ON TRACK FOR TAKEOVER!

Bombardier: page 6

IRAN

HOW TO STOP THE DRIVE TO WAR?

NUCLEAR TERROR

74 years after their bombing, Hiroshima and Nagasaki remain a chilling reminder of the realities of US foreign policy and the need for peace.

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HONG KONG

How are the anti-government protests connected to the US/NATO destabilization campaign?

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MANITOBA ELECTION

The Communist Party has 5 candidates in the Sept 10 provincial election, campaigning for a People’s Agenda.

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EYEWITNESS IN KOREA

Bennett Guillaume shares his observations about the DPRK’s ambitious project.

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HIROSHIMA

WILLIAM BLUM

Does winning World War II and the Cold War mean ever having to say you’re sorry? Is there any reason for the US to apologize to Japan for atomizing Hiroshima and Nagasaki?

Defenders of the US action counter that the bomb actually saved lives: it ended the war sooner and obviated the need for a land invasion. Estimates of the hypothetical saved-body count, however, which range from 20,000 to 1.2 million, owe more to political agendas than to objective projections.

But defining the issue as a choice between the A-bomb and a land invasion is an irrelevant and wholly false dichotomy. By 1945, Japan’s entire military and industrial machine was grinding to a halt as the resources needed to wage war were all but eradicated. The navy and air force had been destroyed ship by ship, plane by plane, with no possibility of replacement. When, in the spring of 1945, the island nation’s lifeline to oil was severed, the war was over except for the fighting. By June, Gen. Curtis LeMay, in charge of the air attacks, was complaining that after months of targeting, there was nothing left of Japanese cities for his bombers but “garbage can targets.” By July, US planes could fly over Japan without resistance and bomb as much and as long as they pleased. Japan could no longer defend itself.

Rejected overtures

After the war, the world learned what US leaders had known by early 1945: Japan was militarily defeated long before Hiroshima; it had been trying for months, if not for years, to surrender; and the US had consistently rebuffed these overtures. A diplomatic approach, interdicted and decoded by the US, dispelled any possibility of surrender, and none was seriously considered, to achieve surrender before the use of the bomb. In his later memoirs, Stimson admitted that no effort was made, and none was seriously considered, to achieve surrender before the use of the bomb.

And that effort could have been minimal. In July, before the leaders of the US, Great Britain, and the Soviet Union met at Potsdam, the Japanese government sent several radio messages to its ambassador, Mutsuji Sano, in Moscow, asking him to request from the US a stop to the war and a opportunity to negotiate. “His Majesty the Emperor still sat on the Chrysanthemum throne,” his radio message read, “it was not militarily necessary. It was this last chilling fact that doubled the great impression on the Russians.”

Killing Nagasaki

Seymour Hersh reports that Nagasaki Mayor Jiro Segawa released his cargo on Hiroshima on August 6, 1945. A-Bombing. It was this last chilling fact that doubled the great impression on the Russians.

Referred to the immediate aftermath of Nagasaki, Stimson wrote: “The psychological effect of Stalin [of the bomb] was twofold,” noted historian Charles L. Mee, Jr. “The Americans had not only used a dreadnought device; they had used it when, as Stalin knew, it was not militarily necessary. It was this last chilling fact that doubled the great impact of the bomb on Hiroshima. And this impact was as much a political change in the anti-communist world as it was on the Soviet Union. 1946, the US promised to maintain the country’s position as a major power in the post-war world. The US decision to drop the bomb was based on neither the pursuit of the earliest possible peace nor it being the only way to avoid a land invasion, we must look elsewhere for the explanation. It has been asserted that dropping the atom bombs would make the Soviet response to the US decision unfeasible and would cut off the only way to the red heart of the USSR. For three-quarters of a century, the Cold War has been the communist factor. World War II and a battlerfield alliance with the USSR did not bring about an ideological change in the anti-communists who owned and ran America. It merely provided a partial believer in a struggle that had begun with the US invasion of Russia in 1918.

It is hardly surprising then, that 25 years later, as the Soviets were sustaining the highest ca-

sualties of any nation in World War II, the US systematically kept them in the dark about the A-bomb project while sharing information with the British. According to Manhattan Project scientist Leo Szillard, Secretary of State Byrnes had said that the bomb’s biggest benefit was not its effect on Japan but its power to make Russia more manageable—able to Europe.

Bomb-slinging diplomats

Churchill, who had known about the project, seeing no use for man, applauded and understood its use. Churchill was in a hurry to get to the end of the Second World War, and bomb as much and as long as the US had the power to make Russia more manageable.

We now had something in our hands which would redress the balance with the Russians.

[This article appeared in the August 1995 issue of People’s Voice, marking the 50th anniversary of the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. It is based on a longer article from CovAction (Quarterly).]
The Central Executive Committee of the Communist Party of Canada has issued a statement condemning the ongoing foreign military buildup and escalating drive to war against Iran. The party calls on the Canadian government to take immediate action to de-escalate the threat, prevent an all-out, regional war that could involve nuclear weapons. This action includes the immediate withdrawal of all US and NATO forces from the region, and normalizing Canada’s diplomatic relations with Iran.

The CPC writes that the current US policy is a direct result of United States’ provocations, which are no longer based on a “cold war” or “hot war” basis. The statement traces this process back to 2018, when the United States’ unilateral withdrawal, last May, from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) and decision to reimpose sanctions on Iran. Those sanctions were described by Donald Trump as “the most biting sanctions ever imposed” and were followed by a further round in November 2018. The JCPOA was a clear deal that was signed in 2015 by Iran and all UN Security Council countries. The later all indicated their opposition to US withdrawal from the deal.

This year, Trump continued to escalate tensions by unilaterally reimposing sanctions that with Iran and declared in April that Iran’s “Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) is a terrorist organization and announcing that all countries importing Iranian oil will also be subject to US penalties. The US has also internationalized the US sanctions, by forcing foreign oil ex- ports to zero.”

