on powerful servers, which receive the electoral results from all the voting machines in the country. The totaling system only receives data from voting machines authenticated and authorized by the CNE, which are protected with an encrypted algorithm and an electronic signature. This key does not depend on any single party because it is shared between the CNE and all participating political organizations.

The Automated Voting System (AVS) has various phases of vote verification protocol: audit of the automated system itself; citizen verification; processes following the election in the presence of representatives of the parties. The complete system of electoral guarantees also includes an international presence - International Electoral Accompaniment Program - to accompany and observe the electoral process, get to know the operation of the Venezuelan system, and even contribute to its improvement.

Perez clarified, “The participation allows electoral experts and other accredited persons, in all the electoral stages, prior to the electoral event, during its development and after it. At all times accompanying persons interact with electoral authorities, technical teams of the CNE, electoral officers, and with technical and political representatives of the participating political organizations as well as with the media, within the framework of the conditions set by the Organic Law of the Elections and independence of Venezuela.”

In the May 20 elections, fifteen audits will be conducted in the different areas involved in the process of the Presidential Elections and Legislative Councils. These audits will comply with the standards used in the 2012 presidential election and the parliamentary elections of 2015 to guarantee transparency in this dance of elections.

The audits will be carried out in the presence of witnesses of the different political organizations, representatives of all national observers, international accompagniers, and technicians from different international organizations and commissions. Perez informed me that these activities of revision can only be followed in live broadcasts by clicking on the banner Canal CNE TV of the official site www.cne.gob.ve, “or anywhere to see.”

It appears that in compliance with the constitutional mandate, the CNE has created a unique legally bound and technologically sound electoral system, backed by the most comprehensive system of guarantees. This makes elections in Venezuela a safe, transparent and reliable expression of the sovereign will of the people and full adherence to the democratic framework, participatory and protagonistic democracy.

In concluding, the Venezuelan Consul stated, “democracy is not a place, only a space where its history and is intensely lived in Venezuela. For Venezuelans, to live in a democracy is to debate, participate and be full protagonists in the construction of their destiny. In Venezuela, the right to elect the President is a right of all citizens of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, and its realization requires that right by all means available. Transparency is at the heart of the electoral system for the May 20 elections.”

The author is a Vancouver-based writer who has studied and observed the Venezuelan electoral system extensively.

MoveUP challenges the concept

MoveUP, the union representing over 12,000 members at public and private sector companies in Western Canada, endorsed the Canadian Blood Services to end its discriminatory practice of banning gay or bisexual men, or transgender women, from donating blood unless they have been deemed HIV negative for one year.

The union is urging members and supporters to sign petition E-1509, asking the government of Canada to repeal the blood ban against men who have sex with men. The petition has garnered 3,500 signatures and will be open until July 17.

The blood ban by Canadian Blood Services is discriminatory, they say it is based on science, but it is not, it is purely discrimination,” said Gunter Seifert, a member of MoveUP’s executive council and co-chair of the Human Rights Committee.

“This policy is not only discriminatory and offensive but it puts the lives of Canadians who need blood at risk by lowering the pool of donors.”

The Canadian Blood Services website says the organization uses antibody testing and nucleic acid testing (NAT) on every donation. There is a period of nine days known as the “window period” between exposure to HIV and the ability to detect antibodies to that virus.

“Modern screening tests are what keeps our blood supply safe,” said MoveUP Vice-President Annette Toth, who initiated the petition. “If the issue with the testing is that HIV is undetectable in the first nine days then everyone should be screened. Why not ask all potential donors to be celibate for at least nine days? It is discrimination and it is ridiculous to tell some people to be celibate for one year. Their policy just does not meet the facts.”

“We all want safe blood and Canadian Blood Services has even admitted that our national ban simply supplies another level,” said Seifert. “Screening questions should be based on safety and science, not sexual orientation. Discriminatory and offensive.”

By Nino Pagliccia

On May 16th and 31st, 2018 | 5

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What is Happening in Palestine? Nakba - 70th Anniversary of the Palestinian Catastrophe

By David Bleakney, 2nd National Vice-President, Canadian Union of Postal Workers, May 14, 2018

On March 30, 2018, the media have been reporting on what is happening at the wall between Gaza and Israel: the deaths, the injured, the human rights violations, and each and every one of us is complicit.

To truly understand the events in recent weeks, we need to go back to the origins and review the facts. What really happened in Palestine in 1948? Here is what history tells us.

