Protests hit US bombing of Syria

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Abandoning his campaign rhetoric, Donald Trump launched 59 Cruise missiles against Syria on April 6th. But it's really no surprise - this is the latest episode in Washington’s long class war against Syria.

Journalist under attack

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The illegal US airstrikes on Syria combined with ominous threats of war against the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea should raise alarm bells in Ottawa and around the world. These acts and threats of war and aggression against sovereign states are completely outside the rules of international law, and are a threat to peace and security on a global scale. The US is not the world’s policeman, though it is armed to the teeth with nuclear weapons and its reckless aggression endangers peoples and states around the globe. Nuclear war between the DPRK and the US is the result of a relentless US campaign against Korea, including threats to use nuclear weapons of mass destruction against the DPRK. This US campaign of disinformation aims to keep tensions in the region at peak levels. The US prospects to re-arm Japan with nuclear weapons, and increasing US interference in the South China Sea including Trump’s decision to send more US warships to the region in February. It is the US that has prevented all efforts at reunification of North and South Korea should raise alarm bells of war between north and south ever since. Regime change has been the US motivation since the end of the Cold War determination to dominate the region and “roll-back Communism” everywhere, including in Vietnam, China, and in Europe. Today, the overthrow of sovereign government in Syria would be a key part of the US pivot to Asia, and the encirclement and isolation of the US as the biggest economic and political competitor, China.

When President Trump calls on the North Korean government to act against DPRK, he means imperialism and the biggest global corporate interests in the world. He means NATO and the military forces of the US and its allies, including Japan, should attack DPRK. It’s in this context that the US military campaign against DPRK has gained new momentum. An end to US threats of regime change and invasion, and negotiations leading to a political solution are the way to defuse escalating tensions and to avoid the possibility of war in the region. The US unilaterally declared the DPRK to be a “rogue state” and “threat to the peace and security of the world”, and finally, organised confrontations, to mobilize to oppose the US war machine, and for negotiated political solutions.

Say NO to US aggression against DPRK!

By Paul Bentley

Without a peep from the opposition parties, the Trudeau government announced on March 31 that it will extend Canada’s participation in the military campaign to fight against Da’esh, dubbed “Operation Impact”, until June 30th.

The absence of any objections, or even questions, in Parliament from the NDP is particularly disappointing given that they had originally opposed the war. The only political party in Canada calling for an end to Canada’s participation is the Communist Party.

When Trudeau recently back-tracked on his promise to end the military campaign, he said he did so for “fear of our allies’ reaction”.

“Canada’s role in the war against Da’esh is simply a training mission, why are Canada’s forces not helping with peace and development?”

“Why do you explain Canada’s involvement in the war on ISIS? It is to gain the international community’s approval”.

The gall which Trudeau has shown himself to be such a. His government continues to fund war in Afghanistan at a rate of $50,000 a year. The Trudeau government has failed to end the gas pipeline project in the Arctic, although the NDP is calling for a moratorium on all exploration and development in the region.

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Corner Brookers rally in defence of media freedom

By Sean Burton

About thirty people gathered in front of Corner Brook’s Sir Richard Squires Building on April 21 to show support for Justin Brake, a journalist for online publication The Independent, who faces criminal charges from the RCMP over his coverage of protests in central Labrador last fall.

In October 2016, dozens of indigenous people representing Labrador’s Innu, Inuit, and Metis along with non-indigenous supporters, occupied the Muskrat Falls hydro plant construction site out of concern for the environmental and social impact of the project.

In the context of widespread aboriginal resistance to environmental exploitation and the struggle against colonization, Justin Brake decided this event was vital to be covered. Brake was in the thick of events at the site and followed the land protectors, as they came to be known, as they occupied offices of crown corporation Nalcor. His coverage of the events was live-streamed on the Independent’s social media pages and widely shared.

During the aftermath of the demonstrations, the provincial government placed a temporary hold on the project and met with some community leaders in an attempt to alleviate concerns, but the RCMP announced that it would press charges against a number of people at the site, including Brake. Twenty-eight people in all were charged in connection with violating a court order for protesters to stay off the site as well as “mischief over $5000”.

At the Corner Brooker rally, Brake was defended by local CUPE representative Ernest Greene, Justice Kennedy of Provincial Action Network on the Status of Women, Sophia Descazi of the Grenfell Campus Student Union, indigenous melissa Trembllett, Mi’kmaq elder Calvin White, and Michael Martin, a former journalist, Labrador South MHA and creator of the Labrador flag. Martin characterized Canada today as undemocratic and ruled for the interests of rich oligarchs, and said that journalists like Justin Brake must be allowed to do what they do in order to combat social ignorance.