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Every August, commemorations of the nuclear bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki are an important reminder of the dangers of nuclear weapons and the importance of ongoing disarmament efforts. People in Canada generally don’t think of this as a nuclear weapons issue — the deployment of nuclear tipped cruise missiles in Canada was ended in 1972, and the nuclear-armed CF-18 fighter jet was decommissioned earlier this year. More often than not, people here consider nuclear disarmament “an international issue.” In fact, though, Canada is heavily involved with nuclear weapons underprotection and proliferation membership in military alliances like NORAD and, especially, NATO compel the government of this country to participate in funding, maintaining and, ultimately, operating nuclear arsenals. That the alliance structures obscure this reality is one of the many reasons for Canada to immediately and unilaterally withdraw.

More concerning, the Canadian government has also been taking steps to bring nuclear weapons back to the Canadian military itself. The vehicle for this is the F-35 fighter jet. In addition to providing ongoing development funding, both Conservative and Liberal governments have aggressively marketed the F-35 to Canadian corporations. While Trudeau Liberals initially shelved the Harper-era deal to purchase 65 of the fighters, they have carefully manipulated the subsequent procurement review to position the F-35 as the only viable option. The political debates typically include plenty of information about costs, operational needs, reliability, and the economic benefits of procurement contracts. But the big piece of news that never seems to make it into the mainstream media is that the F-35 is specifically designed to carry nuclear weapons. And, because of that, a government officially at peace with that fact is anything by today’s standards, meaning Hiroshima and Nagasaki means anything, surely it is that the very same country is the F-35, the Canadian military will become part of multi-national deliveries for nuclear weapons.

Canada is a nuclear weapons country, and nuclear disarmament requires us to see it a country that is anything by today’s standards, meaning Hiroshima and Nagasaki means anything, surely it is that the very same country is the F-35, the Canadian military will become part of multi-national deliveries for nuclear weapons. This is precisely why the current Liberal government, led by Justin Trudeau, needs to immediately and unilaterally withdraw from the F-35 procurement contract and any associated nuclear weapons. Further, the Liberal government needs to immediately and unilaterally withdraw from any nuclear weapons procurement, development or deployment with any other country. Canada’s participation in nuclear weapons must end because doing otherwise is a violation of Canada’s moral and legal obligations under international law.

BELGIUM HAS SQUEEZED 5G IN BRUSSELS DUE TO HEALTH CONCERNS

Belgium has squeezed 5G in Brussels due to health concerns. Similar action has taken place in Italy. The Russian Ministry of Defence refuses to transfer spectrum frequencies for 5G use. US Democratic Senator Richard Blumenthal has blasted the FCC and the Food and Drug Administration for failing to conduct any research into the safety of 5G, instead engaging in bureaucratic finger-pointing and deferring to industry. The Santa Fe Alliance for Public Health and Safety filed a lawsuit to stop 5G in US District Court in New Mexico, asking that the court declare that city, state and federal laws which deprive citizens of the right to protect themselves from harm and deprive injured persons of any remedy for their injuries, are unconstitutional and void.

In BC, retired Canadian Armed Forces captain Jenny Flynn, who.springframework(0,0),(999,999)
The recent violent protests in Hong Kong have focussed on the alleged unfairness of a proposed law permitting the extradition of criminal suspects for crimes committed elsewhere on the Chinese mainland. The protest organizers claim that the extradition agreement would be used to target “activists” in Hong Kong opposing Chinese sovereignty over Hong Kong. But the proposed extradition law is similar to that existing between provinces in Canada, the United States and most other countries.

The extradition issue is but a pretext for a much darker political objective – to destabilize the People’s Republic of China and to negate Chinese sovereignty. In 1997, Britain was forced to end its colonial rule of Hong Kong where democracy was non-existent. The re-uniting of this city with the rest of the country was a victory for Chinese sovereignty and territorial integrity, as well as a blow to colonialism everywhere. But British and U.S. imperialist circles hoped they could turn this setback into a strategic asset by using Hong Kong as a “Trojan horse” – a base from which to undermine the economic and political foundations of socialism in China.

Almost at once, millions of dollars came to be funneled to various Hong Kong-based NGOs, trade unions, student groups, academic think tanks and other “civil society” organizations, many of which have been involved in organizing and supporting the current wave of protests. Much of this funding comes directly from the British and U.S. governments and to a lesser extent, Canada and other NATO countries. Other “donations” have been channeled through the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), Freedom House and some other unofficial extensions of the leading imperialist powers. This is the historical and political context within which the current round of protests must be understood.

Such is the real “hidden hand” behind the events which have shaken Hong Kong in recent weeks. The intention was to provoke the Hong Kong and Chinese authorities into responding forcefully, especially after the criminal attack on, and trashing of the Hong Kong legislature and the posting of British and colonial flags.

Remarkably, the local police and authorities have shown incredible restraint. What would be the reaction of Canadian authorities to a similar attack on Parliament Hill?

The Hong Kong protests are not isolated events. Rather, they are part-and-parcel of a wider strategy to destabilize China, to foment unrest and undermine the political rule of the Chinese Communist Party. The US/NATO axis seeks to weaken and discredit China’s prestige and influence internationally, to stunt its economic advance, and safeguard continued Western imperialist hegemony of the entire world.

This anti-China strategy includes the US/NATO military build-up in East Asia, Trump’s “ tariff war”, and the intensifying propaganda campaign against China, all of which are creating a dangerous threat to world peace. The Canadian Peace Congress is also alarmed by the recent actions of the Canadian government, beginning with the arrest and impending extradition of Huawei Executive Meng Wanzhou, who have contributed to the serious deterioration in Canada-China bilateral relations.