Nakba began the day after November 29, 1947, when the United Nations divided Palestine into two parts, one to create a country for the Jewish people (56% of historic Palestine) and another (44%) to create a country for the Palestinians living on their territory. More than 750,000 Palestinians were thrown onto the streets and became refugees, and 531 villages or city neighbourhoods were completely destroyed. The same militia also began acquiring by force of arms the lands that the United Nations had set aside to create a country for the Palestinians, to the point where, in just one year, Palestinians were left with only 22% of historic Palestine.

The creation of the State of Israel was proclaimed on May 15, 1948. The Jewish people (56% of historic Palestine) and another (44%) to create a country for the Palestinians living on their territory. More than 750,000 Palestinians were thrown onto the streets and became refugees, and 531 villages or city neighbourhoods were completely destroyed. The same militia also began acquiring by force of arms the lands that the United Nations had set aside to create a country for the Palestinians, to the point where, in just one year, Palestinians were left with only 22% of historic Palestine. The creation of the State of Israel was proclaimed on May 15, 1948.

On December 11, 1948, the United Nations adopted resolution 194 recognizing Israel, provided Palestinians could return home or be fairly compensated. This “right of return” was confirmed more than 110 times by the United Nations, but was always rejected by Israel.

This is the context in which we must look at the events happening in Gaza. In this situation, we must remember the Nakba and the 70th anniversary of the Nakba. We must recognize the human rights of the Palestinian people, including withdrawing from the occupied territories and ending the illegal occupation.

That is why, as workers and citizens, we cannot remain indifferent. That is why CUPW supports the international campaign of Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) against the State of Israel until it respects international law and the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including withdrawing from the occupied territories, ending the illegal occupation and recognizing the human rights of all allowing refugees to return.
A PEOPLE’S ALTERNATIVE PLATFORM

An economy that puts people first
● A full employment strategy: expanded manufacturing, a shorter work week with no loss in pay, and public ownership of key resources and industries.
● Expanded provincial social programs, housing and public infrastructure.
● Increased provincial minimum wage, to a liveable level of $20.
● Plant closure legislation to prevent relocation to low-wage jurisdictions.
● Anti-slab laws, bankruptcy protection, and card check union certification for all workers.

Development that is publicly owned and controlled
● All P3 (privatized) developments replaced by public owned enterprises.
● Energy resources and industries under public ownership.
● A single, publicly-owned provincial electrical utility that includes production, distribution, and transmission.

Expanded public universal services
● Health - Restore health and hospital funding, and increase it above the national average.
● Reopen closed hospitals.

Climate and Environmental Justice
● Full and universal dental care, vision care, pharmacy, mental health care and long-term care.
● Education - End public funding for Catholic schools and enact a single, secular public school system in Ontario.
● Housing - Establish a low-rent housing reserve, and increase public housing.

Justice for Indigenous Peoples
● Stop corporate, public or private development on lands with Indigenous claims.
● Equitable standards and funding for housing, job creation, quality education and healthcare for Indigenous people living on or off reserves.
● Immediate cleanup of poisoned Indigenous land and water, and compensation for families.

For Full Equality and Against Oppression
● Enforce equity laws to eliminate the gender wage gap, and fight for an employment equity for Indigenous people, women, people with disabilities, and people from racialized and LGBTQ2S+ communities.
● End market-based property tax assessment and remove education from the property tax.

A New Federal Deal for Municipalities
● Full and adequate provincial funding for municipal services.
● Abolish the Ontario Municipal Board and replace it with local, democratic land-use and planning.

Democratic Electoral Reform
● Mixed member proportional representation (MMP) for provincial elections, and ‘right-to-recall’ legislation for all elected offices.

Lower the voting age to 16 and allow all inhabitants to vote.

We are at a turning point.

In this provincial election, Ontario will vote on a future that makes an important question. Will we watch as politicians pander to corporate profiteers, debating different versions of business-friendly policies? Or will we step up and demand policies that place people’s needs first, regardless of what the boardrooms say?

A decade of austerity measures has brought us the privatization of Hydro One and other public industries under public ownership. They were introduced after the Wynne Liberals, supported and encouraged by the Conservatives. They were introduced after the financial meltdown of 2007, to make the working class pay the costs of corporate losses and government bailouts.

Over the past decade, the average hourly wage for workers has remained largely unchanged. But corporate profits have nearly doubled and are at record levels. The Wynne Liberals have raised the minimum wage to a profit of $11.5 billion last year.

The environmental crisis has continued to deepen. Climate change, depleted water resources, poisoned land and rivers, pollution and waste - these dangers are caused by the actions of profit-seeking corporations and they threaten all of us. The government’s response, supported by the NDP, is to turn pollution into a commodity by trading it through cap and trade markets.