Brake emphasized that he did what any proper journalist should in order to get the story. In his words, “Canadians have a right to know in order to be informed citizens.”

The charges against Brake represent a disturbing precedent that can do great harm to journalism. As Nalcor comments from Nalcor’s lawyer get to the heart of the matter. At court proceedings in February, lawyer Chris King stated, “Journalists have no greater right to defy a court order... than any other individual and a journalist certainly has no greater right to defy a court order... than any other individual.”

If that is so, what is to stop similar arguments from being made against journalists in the future? How could a journalist even pursue a story like this if it means facing criminal charges? It is especially important to remember this; this was an act of civil disobedience by aboriginal peoples in defence of their land, their human rights against a crown corporation and provincial government that use Labrador as colonial reserve land for natural resources. That arrangement is hardly unique to Newfoundland and Labrador, and it is absolutely vital that everyone in this country be aware of the ongoing struggles of First Nations and Inuit if we truly believe in creating a more just society.

For his efforts, Brake was nominated for the province’s Human Rights Award in 2016. Organizations such as Reporters Without Borders, the Canadian Association of Journalists and Canadian Journalists for Freedom of Expression (CFJE) have voiced support, with CFJE director Tom Henheffer pointing out that considering the RCMP’s history with regard to indigenous protests, it is necessary for journalists to be on hand to offer support.

A defence fund has been created to support Brake, who must travel to Labrador for court appearances. The fund can be viewed at https://donorbox.org/the-independent-legal-defence-fund.

Sask Party cuts hurt libraries

The Parkland Regional Library in Yorkton, SK is reducing services and laying off eight people to deal with the 58 per cent budget reduction from the provincial budget. Seven CUPE members are among the workers facing a layoff.

“The Sask Party has put our regional libraries in an impossible situation. Facing a 58 per cent deficit with no warning means our communities lose out on the important programs and services our libraries provide,” said Alex Lenko, CUPE national staff representative.

“Our members who work in the library system love their jobs and are proud of the important work they do to provide an amazing service to the people of Saskatchewan. CUPE will fight these cuts and stand up for our members.”

While the library is not looking at closing branches, the funding shortfall means fewer new books and less e-resources, an end to holds from other libraries, and an end to the ability to pick up books at one branch and drop them off at a different branch.

“These funding cuts will have a colossal impact on the wonderful services and programs our libraries provide,” said Tom Graham, president of CUPE Saskatchewan. “These cuts come in a budget that also cut funding to K-12 education, STC, universities, regional parks, municipalities, and health services. It is important that everyone who is concerned about these cuts contact their MLA and let them know they are concerned.”

RCMP admits to “Stingray” usage

Special to PV

For the first time, the RCMP has confirmed it deployed IMSI-catcher phone surveillance devices—commonly known as Stingrays—dozens of times in recent years to identify and locate suspects in criminal investigations.

The admission on April 15 comes after years of secrecy about the use of the mass surveillance tools. Even serious criminal charges have been dropped to keep the devices a secret.

A recent CBC News investigation found Stingrays in use in downtown Ottawa and at Montreal’s Trudeau airport. The RCMP said it was deemed a warrant for the use of Stingrays, but on the basis of suspicion of wrongdoing, rather than belief. The force claims it doesn’t collect communications content, but privacy advocates such as OpenMedia warn that the collection of location information and metadata is itself a violation. OpenMedia says the admission is long overdue, but leaves important questions unanswered.

“Canadians have been demanding answers about Stingray cell phone surveillance devices for years, and it’s a pity it took revelations about Stingray use in Ottawa to seemingly prompt this admission. Now that the RCMP has come clean, we can finally have the public debate about privacy and accountability that Canadians deserve!” said OpenMedia’s executive director Alastair Sharp, whose complaint last year triggered an ongoing Privacy Commissioner investigation into Stingrays.

“The fact that these devices are in widespread use with very few meaningful safeguards should alarm anyone who cares about their privacy and basic democratic rights,” said Sharp.

The RCMP admits: “How many innocent Canadians have had their private cellular data captured by the RCMP’s use of Stingrays over the past 10 years? Has any of that data been retained? Have these devices ever been deployed to monitor a political protest or demonstration? Is there suspicion of wrongdoing enough to justify the use of Stingrays, given the serious privacy implications for law-abiding citizens?”