The Canadian Peace Congress urges all Canadans to consider carefully the subtext of the Hong Kong developments, and not be misled by mainstream media coverage into supporting western-inspired violence in Hong Kong and the broader campaign of anti-China manoeuvres and provocations. Instead, we call on Canada and its US/NATO allies to end blatant interference in the internal, sovereign affairs of the People’s Republic of China, which is an explicit violation of international law and the UN Charter.

The Venezuelan President concluded his letter by declaring that the Bolivarian Republic will continue to stand victorious in the face of these false accusations. “Know that Venezuela will continue standing victoriously that no false report; nor attack regardless of its coarseness, will tamper with our firm determination of continuing to be a free and sovereign people committed to the defense of its legitimate rights.”
Bombardier’s recent announcement that it will cut 550 jobs at its Thunder Bay Rail Transportation facility has sparked outrage within labour, community and political circles. It has reignited the debate around public take-over of industries that are key to the economy and society.

Will labour join increased calls for public takeover?

Bombardier is the 8th largest employer in Thunder Bay

-5.5% Drop in local employment rate, 2018-2019

1800 Estimate of spin off jobs from 550 manufacturing positions

$39,400 Average employment income in Thunder Bay in 2015 - $8000 less than provincial average

+443% Increase in 1st quarter profit compared to 2018, to $239 million in 8 months

$3.5 billion Total quarterly revenues, January-March 2019

+$8.75 billion Expected 2019 sales revenue for Bombardier Transportation

+$283 million Increase in Transportation’s contract assets for 1st quarter 2019

The Thunder Bay job cuts — half the plant’s workforce — will be devastating to the Northern Ontario city, where Bombardier is the 8th largest employer. The employment rate is already 5.5% lower than the Ontario average, at around 60%. The combined effect of losing hundreds of Bombardier jobs plus hundreds more spinoffs will drive that figure even lower, people give up hope of finding work and simply leave the workforce. In 2009, Thunder Bay mayor Lynn Peterson estimated that if Bombardier created 250 new jobs from Toronto transit orders, the spin off effect would create in the area of 800 additional jobs. Using this same formula, losing 550 jobs at Bombardier will jeopardize 1760 spinoffs in Thunder Bay.

The average employment income in Thunder Bay is already $8000 lower than the provincial average, a figure that will tumble dramatically with the loss of good manufacturing jobs.

During the previous three years, Bombardier announced 13,000 job cuts worldwide, including 3000 in Quebec and Ontario in November 2018. Over that same period, the corporation received at least $4 billion in public bailouts from the federal, Ontario and Quebec governments.

The spectacle of Bombardier receiving billions while cutting thousands of jobs and making monster profits has been exasperating for even bourgeois economic analysts. The company has been described as being in the subsidy business, and “the political equivalent of a protection racket.” Time and time again, Bombardier executives have begged for public funds, all the while paying themselves millions in bonuses.

The situation is like an endless cruel treadmill, on which workers and communities are chained by choking corporate fat cats who fleece them day after day. It’s hard to witness this and not conclude that private corporations like Bombardier have proven beyond a doubt that they cannot be relied upon to provide good jobs, wages and benefits for working class people in Canada.

US protectionism to blame?

Perhaps surprised by the breadth and speed of the outbreak of public anger, Bombardier has offered up an explanation for its actions. The company claims that the “Trump administration’s “Buy America Act” has put its contracts with US cities at risk, so it must move production to the US in order to secure its orders there. This explanation has been parroted by the media, including in business circles, as Bombardier already has 16 US sites including six in Transportation. Furthermore, there is no evidence that Bombardier has missed out on any manufacturing contract in the US because of Buy America.

What is more likely is that Bombardier is citing Buy America as a convenient pretext to move more of its production to lower wage and lower regulation jurisdictions, including union-right-to-work states in the US. They have some recent experience with this. In 2017, Bombardier negotiated a contract with Airbus to build C-Series jets in Alabama. Thousands of new jobs in Canada were killed in the process, but Bombardier hit the jackpot — the following year, its product orders increased by over 44%, and earnings jumped by a whopping 25%.

Holding workers hostage

Bombardier has carefully cultivated its public image as a struggling Canadian firm that needs constant — and colossal — public bailouts in order to stay in operation. In the shadow of this image, parties and governments at different levels have been busy finger pointing and trading blame in a cynical spin game. Ottawa accuses Ontario of making “empty promises” of contracts, Ontario faults Ottawa for not providing promised funding, and on and on.

Unfortunately, the labour movement has also been drawn into this narrative. Unlike, the union representing workers at Bombardier, has called for increased government investment in transit. The Thunder Bay unions and government at different levels have been busy finger pointing and trading blame in a cynical spin game. Ottawa accuses Ontario of making “empty promises” of contracts, Ontario faults Ottawa for not providing promised funding, and on and on.

Without question, there is a link between public transit, jobs and environmental justice. The key element, though, is the degree to which governments are prepared to intervene in the economy in order to forge this link. In response to Bombardier’s latest job cut announcement, there has been an increase in calls for the company to be placed under public ownership and democratic control, in order to secure sound economic, social and environmental stewardship in the transportation industry.

Intervention on behalf of workers and environment

One of the key organizations raising this demand is the Communist Party of Canada, who call for the public takeover and operation of Bombardier is part of a broader set of immediate demands for faster, safer, cheaper, more efficient and more socially just public transit.

Faced with such an adversary, who is holding the working class hostage? Unfortunately, the labour movement has also been drawn into this narrative. Unlike, the union representing workers at Bombardier, has called for increased government investment in transit. The Thunder Bay unions and government at different levels have been busy finger pointing and trading blame in a cynical spin game. Ottawa accuses Ontario of making “empty promises” of contracts, Ontario faults Ottawa for not providing promised funding, and on and on.