The Conservatives prefer to ignore the issue altogether. Racists and fascist groups continue to organize in communities across Ontario targeting Indigenous people, immigrants, racialized people, women, and LGBTQ2S+ people. The economic crisis produces poverty, joblessness and desperation - a breeding ground for hate groups. The resurgence of fascism and white supremacy also reflects the aggressive foreign policy of the federal government, with its higher arms spending and increased military activity.

Women continue to face widespread sexual harassment and assault, as well as a continuing gender pay gap in which women make 70 cents for every dollar a man makes. In the first 3 months of 2018, more than a dozen women or their family members have been killed by past or present intimate partners.

The oppression of women is worse for women of colour, marginalized, disabled, trans and LGBTQ2S+ women. Doug's Ford plan to limit minimum wage gain that the working class won through hard struggle.

A Conservative government would be a disaster for the working class.

Andrea Horwath’s NDP says they are the only progressive option, but they offer very little to the working class. They take a piecemeal approach that places “fiscal responsibility” above people’s needs.

Working class support needs to be earned, not taken for granted. Parties and candidates who fight for working class policies should be supported, during the election and in the days that follow.

We need policies that place people’s needs above those of corporations and the very rich.

We need policies that are based on a full employment economy, with expanded public services and progressive tax reform.

We do not have to choose between three competing capitalist parties, who continue “polices of austerity and privatization.” We can demand policies that place people’s needs before those of corporations and the very rich.

Ignite the Movement for Socialism!
Working people’s interests are not served by different version of capitalist policies – Tory, Liberal or NDP. Nor are we served by elections that are simply popularity contests between parties who promise to manage the same corporate-friendly policies.

For the working class to achieve meaningful political reforms, we need to organize ourselves and win them. We have to campaign beyond this election, to the days that follow.

We have to build a progressive movement – one that can unite the labour and people’s movements, including Indigenous peoples, youth and students, the unemployed and unorganized, precarious workers, women, LGBTQI2S+ immigrants and racialized people.

We need to build a movement that can win for reaching economic, social and political reforms, to strengthen the working class struggle, and open the door for socialism and working class power.

The Communist Party will work with all who are willing to fight for this progressive alternative. You can count on us to struggle against corporate power and to promote a platform that puts people’s needs before corporate greed.

We are at a turning point. Vote Communist – Ignite the movement for socialism!
The danger of a military conflict with Iran is mounting: the peace-loving forces must be mobilized

By Sean Burton, May 2018

A small town in west-central Newfoundland is a scene of a whirlpool of controversy late in April. The town council voted 4–3 against the crosswalk. Mayor Dave Edison insisted that the town supports all of its residents but that the "precedent" still needed to be avoided. The GSA did find some reason for optimism in the fact that a dialogue had been started, and that Edison suggested other means of supporting them such as a rainbow picnic table on school grounds or raising the pride flag at town hall during pride week.

One might wonder what is the difference between a rainbow crosswalk and a rainbow picnic table. Perhaps the mayor and his supporters think a crosswalk is too visible? Imagine being forced to acknowledge LGBTQ rights whenever crossing the road to the school?

But a picnic table? That can be kept away in the distance and only for the students to use. Cynical yes, but the fact is despite all the outputting of support for the brave and mature students in the south district of Hama and Bornabeh locals, and the brave and mature students and the brave and mature students in the north district of Hama and Bornabeh locals, and the brave and mature students.

On Monday 30 April, following Mike Pompeo's visit to Israel, the world media reported an extensive Israeli military operation on a number of Syrian airbases and military bases of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard’s Corps (IRGC) in Iran in Syria, in which several Iranian military personnel were killed. The Associated Press cited local sources as well as human rights and political analysis that several Iranian soldiers and military bases of the Islamic Republic of Iran were also hit. In the southern district of Hama and the Islamic Republic of Iran, quoted from the AFP, it was added: "The Israeli military has never stopped violating international law by bombarding Iran's facilities in Syria. The attack on the Iranian facility in the western province of Syria was a violation of Iran's rights as a result of the IAEA's continued inspections and evidence of Iran's IAEA's violation of its obligations and the International Atomic Agency (IAEA) stated on Tuesday 1 May that it has no evidence of Iran's attempt to achieve nuclear weapons capability in recent years. Also, according to ISNA (Iranian Students News Agency), the EU foreign policy chief Federica Mogherini said on Monday, in Cairo, that "the JCPOA is not based on assumptions of good faith or trust; it is based on concrete commitments, verification mechanisms and a very strict monitoring of facts, done by the IAEA". She added: "It is the IAEA that need to assess the details of the statement Prime Minister of Israel, Benjamin Netanyahu has made, and first and foremost get the IAEA's assessment, because the IAEA is the only impartial, international organisation that is in charge of monitoring continued Iran's nuclear commitments". In analysing the current developments in the Trump administration and the coordination - more than ever before - of the governments of Israel and Saudi Arabia with that administration, many of the world news agencies have commented that the risk of a military conflict between Israel and Iran is now higher than ever. Several Iranian military intelligence chief was quoted by the Guardian that “The chances of an escalation into a full-scale military conflict in Syria are higher than ever before. No doubt is Iran planning about the need, from their side, to respond. We’ll have to wait.”