Salaberry that the use of these devices has been going on for years, pre-dating the current Public Safety Canada, despite authorization from Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada only being granted this week.

“Examining the key points from the RCMP statement are:

The RCMP says it has a total of 10 surveillance devices in its possession, and 24 technicians trained and authorized to deploy them. The devices have been used “scores of times” in recent years, including 19 times last year and 24 times in 2015. The RCMP also said other police forces own and are trained and authorized to deploy them.

The force currently applies for a Transmitter Data Recorder Warrant to permit its use of Stingrays. Such a warrant can be granted based merely on “reasonable grounds to suspect” an offence has been or will be committed, rather than the stronger “reasonable grounds to believe”.

While the RCMP is tracking the number of warrants it applies for, it is not obliged to report this to Parliament. These devices can interfere with other devices, including cell phones, and even interfere with the ability to dial 911 in older phones. As a result, the RCMP says it tries to use the devices only for a few minutes at a time, to minimize unintended disruptions.

Over 45,000 people have signed an online call for safeguards to be put in place to mitigate the risks from Stingray phone surveillance, at StopStingrays.org.
Earth Day and climate justice

This year’s Earth Day (April 22) is the first since the White House was taken over by a clique of climate-change deniers heavily funded by Big Energy monopolies. As Noam Chomsky warns, Donald Trump’s stated goal is to maximize the use of fossil fuels, end environmental regulations, and dismantle the Environmental Protection Agency. This strategy may signal the end of the world, Chomsky says, “even if not quite in the intended sense”.

The release of carbon stored in plants, soil, etc., into the atmosphere, through burning fossil fuels and cutting down trees, means that today’s atmosphere contains 42% more carbon dioxide than during the pre-industrial era. Extreme weather events are more common, and global surface temperatures have increased by about one degree centigrade since 1880. The 10 warmest years on record (with the exception of 1998) have occurred since 2000. Arctic ice and glaciers have shrunk markedly, and sea levels have risen 15 centimetres over the past century.

Could U.S. withdrawal from even token efforts to limit carbon emissions spell the end of civilization? That is the increasingly common belief among scientists who warn that the tipping point for atmospheric emissions spell the end of civilization? That is the increasingly common belief among scientists who warn that the tipping point for atmospheric warming is so close that “humanity is currently on a trajectory that will result in an irreversible and catastrophic rise in global temperatures and loss of biodiversity.” According to climate models, the average global temperature has increased by about one degree centigrade since 1880. The 10 warmest years on record (with the exception of 1998) have occurred since 2000. Arctic ice and glaciers have shrunk markedly, and sea levels have risen 15 centimetres over the past century.

Workplace deaths: a capitalist disease

Every year leading up to April 28, the annual Workers Memorial Day, statistics and articles provide ample proof of the epidemic of workplace deaths. On a world-wide scale, every 15 seconds, a worker dies from a work-related accident or disease, and 135 workers have a work-related accident or disease every day. Every day, 6,300 people die as a result of occupational accidents or work-related diseases - more than 2.3 million deaths per year. An estimated 12 million people die each year from work-related illnesses or working in unhealthy environments each year, nearly 1 in 4 of total global deaths, according to the World Health Organization. More than 300 million accidents occur on the job annually, many resulting in extended absences from work. The economic cost of occupational deaths and injuries, and poor occupational safety and health practices, is estimated at 4% per cent of the global Gross Domestic Product. The first victims will be island nations and low-lying areas such as Bangladesh, already hit by heat waves and rising ocean levels. Working class and poor people everywhere will bear the brunt of climate change, which is truly an issue of global social justice.

As we struggle against the capitalist agenda of austerity, cutbacks, corporate trade deals, and militarism, the fight for environmental justice must be one of the core issues of our alternative programs. Earth Day is often an occasion for corporate interests to “greenwash” their image. Instead of profiteering instead, it should become a day for working people to demand a new socialist economic system, based on protection of people and the environment.

Federation (a conservative and libertarian-leaning advocacy group financed by big business) hosted Peterson and right-wing pundit Ezra Levant at a conference at U of T in February, which was eventually shut down by police at the last minute.