The Communist Party’s pro-posed action plan includes: a full employment and strategy public inter-vention in the economy; plant closure legislation and public takeover of corporations that are moving their operations to lower wage jurisdictions; free ur-ban public transit in all major cities; single subway and rapid inter-urban rail transit as an al-ternative to highway and airline use; and a domestic vehicle in-
dustry to build affordable, and fuel-efficient electric cars and light industrial vehicles.

A key first step to achieving these immediate aims is to fight for and win the public takeover of huge transportation corpora-
tions such as Bombardier.

The key question, though, is whether the labour movement will take up the call and engage this fight on behalf of the work-

ing class. Certainly, workers and their communities cannot afford afforded.
COMMUNISTS DEMAND PEOPLE’S AGENDA FOR MANITOBA

Create Jobs and Raise Wages and Living Standards
• Raise the minimum wage to $20
•立法a 32 hour work week with 40 hours pay
• Ban overtime and end part-time, contract, and precarious work with full employment policies
• Introduce a guaranteed livable annual income
• Fight to raise (CPP/OAS) pensions, and full pensions at age 60
• Green retrofit of schools, hospitals and public rent and food infrastructure
• Expand public services and reverse privatization
• Expand value added manufacturing and secondary industry
• Build agricultural implement appliance industries
• Enact plant closure legislation with teeth
• Scrap Free Trade deals that close plants and bankrupt farmers
• Strenthen labour legislation on health and safety: enact a bill a worker, go to jail laws
• Fight to make EI universally accessible, at 90% of previous earnings, for the full duration of unemployment
• Guarantee the right to strike, organize and picket

Protect the Family Farm
• Carb the power of agri-business and protect and expand supply management in agriculture
• Cap the costs of farm inputs, including machinery, seed and fuel costs
• Restore the Canadian Wheat Board and single-desk grain sales, restore the Crown rate, reduce rail freight rates, and protect and expand marketing boards
• Raise farm incomes and make bank foreclosures illegal
• Legislate stronger labour and minimum wage laws for farm workers
• Ban GMO and ‘terminator’ seeds, shift to environmentally sustainable methods of food production
• Set price controls on food staples for Northern and Inuit communities
• Increase food safety inspections and ensure Canada’s food sovereignty

Cut Deep into Carbon Emissions
• Sharply reduce fossil fuel use and carbon emissions now, and eliminate altogether by 2050
• Legislate to compel corporate compliance, including jail terms and public take-over
• Develop renewable energy sources; solar, wind, thermal, hydro-electric, etc. to a publicly owned and democratically controlled energy sector, and an east-west power grid
• Fight to close tarsands and guarantee workers’ jobs in renewable energy & value added manufacturing
• Cancel all pipeline projects based on expansion of tarsands extraction, and end fracking

Make Housing a Right, Not a Privilege
• Build 25,000 units of affordable social housing for all and for the aging
• Roll back rents and legislate real rent control
• Create and expand municipal land banks
• Require landlords to provide heat and air conditioning
• Recognize the rights of tenants to organize
• No eviction or utility cut-off due to strikes or layoffs

No Privatization: Expand Public Services and Social Programs
• Reverse Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) that are a windfall for banks and developers, a disaster for the public
• Resolve provincial funding and transfers for public services and social programs cut by previous governments; reverse provincial download of services and funding
• Fund services for youth, including amateur sports, recreation and culture
• Expand municipal transit systems, and make public transit free and accessible
• Create a Crown corporation to provide accessible, affordable transit & promote public transit between rural communities and across the province
• Restore MTS as a Crown corporation under public democratic control, with low-cost service to residential users. Expand fibre optic network across the province, and establish a 5G network for Manitoba
• Keep Mauritahloa Hydro public, and keep rates low
• Put police under civilian control, including the power to look into police assaults, murders, and other wrong-doings
• Hands Off AUTOPAC – No Privatization!

A New Financial Deal for Cities
• Adequately fund municipalities with statutory transfer payments, or give them wealth-taxing powers to tax corporations and the wealthy
• Return 50% of road-user and gas taxes to municipalities
• Fight to recognize municipalities and school boards in the Constitution

Defend and Expand Medicare
• Enforce the Canada Health Act and stop privatization of healthcare NOW
• Stop hospital closures. Build the regional hospital in Fortage La Prairie now
• Restore and expand federal/provincial funding for hospitals and healthcare
• Reverse the privatization of Medivac
• Recognize that the opiate and amphetamine crisis is a health issue: focus on treatment and prevention of deaths
• Fight to expand Medicare to include pharmacare, dental and vision care, long-term care, and mental health care

Enact Universal, Quality, Public Childcare
• Enact a provincial system of universally accessible, affordable, quality public childcare
• Require ECE certification for all childcare workers and raise childcare workers wages now

Make Education Free and Universally Accessible
• Fund public and post-secondary education
• Eliminate tuition fees for students in publicly funded colleges and universities
• Eliminate corporate intrusions into courses and curricula
• Expand liberal arts, labour, Indigenous, and women’s and gender studies
• Ban hate speech & protect free speech on campus
• Ban military recruitment on all campuses
• Ban military recruitment on all campuses

Recognize the Right to National Self-Determination
• Fight for a new, equal and voluntary partnership in a new Constitution, based on the right of Quebec, Indigenous Nations, Acadians and English-speaking Canada to self-determination, up to and including the right to secession
• Early and just settlement of Indigenous land claims
• Immediate action to implement the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls
• Stop the seizure of Indigenous children into ‘care’ and enable Indigenous Nations to independently administer Indigenous child and family services.
• Immediate action and funding to improve living conditions, infrastructure, housing, education, healthcare, social services, and other urgent needs, including protection of language and culture of Indigenous Peoples on and off reserve
• Guarantee the rights of Franco-Manitobans and Indigenous Peoples to public and post-secondary education and to government services in French and Indigenous languages, wherever numbers warrant
• Stop the construction or use of pipelines through Manitoba carrying bitumen or other substances dangerous to the environment and to Indigenous Peoples