In response to Netanyahu’s claims and Israel’s provocative actions, Amir Hatami, the Iranian regime’s Defence Minister, said: "I warn the Quds occupying regime and its supporters to stop their dangerous behaviours and plots because Iran's response will be surprising and remorseful [for them].

The Rot Beneath the Surface

Rainbow crosswalk in Corner Brook NL, one of many across Canada
Wave of pension strikes at UK campuses

A recent wave of pension strikes at UK universities was the biggest action the sector has ever seen, according to reporting in the Independent newspaper, Sally Hunt, the general secretary of the University and College Union (UCU) and John McDonnell, the Labour Party's shadow chancellor of the exchequer, say that the commitment of staff over the fourteen strike days, along with overwhelming support from students, won a much-improved offer from the employers.

The strikes' success also depended on the backing of thousands of international staff who work in the higher education sector. But for those on Tier 2 'skilled worker' visas, the cost was more than lost pay; it meant missing their immigration status. Staff could be deported as subject to strict limits on unpaid leave. If a migrant worker exceeds 20 days of leave in a calendar year, their employer is obliged to report them to the Home Office and could face fines. Exceeding this limit could become grounds for revoking a migrant's leave to remain in the UK. There are some exceptions for those on parental leave or long-term sick leave - but industrial action isn't in the list of exemptions.

When asked if strike absences would affect them, the Conservative immigration minister said that decisions about whether to revoke a worker's leave would be made with "full regard to the circumstances".

The right to strike is enshrined in article 28 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union. But with "Brexit" looming, the 2.4 million EU citizens who work in the UK could shortly become subject to Britain's visa system. Immigration rules could be used to restrict their engagement in strike action, even though migrant workers contribute to the UK economy. Migrants who work in the higher education sector are to be paid a minimum wage of £23.75 an hour, the government said in May. Migrants who need to take unpaid leave for engagement in strike action, even though they may have worked in the UK for many years, could soon become subject to EU rules.

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Garment workers face sex harassment

After a series of deaths in factories and hostels, garment workers in south India are being encouraged to stand up for the workers, and to help them cope with problems from work pressure to sexual harassment. Most of those working in the $42 billion-a-year export industry are young women living in hostels far from home and forced to work on the terrible condition of women in the $42 billion-a-year export industry, where much of the industry is located.

The hostels where the girls stay are not registered properly and there is no accounting for the number of workers," said Kamrupa Samy, director of READ, a charity that works with garment workers. "We have worked as informal workers for over 75 deaths between 2015 and 2017, all suicides in mill hostels. These are only one-off deaths.

The Dindigul administration will run sensitization workshops in an effort to improve working conditions in up to 200 spinning mills. The idea is to empower the women workers helping them to deal with the work pressure and give them opportunities to continue their education.

100,000 protest in Melbourne

A union protest in Melbourne's central business district on May 9 shut down roads and tram routes as up to 100,000 workers rallied for new pay deals. Thousands of union members carrying banners and flags marched past Victoria's state Trades Hall as part of the Change the Rules rally that lasted for several hours.

The crowd stopped outside the Melbourne Magistrates court where Construction Forestry Mining and Energy Union secretary John Setka and his deputy, Shaun Reardon, were appearing for a comittal hearing after allegedly blackmailing two construction company executives.

The trumped-up charges allege that the union leaders threatened to stop trucks entering building sites unless the company cut supplies to another builder which had been fighting for a higher rate. Under siege, the workers urged support for the high-profile union leaders.

The Australian Council of Trade Unions is calling for an increase to the minimum wage of $550 a week as part of the Change the Rules campaign. The Victorian state government says it will support workers, but a smaller minimum wage increase of about $27 a week. (Note: the Australian and Canadian dollars are approximately at par.)

The ACTU says that Victoria is in its 25th year of uninterrupted economic growth but that wages growth was subdued. Victorian
By Stephen Gowans, author of "Washington’s Long War on Syria" and "Patriots, Traitors and Empires: The Story of Korea’s 25th Anniversary Banquet"

Indian Communists are demanding a high-level judicial probe into the killing of at least 39 people in recent clashes. Communist Party of India (Marxist) general secretary Brinda Karat challenged the official version of incidents which took place in the south-central state of Maharashtra on April 22 and 23.