U of T has not been the only campus downtown to prove welcome to the “alt-right”. Ryerson University students have filed complaints about instructor Brian Petz (former president of Ryerson’s Campus Conservatives) whose public anti-immigrant, anti-Muslim, and anti-LGBTQ&A comments reference “Make Canada Great Again”.

At the University of Toronto, much of the “alt-right” activity has centered around professor Jordan Peterson, a vlogger, and self-described “professor against political correctness” who vocally refuses to use non-binary and gender-neutral pronouns. Shortly after Peterson came into the spotlight, a U of T campus group called “Students in Support of Free Speech” formed to defend him. This group, along with “Generation Screwed”, the student wing of the Canadian Taxpayers Federation (a conservative and libertarian-leaning advocacy group financed by big business) has capitalized on the success of this political maneuver.

The lesson is clear: capitalism kills, and the bosses are the culprits. But there is a cure - organized resistance in our workplaces and communities, and at the political level. Stronger trade unions and united political struggles are needed, not more PR campaigns by corporations eager to protect their sales figures.

Commentary by the University of Toronto Club, Communist Party of Canada

With the election of Donald Trump as president of the United States, and the current Conservative Party leadership race, the question of the growth of the “alt-right” - a loose coalition of “men’s rights” activists, anti-choicers, racists, anti-Muslim bigots, anti-LGBTQ&A bigots, social conservatives and reactionaries who use “free speech” as a cover to push an agenda of hate. “Alt-right” posters have appeared on campuses across the country, protesting hatred towards immigrants, LGBTQ&A, and other marginalized people. As the current crises of capitalism continue to magnify the precariousness of life for a great many people, the public’s receptivity to the message of the far-right has also increased.

While racism is by no means a US import to Canada (a state founded on the basis of colonial genocide against indigenous peoples, and the brutal exploitation of immigrant workers), groups who have capitalized on the success of the US far-right, often mimicking their rhetoric with slogans like “Make Canada Great Again”.

At the University of Toronto, much of the “alt-right” activity has centered around professor Jordan Peterson, a vlogger, and self-declared “professor against political correctness” who vocally opposed Bill C-16 (which adds the words “gender identity or expression” to a list of protected classes under the Canadian Human Rights Act and the Criminal Code) on “free speech” grounds, and notoriously refuses to use non-binary and gender-neutral pronouns.

Don’t miss a single issue—renew today!
Act now to condemn US military strike on Syria
Demand Canada oppose this wanton aggression:

The April 6th U.S. missile attack on the Shayrat Military Airbase in Syria, ostensibly in response to an alleged chemical attack on a village in Idlib province, is a blatant act of aggression. At least 14 people were killed in the missile strikes, including five soldiers on the base and nine civilians in neighborhood buildings surrounding the facility. Shayrat is one of the largest and most active Syrian Air Force bases, dedicated primarily to fighting ISIS in central Syria and providing air support to beleaguered civilians in Deir Ezzor.

This unilateral action, taken without any UN Security Council mandate, is an egregious violation of international law which cannot be just and fair, no matter who the aggressor. The U.S. has failed to provide any evidence proving that the Syrian government and/or its allies were responsible for this chemical attack, and before any independent investigation could be undertaken by UN monitoring bodies to determine responsibility for the Sarin gas attack.

The U.S. missile strike significantly escalates the ‘proxy’ war on Syria, precisely at a time when negotiators from both the government and some of the ‘rebels’ are in Moscow, Turkey and others, trying to achieve a political solution to end the six-year long conflict. More than that, it increases the possibility of a direct military confrontation between the leading nuclear weapon powers – the U.S. and the Russian Federation – which could ignite a much wider regional conflict, not to mention a global thermonuclear war.

This wanton act of war – and the accompanying justifications given by the Trump Administration – confirm without a shadow of a doubt that the true objective in Syria is not to fight terrorism but rather to impose regime changes, even though it has always been clear that the Sarin gas attack on Khan Sheikhoun was never driven by terrorism, but by the Assad government.

The Canadian Peace Congress unreservedly condemns this aggression, and demands such attacks cease immediately, and that Canada, like other countries, already in Syria without any sanction or approval from Damascus, be withdrawn. We further demand that the Canadian government reverse its policy, withdraw its support for this brazen and criminalWanton aggression, and international law, and call instead for a lasting political solution to the conflict in Syria. Canada must remove itself from the US-led coalition in Syria & Iraq, end its punishing economic sanctions and embargoes, and end all diplomatic relations with Damascus!