Women’s Rights and Gender Equality
• Enact equal pay for work of equal value across the public and private sector
• Legislate reproductive choice, and universal access to abortion across the province in free-standing clinics
• Build a provincial system of universally accessible, affordable, quality public childcare
• Stop the attacks on the equality rights of 2SLGBTQI+ and Trans persons
• Fight racism and discrimination

Tax the Corporations and the Rich
• Restore a progressive tax system based on ability to pay
• Double the corporate tax rate and raise taxes on the wealthy
• Collect unpaid and deferred corporate taxes and close tax loopholes
• Eliminate taxes on incomes under $40,000
• Introduce a wealth and inheritance tax on estates over $1 million
• Enact capital controls to prevent capital flight
• Axe the provincial sales tax and the HST
• Take education off the property tax and cut property taxes by 50%

Cut Military Spending
• Cut military spending and convert to civilian spending on jobs, wages, pensions, social programs, healthcare, childcare, and education
• Get out of NATO and NORAD – Fight for a foreign policy of peace and disarmament

Make Every Vote Count!
• Enact mixed member proportional representation to make every vote count
SOUTH KOREA: strikes for minimum wage hikes

The Korean Confederation of Trade Unions, one of the south’s two major left-leaning umbrella bodies, stage multiple strikes on July 18 to protest key labour policies of the Moon Jae-in administration. Among the policies labour groups have condemned, at the centre of growing discontent, is this year’s minimum hourly wage which will fall short of reaching 10,000 won ($8.80).

Some 50,000 members of the KCTU joined demonstrations held nationwide, of which about 5,000 called in the front of the National Assembly in Seoul, as the parliamentary group of labour parties has convened, aiming to “fundamental problems” in precariousness. Automation has “hyper flexibilization” and Trade Unions pulled out of the involving the union, which leads to the demolished Industrial Relations Code.

The company has implemented framework of the 20th-century Moon government. during five days of mediation. The strike affected over a third of the movement, the core support after failure to reach an agreement added. The Minimum Wage Commission recently finalized the minimum wage for 2020 at $1,390 won per hour, up 2.4% percent, but lower than inflation.

Next year’s minimum hourly wage will be raised by 100 won, following objections from the labour movement, in the attempt to reform the base of the Moon government. In response, both the KCTU and the National Assembly of Trade Unions pulled out of the negotiations, accusing the government of “fundamental prob-lems” in the decision-making process.

CHILE: Walmart workers push back

Walmart Chile said it resumed normal operations on July 16 after reaching an agreement with a union of 17,000 workers who walked off their jobs on July 11, after failure to reach an agreement during five days of mediation. The company has implemented increased automation without involving the union, which leads to “hyper flexibilization” and precariousness. Automation has forced workers to multitask in their daily jobs, for example, cashiers now have to stock shelves or serve as security guards.

Walmart Chile is undergoing a “digital transformation”, which includes replacing automatic cash registers, which will be under constant surveillance in the coming months. The workers said they have received training on these replaced employees into other positions within the same super- market.

According to the union, the expansion of multifunctionality will compromise workers’ rights, whose workload has significantly increased without any compensation. Walmart has also put in place a system of unprotected dismissals which will result in a reduction of rights for at least 10,000 workers.

Granada TV’s World In Action, a cutting-edge investigative team, found that the Service Security Fund found “no evidence of a conspiracy” and declared that “we are no longer interested in any interest from the government. ‘They’re of Great Britain had diminished.’

“Communists are less influential than Trotskyists, who however are too damned to be allowed in that joint plan,” the file claims. M1S was instructed to maintain an “attitude of relaxed vigilance, and to report again in, say, two years’ time.”

The 1969 paper was presented to Richard ‘Dick’ Thistlethwaite, an M1S officer who had previously served in Palestine, Singapore and Washington, monitoring black US civil rights activists Paul Robeson in the latter two countries.

US: Boost to Federal minimum wage

The US House of Representa- tives has passed legislation to gradually raise the federal min- imum wage to $15 an hour, fol- lowing through on a key Dem- ocrats’ election pledge and ending a six-month struggle within the caucus. Passed by an 87-35 party lines, the vote marked a crucial test for Demo- cratic leaders as lawmakers bat- tled behind the scenes to shape the proposal. It also delivers a win for a party that has long called for a “living wage” and is expected to turn its legis- lative agenda during the upcoming summer.

The move was resisted by dozens of more conservative Democrats, including many in vulnerable seats, who feared a backlash from businesses back home for agreeing to more than double the hourly minimum wage, which has been set at $7.25 since 2009.

Democratic leaders secured support from 218 votes by agree- ing to phase in the wage increase over five years. Progressives liked the idea early in the negotiations, but ac- cepted a deal that would allow spending by unions, with big influence, to help businesses in the industries hit by the new wage.

Leaders of several central trade unions addressed the seminar, such as Deepak Sharma of the Indian National Trade Union Congress (INTUC), Swadesh Dev Roye of the Centre for Indian Trade Unions (CITU) and Vidya Sagar Giri of the All India Trade Union Congress (AITUC).

Goasals said talking about a Indian national minimum wage was pointless, since this and other rights would not be enforceable in a country where courts do not see the entire system of labour protection would be rejected, self-certification. “The company owners would be able to say they have given these workers and the workers, the ICW, the ICW, which was a hundred workers. But there will be no one found out the people. But there will be no one to enforce any law,” he added.