The Indian government claimed they were engaged in a "fierce encounter" with Naxalite Maoist insurgents on April 22, in a four-hour fight in which an unspecified number were killed. The following day India’s C-60 special forces claimed to have killed at least 12 Maoist commanders in a "successful ambush."

Authorities have found 39 bodies so far, at least 19 of which are women. Post-mortem reports state that some of the deaths were due to "multi-organ failure due to bullet injuries and some due to drowning."

Karat questioned government claims that all of those killed were Maoists, with young people from tribal areas challenging the government after being "left that has much to do with challenging and overcoming a real world system of domination, oppression and exploitation. It’s a left whose goal is the absence of conflict, not the presence of justice; it’s for pious expressions of benevolence, not engagement with a real world struggle against dictatorship on an international level."


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25th Anniversary Banquet
Saturday, June 2, doors 5:30 pm
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Vancouver

Great food and cultural presentation, and special guest speaker

STEPHEN GOWANS
author of “Washington’s Long War on Syria” and “Patriots, Traitors and Empires: The Story of Korea’s Struggle for Freedom” published by Baraka Books.

Tickets $20 (students/unemployed $12), ph. 604-254-9836

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The US has been accused of human rights abuses, serious infringements of its citizens’ rights and “systematic racial discrimination” in a damning report released by China. “The Human Rights Record of the United States 2017” which uses official government statistics and other publicly available sources, highlighted the poor US human rights record at home and abroad. The report claims that the situation in the US worsened in 2017, with results showing that Washington is in no position to play the role of a global “human rights judge.”

In its release the US State Department’s Country Reports on Human Rights Practices, which branded the governments of China, Russia, Iran and North Korea “morally reprehensible,” saying that they represented “a threat to global stability.” However Beijing warned that such “biased reports” were a failed attempt to interfere with the country’s internal affairs and China’s development. China’s report slammed the US for its military interventions in Syria which have led to the bombings of civilian infrastructure, including at least 12 schools, 15 mosques, 13 hospitals and a refugee camp. It said the US had attacked Syrian government forces at least four times in recent months, violating the UN charter in a war of aggression.

And it hit out at the growing disparity between rich and poor in the US where a record 40 million people are living in poverty.

The report criticised the US legal system, using data from the US Department of Justice, stating that slavery was "entrenched in American society".

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The report concludes that the US should be aware of the issues that lie at the root of the conflict. She’s that she’s on neither the side of the colonial war on Syria, protesting against supporters of the Syrian government’s struggle against the aggression of what he concludes are rapacious US foreign policy, Saudi extremism, and Israeli opportunism, can’t think of the government’s struggle against the US war to impose neo-colonial slavery on (and after Syria, Iran), but it’s not clear why. She certainly hasn’t arrived at her position by reasoned analysis; none is offered. Her disquisition is embarrassingly unproscriptive. She appears to be unaware of the issues that lie at the root of the conflict. She’s recognises that the war in Syria fits the description. She urges us to come up with some, all arguments. She urges us to come up with some, all arguments. She urges us to come up with some, all arguments.


Tickets $20 (students/unemployed $12), ph. 604-254-9836
By Rob Goulard, from The Guardian, weekly of the Communist Party of Australia

In 1983 a feudal ruler of Afghanistan, King Mohammed Zahir, was ousted in a palace coup engineered by his cousin Mohammed Daoud who proclaimed himself President with the title of Khalq Mohammad Daoud. As a result of this, the revolutionary forces of Afghanistan finally able to overthrow Daoud's repressive feudal autocracy came to be known as the Saur Revolution led by the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA).

The numerous prisons were opened amid general rejoicing. In Australia, Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser welcomed the Afghan Revolution as a triumph of democracy. The US intelligence agencies saw it differently however, interpreting this popular uprising as yet another Cuba, enabling them to facilitate “Soviet expansionism”, and therefore something to be thwarted at any cost.

The US sought allies among the various counter-revolutionary groups to stem this tide, looking for their keenest supporters among the most backward Islamic clergy who feared losing their influence and privileges and also feared the new government’s radical ideas, like women’s liberation.

These militant Islamic groups were also supported by the regime of the Mongoose, Premier Maurice Bishop in neighbouring Pakistan who had no own reasons for wanting turmoil next door. The United States Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) launched a program codenamed Operation Cyclone to encourage Islamic groups to organise, arm, and finance these backward, Muslin fanatics in a Jihad or holy war against the revolutionary government.

The terrorist campaign engaged in by the US and Pakistan-backed (and well-armed) mujahedeen targeted any in the civilian population who showed sympathy for, or even an interest in, the programs of the revolutionary government.