Canada must also declare its repudiation of its own sovereignty and territorial integrity, and end all military flights over Syria (which are to refuel allied warplanes and to identify new targets), and stop selling weapons to countries who are funding and arming the terrorists in Syria. Not least, this should include Canada’s purchase of fighter jets arms deal with Saudi Arabia.

We appeal to all peace organizations and activists, labour, anti-imperialist and international solidarity groups, and peace-loving people across the globe to see through the barrage of imperial propaganda, and its use of the so-called ‘Responsibility-to-Protect’ (R2P) doctrine intended to dispose and neutralize organized resistance, and to come together in unity and action against imperial aggression in Syria.

Hands Off Syria! Canada Out of NATO!

Statement by the Central Executive Committee, Communist Party of Canada, April 7, 2017

US President Donald Trump’s illegal bombing of Syria yesterday is an act of neo-imperialist aggression. Prime Minister Trudeau’s statement this morning, supporting the US strikes, makes Canada complicit in these war crimes.

We call on the Liberal government to oppose US aggression, to take a firm position supporting a return to the peace process and a negotiated settlement, and to demand a full investigation into the release of Sarin gas which led to the deaths of 89 civilians.

There is no proof – nor any investigation – to determine who is responsible. What is known is that the Pentagon has trained the terrorists in the use of Sarin gas, and that US forces have stockpiled Sarin gas in secret storage facilities that were bombed by government forces last week.

Trump’s rush to war suggests the truth is incidental – or inconvenient for the US administration, which has fought to overthrow the Assad government for years, using mercenaries and terrorists recruited and trained to do their dirty work from US client states in the Middle East.

Now that the Syrian government is seeking to defeat ISIS, ISU, Nusra, and others, the US has no more proxy forces inside the country able to overthrow the government from within.

In fact the peace process was proceeding well at the international level, with peace talks including the Assad government and the warring parties nearly won. For the democratically elected Assad government and the Syrian people, a peaceful and negotiated political solution were at hand. They clearly had no interest in derailing the peace process.

Honest people must ask themselves who benefits from Sarin gas deaths and the US airstrikes on Syria?

The answer, clearly, is the reactionary states in the region which have called for a no-fly zone and US military intervention to overthrow the Assad government, and US President and Republican administration in deep trouble at home, unable to move legislation forward in the Congress, with very low public approval ratings and mass opposition growing, including inside the Republican caucuses. Not least, Trump is in trouble because of a budget which shifts $54 billion out of social spending into spending for war.

The terrorist stock-piling of Sarin gas and the terrible deaths resulting from its release can only be attributed to the Assad government by force, to distract US public opinion from Trump’s catastrophic foreign and domestic policies including on immigration, healthcare, the EPA, and civil and democratic rights. Trump claims that most reported US intelligence about the so-called ‘weapons of mass destruction’ in Syria are mere lies.

The US is already in Syria without any sanction or approval from Damascus, but demands, such attacks cease immediately, and that Canada, like other countries, already in Syria without any sanction or approval from Damascus, be withdrawn. We further demand that the Canadian government reverse its policy, withdraw its support for this brazen and criminalWanton aggression, and call instead for a lasting political solution to the conflict in Syria.

The US attack was a response to an alleged chemical attack, but already in Syria without any sanction or approval from Damascus, be withdrawn. We further demand that the Canadian government reverse its policy, withdraw its support for this brazen and criminalWanton aggression, and call instead for a lasting political solution to the conflict in Syria.

The Canadian Peace Congress unreservedly condemns this aggression, and demands such attacks cease immediately, and that Canada, like other countries, already in Syria without any sanction or approval from Damascus, be withdrawn. We further demand that the Canadian government reverse its policy, withdraw its support for this brazen and criminalWanton aggression, and call instead for a lasting political solution to the conflict in Syria.

Tell Trump - No to war! Hands off Syria!

From www.telesurtv.net

Lambasting the United States’ aggression against Syria, Bolivian Ambassador to the United Nations Sacha Llorenti compared the basis for the unilateral move to former U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell’s infamous 2003 presentation to the body, when fraudulent evidence of an alleged Iraqi weapons program was presented to justify the U.S. war on Iraq.

“Looking up an enlarged photo of Colin Powell’s ‘weapons of mass destruction’ speech, Llorenti emblazoned a fabrication plea to hold the U.S. to account for the unprovoked attack on Syria, noting the U.S. history of deception, manipulation, including in Latin America.