Along the 44 Labour Acts on the chopping block are the Working Journalists & Other Newspaper Employees (Conditions of Service & Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 1955 and The Working Journalists (Fixation of Wages) Act, 1958, which are the ‘bedrock of the newspaper industry, setting basic standards, wages, working hours and various benefits like leaves, medical leaves and entitlements like earned leave, medical leave and maternity fund, maternity benefits etc.’

Vidya Sagar Giri of AITUC then highlighted the labour core ILO Conventions to which India is a signatory. The ILO’s Centenary Declaration of 2019 says that all governments are agreed that there are core conventions on which no one can be excluded such as the right to association, which will be demolished by the proposed Industrial Relations Code.

BRAZIL: Vale to compensate relatives of killed workers

Union leaders say Brazilian mining giant Vale has agreed to pay a minimum of nearly $400,000 to each close family member of workers who died in Vale’s collapse of one of its dams early this year. At least 240 people died in the Jan. 25 accident that sent a wall of mud in the city of Brumadinho streaming along everything in its path.

Vale leaders were in the mediation described a long and difficult process to even get the minority to the negotiations table. The agreement reached in mid-July also includes child and education benefits, including a $4,000 capital fund for employees who survived the breach but lost their jobs.

Vale said the agreement will result in the unfreezing of 1.6 billion reais ($424 million).

SPAIN: Ibiza hotels face room cleaner strike

Tourists visiting Ibiza, off the Mediterranean coast of Spain, could face hotels without clean rooms, towels or bedding, as room cleaners plan to go on strike. The female hotel workers - known as Kellys in Spain - say their heavy workload is akin to “slavery” and causes stress and injury.

“We are presented each day with a list and a number of rooms to clean. Are we willing accord- ing to how many cups of coffee they serve?” one said during a recent protest meeting in a park in Ibiza.

The strike will take place on two consecutive days in August, although the exact dates have yet to be set. There is also a call for hotel staff on the neighbouring Balearic islands of Mallorca, Menorca and For- menorca to join in the joint strike. The industrial action on the popular island would leave hotel rooms unclean, with beds not changed and no new towels for at least 48 hours.

Rafa Sánchez, a representa- tive of the trade union GCIT, said the female workers were being treated unfairly with no regard to their health. “According to the law, the workload should be regulated,” he said. “That is why more than ever the strike is nec- essary.”

A spokesperson for the As- sociation of Owners of Ibiza said they wanted to remind politi- cians that many workers in the tourism industry are backpackers and tour guides, and not in the public sector. “Unfortunately there would be no tourism,” she said.

One supporter added: “Sadly most of us cannot care in the least about your health and less your salary as long as they get the maximum benefits.”

BRITAIN: Spies investigated journalists

British spies investigated documentary TV series World in Action to root out “communist influence” among its staff, a declassified secret file reveals. The MI5 operation monitored under wraps for over half a century, buried in a Cabinet Office cache of “ultra-sensitive stuff that was too hot to handle at the time,” according to a top historian.

The file shows that, as early as 1964, MI5 began a secret committee on communism in the BBC and “an investigation which was to find absolutely no evidence that Independent Television programmes were either slanted towards communism or ‘open to communist influence’.”

Although MI5’s vetting of BBC staff is notorious, the spy agency’s surveillance of independent television is less well-known. By 1969 MI5 was particularly concerned about the breach but lost their jobs. Yale says the agreement will result in the unfreezing of 1.6 billion reais ($424 million).
In April a Japanese newspaper revealed a document purportedly detailing the Dem- ocratic People’s Republic of Korea’s economic strategy for the 2016– 2020 period.
The writer’s authors stressed the need to step-up technological de- velopment, diversify the country’s trade, chiefly toward Russia, and proceed with the “full introduction of a new 2016-2014 management method.”

The “new management meth- od” could they be referring to? Most western reports on DPRK econom- ical affairs tend to speculate on Kim Jong Un’s desire to emulate Chi- nese reform and development whilst hesitating to suggest that anything tangible is yet in place. They usually allude to the presence of private markets throughout the country, explaining these as a result of the collapse or near-collapse of the socialist country’s public food distribution system during the “Ar- dauus Marth” (severe shortages and famine during the 1990s). But these markets, while used, are fre- quently said to be merely tolerated by the government, occupants of a grey legal zone. As I learned during a June visit to Pyongyang, the government’s accompanying to this and related questions can be difficult. Nobody seems to know if market reforms, and one is told that things are much better in Kaesong, which to this author of Ward’s word, Think China and Yugoslavia prior to its dissolution.

The central People’s Economic Plan doesn’t vanish, but becomes more “flexible,” Ward says. Think China and Yugoslavia prior to its dissolution.

I was surprised to note that what is emerging in the DPRK is an econo- my led by large collective co-operatives taking advantage of new rules to establish diverse enterprises, such as an airline, taxis and soft-drinks under one roof, or hotels, ski re- sorts, and mineral water/beer operations under another.

Last year, Supreme Leader Kim Jong Un told Koreans that the dual policy of concentrating on eco- nomic development and securing a nuclear deterrent had run its course, in the sense that the latter had been achieved. The Workers’ Party and its dynamic young leader have henceforth become irrevo- cably committed to raising living standards. That is the measure by which they will be judged, barring some dramatic event.

In this context we can under- stand why the Vietnamese term from Pyongyang to reach an acceptable accord with the United States. Re- acting to China, the “arbitrary activities” of the DPRK in their opinion is “cruel and open up is crippled by sanc- tions.”

DPRK policy makers never for- get the ultimate goal: re-unification of the peninsula under Pyong- yang’s leadership. “One country/ two systems” is the immediate model for this objective; socialism need not be a causality of reunifica- tion, but such an outcome is con- ceivable only with an economically dynamic North. Were Kim Jong Un to accomplish this project in his lifetime, he truly would be his grandfather’s boy.