The Soviet Union intervened to aid the PDPA government in their fight with the mujahedeen which allowed the US to step up their propaganda that the war in Afghanistan was being waged against “Soviet expansionism.” A partial boycott of the Moscow Olympics was organised. In 1979, under Gorbachev, the USSR ended its support for the PDPA whose leader Mohammad Najibullah struggled on alone against the Islamic fanatics until 1992 when the PDPA forces were finally overwhelmed and Najibullah was brutally murdered.

Operation Cyclone was one of the longest and most expensive covert CIA operations ever undertaken; funding began with US$20-30 million per year in 1980 and rose to US$630 million per year in 1987. Funding requests are issued, it is almost certain that Santrich, his defenders reject accusations that Santrich trafficked in illegal drugs. Besides, the US government and its facilitation of laundering drug-trade profits. For Colombians, the issue of extradition is emblematic. Interpol (The International Criminal Police Organisation) routinely identifies alleged criminals sought for extradition by posting “red notices” on them. Interpol had already issued six red notices applying to other former FARC guerrillas long before it targeted Santrich on April 4. Evidently Santrich’s arrest was a key-up job. Prosecutors say he committed crimes after the peace agreement was signed and thus isn’t eligible for a pardon from the JEP.

Santrich’s present history is hardly consistent with his becoming a drug trafficker. Born in 1967, until then a professor of philosophy and social sciences. He joined the Communist Youth organisation, and then the more radical and leftleaning electoral coalition whose adherents earlier were murdered by the thousands.

State agents seeking to kill Santrich instead shot and killed his bodyguard, who also tried to prevent the assassination.

Indeed, assailants have been murdering former guerrillas. Demobilized battle-hardened and war poverty-stricken is to prepare for civilian life, live in isolation and are poorly housed. There is a Special Jurisdiction for Peace (JEP), set up to punish or pardon ex-combatants guilty of crimes, but it barely functions. Agrarian reform, one of the negotiators’ agenda, remains a distant dream.

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On May 8th, security state forces of the fascist Ukrainian government forced their way into the home of Petro Simonenko, leader of the Communist Party of Ukraine, closed the front entrance and contents over the strenuous objections to what was a vicious and unlawful attack. At the same time, the offices of the Communist Party of Ukraine were also unlawfully attacked and occupied. It appears likely that the fascist government intends to arrest Simonenko on trumped up charges in the next few days.

The attack on Petro Simonenko and the CPU is the latest in a long series of violent attacks on the Communist Party of Ukraine, its leaders and members, and is part of the Ukrainian government’s goal to obliterate the labour, democratic, civil, social and political rights of the Ukrainian people. Since the coup d’etat was carried out by the fascist government encourages these vicious and unlawful attacks on labour, democratic and political organizations including the CPU, suggesting the Liberals are content to defend Ukrainian fascism if its target is the Communist Party and the obliteration of socialism in Ukraine.

If this isn’t the case the Prime Minister should immediately condemn the violent attacks on Petro Simonenko and the Communist Party of Ukraine, and condemn the fascist government of Ukraine installed by coup d’etat.

The Prime Minister should also end the government’s vicious campaign against the Venezuelan government and the May 20 elections in Venezuela, and respect the decision of the Venezuelan people.

Central Executive Committee, Communist Party of Canada

Send Submissions to PV Editorial Office, 706 Clark Drive, Vancouver, BC, V5L 3J1 pvoice@telus.net

People’s Voice

FOR THE ISSUE DATED JUNE 1-15, THURSDAY, MAY 24
FOR THE ISSUE DATED JUNE 16-30, THURSDAY, JUNE 7
SEND SUBMISSIONS TO PV EDITORIAL OFFICE, 706 Clark Drive, Vancouver, BC, V5L 3J1 pvvoice@telus.net

PM Trudeau: Condemn fascist violence in Ukraine against Petro Simonenko and the CPU

Dr. Hassan Diab speaks on his unjust imprisonment and his challenge to Canada’s extradition laws, Friday, May 18, 6-7.30 pm, Room 7000, SFU Harbour Centre, 515 W Hastings. Sponsored by the CPC and AI Canada.

CPC 97th Anniversary, Sat., May 26, 6 pm, at the CSE, 706 Clark Dr. The Otto René Castillo Club CPC invites you to celebrate the anniversary of the CPU’s foundation, with speakers, poets, music, food and refreshments. Admission by donation.

People’s Voice 25th Anniversary Banquet, Saturday, June 2, doors 5:30 pm, Russian Hall, 600 Campbell Ave. Tickets $20 ($12 students or unemployed). For details, ph. 604-254-9830.

Toronto, ON

Patriots, Traitors & Empire, Thursday, May 17, 7:00 pm (doors open 6:30) at 62-64 Eglinton Ave W (one block east of Dufferin), Venezuela Solidarity Committee - Toronto

CJPME condemns Israeli shooting of Canadian doctor

May 15 - Canadas for Justice and Peace in the Middle East’s (CJPME) statement released in response to the shooting of London, ON based doctor Tarek Loubani, shot while attending the wounded in Gaza. Despite being clearly identified as a first responder, Loubani sustained a moderate injury to his left leg, and a minor injury to his right leg. A friend and colleague of the doctor the Gaza Health Ministry, Dr. Hana Abubashinnin was killed, along with at least 54 other Palestinians in Gaza yesterday.

Loubani makes regular medical missions to Gaza, and was trying to provide medical treatment to Palestinian protesters injured by Israeli snipers. Monday was the bloodiest day yet of a weeks-long protest in Gaza where Palestinians seek to call international attention to the “Nakba”: the dispossession and loss suffered by Palestinians as a result of the UN Partition Plan of 1947. The Trudeau government’s response was muted, with foreign affairs minister Chrystia Freeland suggesting the Liberals are content to see Israel on its bloody response to what is a passionate, but peaceful protest. NDP Leader Jagmeet Singh asserted, “the use of live ammunition against protesters and resulting deaths are clear violations of international law and human rights.” He also called for an independent investigation of the Palestinian deaths.

Sohan Mann (1934-2017)

The Otto René Castillo Club invites you to join us to celebrate our 97th Anniversary.

Centrefor Socialism Education 706 Clark Drive, Vancouver BC

Saturday, May 26, 2018, at 6:00 pm

We will have a speaker, poems, music, food and refreshments.

Entrance by donation

Organized by Otto René Castillo Club

97th Anniversary of the Communist Party of Canada

1921

2018

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WHAT’S LEFT

No War On Iran...

(continued from p. 7)

Our country and the Persian Gulf region is once again facing a very serious and urgent threat of catastrophic proportions, the likes of which will have dire consequences for Iran and the entire region. Ignoring these threats and supporting the destructive and interfering policies of the US, Israel and Saudi Arabia, contrary the claims of some of the foreign-allied, anti-people, so-called opposition not only will not lead to the liberation of Iran from the claws of the current dictatorial regime but, like the imperialism-inflicted war of Iraq with Iran [1980-1988], will have very serious and far-reaching consequences for our nation, and for the popular movement for freedom, democracy, independence and social justice. In the current sensitive and critical situation, all the patriotic and peace-loving forces of Iran and the world must be mobilized to bar the war-mongering and reactionary forces in the region and Iran from once again creating another catastrophe.

The provocative remarks of the leader of Hamzeh and other figures of the Iranian regime serve only to assist the aggressive policies of the belligerent forces.

The struggle of the Iranian people to dispose of the theocratic rule and establish a national and democratic regime in Iran in order to secure freedom, democracy, independence and social justice is not achievable through the destructive military intervention of such reactionary forces as the Trump, Netanyahu, and Bin Salman administrations. In such critical times, the most important task of all the national and democratic forces is to organize and mobilize all peace-seeking forces of the nation and the world to prevent another disastrous and destructive war in our region.

Sohan Mann was a longtime member of the Communist Party of Canada. He was the organizer of the Punjab People’s Language Club of the CPC in Calgary through which he was the well known and respected face of the Party in the Punjabi community. Sohan also participated in the Congress of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) and the Communist Party of India as a member of the Central Executive Committee, Communist Party of Canada. At Sohan’s funeral Naomi Rankin, leader of the Communist Party (Alberta), leaders of the Progressive Cultural Association, activist, socialists, community leaders and friends. The Progressive Cultural Association has announced that they have decided to make this event an annual commemoration of the memory of Sohan Mann.

Sohan Mann’s memory lives on in the work done by the organizations he supported in Canada and internationally.}

PM Trudeau: Condemn fascist violence in Ukraine against Petro Simonenko and the CPU
By John Wojcik, People’s World

In an attempt to thwart pro-worker demonstrations planned for May Day in Ukraine, the current government’s “security services” broke into Communist Party buildings in that country on April 24, according to press releases sent out of the country by the party. The party stated that the government security forces acted on information provided by Svoboda (Freedom).

Svoboda, which is connected to the Social Nationalist Party of the Ukraine, a well-known pro-war party, claimed the communists were harbouring illegal activities including passing out post cards in celebration of May 9, 1945 Allied victory over fascism and planning illegal pro-worker demonstrations on May Day next week.