Food security a major challenge
Crossing the Yalu River (Amnok in Korean) from the Chinese city of Dandong into the DPRK, and pro- ceeding south of Sinuiju, one sees for hours of countryside. The view is of a great, green agricultural plain with significant rises in the land- scape near Sinuiju. The apparent striking is the apparent devotion of every square inch to raising food. Londoners are aware the flooded fields of rice, crowded by raised livestock, who strip the crops and kids back from school.

As our drivers crossed the DPRK – from Pyongyang to Nampho, to Kargong, back to Sinuiju, to Won- san, to the Chinese border – the topographical changes are often dramatic, but the constant is rice, maize, potatoes, fruit trees. Much of Korea north of the 38th is an effort to feed over 25 million people.

It will be difficult to accounts for only about 13 per cent of this country’s surface. That’s the first challenge, then there’s the weather, note- worthy for its impacts on crop yields. Another challenge is obvious to the wind-swept northern parts, if nu- merosous zones of Pyongan seem firmly planted in the 21st centu- ry, the Korean countryside does not. Mechanization is scant and human labour abetted by cows is ubiquitous. We see a countryside in some respects unchanged through millennia, although such an obser- vation is not to disparage or mini- mize the nurseries, schools, training halls, decent housing and clinics that rural cooperatives often boast.

My attempts to learn about coupons and State shops were also difficult. One guide explained that the government distributes “tickets” to citi- zens, permitting them to acquire specific goods at very low prices. She said typical days for these dis- tributions were national holidays and festive events and proceeded to count off 15 such days in a year. Volunteers in apartments buildings play a key role in furnishing the tickets to families, she reported.

The DPRK’s host of imported supermarket bulging with food, clothing and electronic goods, I asked if the coupon system worked there. Another guide became visi- bly agitated and insisted that such a system wasn’t used in the DPRK. Later, a long-time friend and notable observer of DPRK agriculture and infrastructural aid said that it was sometimes was, but not in this su- permarket where people paid reg- ular prices in cash. I had provoked a minor incident and was briefly seized.

Navigating a sea of sanctions
Surely it isn’t too much of an edifying indulgence to say that sanctions must end. There are various reasons for backing this de- mand – above all, so that the Kore- ans cannot be bought at the expense of the poor. In short, to be masters of their own lives in work and in leisure.

PHOTO CREDITS: Bennett Guillaume

PEOPLE’S VOICE | AUGUST 1-31, 2019 | 9

Recently returned from Pyongyang, Bennett Guillaume provides first-hand observational insights into the DPRK’s ambitious project

Navigating a sea of sanctions

One of the worries the author raises is the issue of sanctions. These are imposed by the United Nations and other international organizations as punishment for the DPRK’s nuclear and missile programs.

The sanctions include a ban on arms exports, financial transactions, and travel restrictions. They are designed to cut off the DPRK’s access to the global financial system and to disrupt its ability to develop nuclear and missile technologies.

However, the sanctions have not been effective in slowing the DPRK’s development. In fact, some experts argue that the sanctions have undermined the DPRK’s economy and have led to further restrictions on the population’s access to food and basic goods.

The international community is divided on how best to address the situation. Some argue for further sanctions, while others advocate for a more flexible approach that would allow for some economic engagement.

In short, the situation in the DPRK is complex and requires careful consideration. The sanctions are a significant factor in the ongoing negotiations between the DPRK and other countries, and their impact on the population must be taken into account when making decisions about how to proceed.

Photo Credit: Bennett Guillaume

PHOTO CREDITS: Bennett Guillaume
GENDER AND WEALTH: A FEMINIST VIEWPOINT

THE SEX FACTOR
How Women Made the West Rich

VICTORIA BATEMAN

PUBLISHER: POLITY PRESS

AUTHOR: VICTORIA BATEMAN

10

Unfortunately, “The Sex Factor” pays scant attention to a related point: the fact that the right-wing, fundamentalist attack against women’s equality began to gain traction after the overthrow of socialist governments in east-central Europe and the USSR. The restoration of capitalism in those societies included a massive rollback of equality gains achieved under socialism, although this historic tragedy is largely ignored by most liberal and social-democrat- izers in the imperialist countries today. (For more on this, see Why Women Have Better Sex Under Socialism, And Other Ar- guments For Economic Independence, by Kristen Ghodsee, 2018.)

Bateeman is fiercely critical of main- stream economists, arguing (correctly) throughout her book that this line of study is utterly wrong to consider itself “gender neutral.” On the contrary, as she makes clear, by failing to put the question of women’s inequality as a top consideration, most economists actually contribute to the ongoing realities of patriarchal oppression.

The author avoids the theoretical limitations of mainstream economics by integrating her analysis with feminist theories. While it is true that Marx and Engels wrote some famous statements about women, they did not regard the analysis of women’s oppression as a separate field of inquiry. Bateman is working to change that.

Bateeman’s fundamental argument is that societies which encourage the participation of women in the public realm of economic and political life tend to expand their economies much more quickly than those which put more restrictions on the role of women by pushing them back into the domestic sphere. That point is widely accepted as true, but Bateeman goes further by examining why, even in capitalist coun- tries with expanding economies, high per- centages of women remain stuck in pov- erty and struggling against rising levels of income inequality.

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The NDP government of British Columbia has released figures showing an operating surplus of $1.5 billion during the 2018-19 fiscal year. The amount is $1.3 billion higher than projected in previous budgets, thanks largely to increased revenues from personal and corporate income taxes, even though the province has not rolled back the enormous tax breaks for the rich given by the former Liberal government. The revenue increase is mainly due to higher than expected economic growth in British Columbia.

Premier John Horgan’s government, based on a formal legislative agreement with three Green MLAs, has reversed some of the Liberal cuts to social programs, child care, education and health. As a result, the NDP remains ahead in opinion surveys.