While these activities have indeed been deemed illegal by the Ukrainian government the use of fascists symbols and flags, fascist marches and the construction of memorials honouring Nazis are all entirely legal now in that country.

The current government in Kiev came to power in a coup that ousted Viktor Yanukovych, the democratically elected president of the country and then slaughtered thousands of ethnic Russians who resisted the new fascist government.

According to the communists, the government has declared as illegal leaflets seized that read: “Long live May 1 - the day of solidarity with working people.”

Incredibly, Ukraine is now one of the few countries in the world where the celebration of May Day has been banned. It is currently celebrated in at least 142 countries, the Ukrainian Communist Party notes in its statement on the raid.

Other leaflets seized read, “We demand Peace, Jobs, and Salaried!” The government said the leaflets were seized because they contain “pseudo-liberal” slogans.

In the time span of only a few months in 2013 there were at least ten mysterious deaths of opposition figures, with the government claiming they were all suicides. One of those killed was Oleg Kalishnikov, a leader of the opposition Party of Regions, who was shot in his own home after he had been campaigning for the right of Ukrainians to celebrate the allied victory in World War II.

His death and the killing of numerous opposition journalists have been largely ignored in the western media.

Those included the murder of Ukrainian journalist Oles Buzna, a critic of the Kiev fascists, who had protested censorship that the Ukraine has imposed on news outlets that don’t carry forward the government’s position on issues.

Also murdered was the dissident journalist Serhiy Sakholdok. There were reports after his death that his assailants had been found but later the government changed its story and said they had not been found.

The US State Department, both during the Obama years and now under Trump, has pushed the narrative that the Ukrainian government has been initiating democratic reforms. While there is little evidence of any such reforms the government has been busy, however, slashing pensions for seniors, hiking fuel prices and implementing International Monetary Fund demands for austerity in exchange for that fund having bailed up Ukrainian banks.

Naziism has a long history in Western Ukraine since World War II, particularly in cities such as Lviv which boasts a well-kept cemetery to veterans of the Ukrainian chapter of the Nazi SS.

The “mass” protests against the current government’s episodic neo-Nazi violence, Yanukovych, included brigades of neo-Nazi militias based into Kiev. After the coup, Artyr Paribij, a leader in Svoboda who was a fascist commander of the so-called “defence forces” of the demonstrators in Kiev, was elevated to the post of national security director. He led the government expeditions into eastern Ukraine to fight the ethnic Russians resisting the coup. Thousands of the pro-fascist fighters marched into ethnic Russian villages in eastern Ukraine under banners bearing swastikas and other fascist symbols.

The generally right-wing London Telegraph departed from the type of reporting at that time generally seen in the US when its correspondent Tom Phillips, wrote in an article: “Kiev’s use of voluntary paramilitaries to stamp out Russian activists and Luhansh ‘peoples republics’ should send a shiver down Europe’s spine.” The VPC men use the neo-Nazi Wolfsangel (Wolf’s Hook) symbol on their banner and members of the battalion are openly white supremacists, or anti-Semitism.

In interviews with the Telegraph, fighters denied the Holocaust, expressed admiration for Adolf Hitler and said that they were in fact Nazis.

Vancouver Peace Council formed to promote stronger anti-war actions

PV Vacouver Bureau

As the US administration and its allies in Canada and other NATO members escalate their agenda of militarism and threats against a wide range of countries, a group of Vancouver-area peace activists met on May 1 to form the city’s newest anti-war group.

The Vancouver Peace Council will be the local chapter of the newly revitalized Canadian Peace Congress, founded in 1949 during the early days of the Cold War. The formation of the Vancouver Peace Council follows a decline in anti-war activity in this city in recent years, in contrast to earlier periods such as the anti-Vietnam War movements of the 1960s, the massive End the Arms Race demonstrations of the 1980s, and the huge protests during 2002-2003 against the US-led invasion of Iraq. During the past fifteen years, most of the major anti-war activities in the city were organized by the StopWar coalition, which recently disbanded.

As the call to the VPC founding meeting pointed out, “Our city has a proud history of opposition to war and militarism, and we need an activist organization which can mobilize people against the ongoing military aggressions of the US and its allies in the NATO imperialist alliance, in which Canada plays a key role.”

The group which chose to form the VPC includes outspoken critics of the US attacks against Syria who organized the April 15 rally at the Art Gallery against the latest US-UK-France bombing. VPC activists have been involved in campaigns against the US sanctions and threats aimed at countries such as Iran, the DPRK, and efforts to build solidarity with the peoples of Palestine, Venezuela and other targets of imperialist and Zionist attacks.

Fascist moves in Ukraine


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