But at the same time, the government has refused to tackle one of its most serious problems, the inability to attract more teachers to the public school system. The main reason is that teacher salaries are lower than in most other provinces, despite the higher cost of living on the west coast.

Figures from the BC Teachers Federation show that “the minimum salary for a teacher with a category 5 qualifications ranks 12th out of the 13 provinces and territories.” The weighted average of BC teacher annual salaries is in the range of $49,276 to $57,270, compared to $62,377-$72,019 in Alberta, or $52,967-$61,837 in Ontario.

The deadline has already passed to reach a new collective agreement in time for the new school year in September. There appears to be little progress in talks between the BCTF and the BC Public School Employers’ Association, which is effectively the voice of the government, judging by social media discussions, teachers across the province are increasingly upset by the government’s foot-dragging, especially given the news about its fiscal surplus.

**WHAT’S LEFT**

**VANCOUVER**

AUG 23 | US THREATS AGAINST IRAN

7 PM, with speaker Mohamed Omarivel, spokesperson for the Tudeh Party of Iran, at Mt. Pleasant Neighbourhood House, 800 E. Broadway. Sponsored by Vancouver Peace Council.

**SURREY**

AUG 25 | PEOPLE’S VOICE WALK-A-THON

Bear Creek Park, gather at picnic area by the parking lot, 140 St. & 88 Ave. Walk at 11 am, international lunch 12 noon, speakers and program 1 PM. Sponsored by Lower Fraser Club CPC.

**EDMONTON**

SUNDAYS IN AUGUST | MARXSISM 101 COURSE

AUUC Hall, 10108 97 Street, 2 PM - 3:30 PM. Contact Edmonton CPC Club for more information or to register. 780-934-7893.

**TORONTO**

AUG 6 | HIROSHIMA & NAGASAKI DAY

6:30 PM, Toronto City Hall Peace Garden. Live music, poster display, crafts, Speaker Rae Acheson. Lantern ceremony at dusk.

**TORONTO**

AUG 9-11 | GCDO BOOTH AT TASTE OF THE DANFORTH

Come help out at the GCDO Corn Booth. Clean corn with comrades old and new! 416-469-2481 for more information.

**TORONTO**

AUG 10 | PRISONER JUSTICE DAY

11:30 AM - 1:30 PM, 423 King St. East. Speakers, film screening, and conversation to commiserate over the lives lost to the prison complexes in Ontario. Sponsored by Disability Justice Network of Ontario.
Communist Party election campaign:

“Manitoba can’t afford Tory austerity”

The Pallister government has spent the last 3 years slashing wages, social programs, and public services under cover of reducing deficits. The cuts to hospitals, schools, and healthcare have driven them to the brink of collapse. Workers are suffering, and the Pallister government has no intention of stopping.

The East Danforth Report was released in June 2018. Both reports are based on community surveys of local women workers and reveal the stark reality of the growing crises created by capitalism, especially through the rapid growth of temporary employment.

According to Deena Ladd from the Workers’ Action Centre, the largest percentage of temp agencies are in Ontario, and are used in every corporate sector, including banks, car parts companies like Manuform, retail outlets like Canadian Tire and some government services like child care. The most nefarious use of temp work is to create a “reserve army” of labour, particularly for low-wage industries as they seek to attract new workers. Temp agencies are responsible for Workers’ Compensation Standards Laws, including compulsory workers’ compensation, payroll, and the management of claims. If a temp worker is hurt on the job, it is the agency, not the client-company that is responsible for Workers’ Compensation.

In addition, agencies may arrange for temp workers to collect their pay, often via a payday loan company. The most notorious companies to hire temp workers from agencies are Fiera Foods in the East Danforth community. Four workers have died at work at Fiera-related companies since 1999, including Amina Diaby, a 19-year-old refugee who was caught in the machinery and strangled when her hijab was caught. Workers are facing massive cuts, including a 23% reduction in wages, and guaranteed better scheduling.

The Pallister government has legislated wage cuts for temp workers, and double in no time. That’s the reality in provinces without public support.

What do the Tories have in mind for education in Manitoba? Pallister’s Ontario buddy, Premier Doug Ford, has launched a vicious attack on both public and post-secondary education, in order to cut wages, closures, and layoffs, bigger classes, and the scrapping of all French-language University in the province of Quebec.

Ford and Tory Premiers across the country are responding to the climate crisis and the urgent need for sharply curbed emissions and fossil fuel use across the country. This is inescapable and will lead to irreversible climate change. Manitoba can’t afford another 4 years of Pallister and temporary agencies.

Pallister has legislated wage cuts for temp workers, and kept the minimum wage at $11.35 (and lower) while governments in BC, Alberta and Ontario agreed to $15 minimums before new Tory governments reversed the hikes.

Austerity has resulted in widespread social misery, unemployment, precarious work, and deep cuts to real wages and living standards, while cutting off access to education, apprenticeships, and good jobs for women. Women, Indigenous people, racialized people and immigrants have all been victimized by this government’s very policies. Meanwhile the corporations and temp agencies grow rich and well indeed with increased corporate profits. This is inevitable.

Today more than ever it’s time for fundamental change that will put people’s needs before corporate greed. Fundamental change that will curb corporate power, strengthen democracy and the power of the labour and people’s movements, and open the door to socialism.

The Communist Party and its candidates are committed to fight for a People’s Agenda for Manitoba, and to win wide support for the policies below. The best outcome in this election is a new government with new policies committed to meeting the needs of Manitobans. The election of Communists to the Legislature will help strengthen that fight.

Working people can count on the Communist Party to do what is need for working people, inside and outside the Legislature, now and all the time.

On this centenary of the Winnipeg General Strike, working people must unite and move onto the offensive to secure their rights and standards. Another world is possible, urgent, and worth fighting for!