“Now the United States believes that they are investigators, they are attorneys, judges and executioners. That’s what international law is.

“The Andean nation currently holds a non-permanent seat on the UN Security Council.

“I believe it’s vital for us to remember what history teaches us and on this occasion (in 2003), the United States did the same, they affirmed that they had all the proof necessary to show that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction but they were never found... never were they found”, the Bolivian envoy told the emergency Security Council meeting on April 7.

On Feb. 5, 2003, Secretary-Powell presented fabricated “proof” that Saddam Hussein’s government in Iraq was developing weapons of mass destruction, including deadly nerve agents. The presentation has since been widely discredited, as no evidence of a weapons program was ever discovered. Powell himself expressing regret over what he termed “great failure” – a failure that originated in his own exaggerated and doctored interpretations of intercepted Iraqi communications.

The U.S. launched dozens of tomahawk cruise missiles at Shayrat air base in Homs on April 6. The attack was a response to an alleged chemical attack on a rebel-held town of Khan Sheikhoun. The incident claimed 89 lives, including 33 children and 18 women, according to local opposition authorities.

Syrian government representatives have said they would use such weapons, stating that the alleged proof of a Syrian military role is, in fact, propaganda fabricated by opposition groups like Jabhat al-Nusra, a group that Russian President Vladimir Putin’s spokesman, Dmitry Peskov, said Putin considers the strikes to be “aggression against a sovereign state in violation of international law.”

Arguing that the U.S. acted unilaterally and in flagrant violation of the UN Charter, Llorenti said the Bolivian envoy called for a closed-door meeting of the U.N. Security Council.

“The United States was preparing once again and carried out another attack on Syria, as it’s said. ‘The missile attack, of course, is a unilateral action. This is a show of force against Syria’s refusal to international peace and security.”

The U.S. ambassador to the United Nations Nikki Haley denied the request. The U.S. has been blocking action by the Security Council during the month of April.

Toronto rally on April 8 against bombing of Syria (photo: Jay Watts)

Attack violates UN charter, Bolivia

Canada to speak up and mobilize for the UN Security Council to condemn any Canadian support for or involvement in this new US war on Syria.

Canadians must make it clear in every possible way – in protests on the streets, in the media, in Parliament and on the Hill, that war is not an option. The only solution is a negotiated settlement, based in international law. Hands off Syria! End Canadian complicity in this dirty US war! Bring the troops home!

Tell Trump - No to war! Hands off Syria!
The election of Trump and the subsequent flurry of actions by his administration has helped PM Trudeau and the Liberals through an increasingly unpopular winter of discontent in Canada. Polls show the Liberals losing support as one by one, the government’s election promises vaporize. Starting with the promises to Indigenous peoples to develop an inquiry into Missing and Murdered Aboriginal Women, avoiding delays and facilitating its work, to stripping out provisions for the relationship between the federal government and Indigenous nations, to eliminating pipelines without prior approval of Indigenous nations; to adequately fund Indigenous education, healthcare, mental health, housing, and clean water on reserves; and to a host of other initiatives delivered. Trudeau’s approval of the Kinder Morgan Pipeline in November, and the repurposing of the Keystone XL pipeline by President Trump have generated further composition and entrenchment of the Liberal party as well as Indigenous peoples and their supporters from both the US and Canada.

Just before the December holidays the government convened provincial health ministers to offer them a take-it-or-leave it deal that would see $30 billion from healthcare transfers over the next ten years. By adding $1 million, a small amount – specifically for mental healthcare and long-term care – the government tried to convince them that this is the best option but $30 billion from healthcare was a good idea. Originally united against the massive cuts, the provinces have pulled apart with the Atlantic provinces, the Territories, Saskatchewan and BC settling for the original offer with some small tweaks and top-ups. The biggest provinces, Ontario and Quebec have not settled, nor Alberta and Manitoba; however, the provinces’ intent to secure a new and better financed federal healthcare accord has broken apart, and the goal of a new federal healthcare accord is lost. The Saskatchewan settlement poses another imminent threat to Medicare in Canada because the federal government has chosen not to allow it to happen. The Wall government end its practice of allowing private pay healthcare to clear the backlog of people on the wait list for MRIs in the public healthcare system. The Wall government – a right-wing Tory government – is floating the Canada Health Act and the single payer public system with impunity. The government wants to do this because they want the $10 billion cut from their transfers over 10 years, to be used for infrastructure spending, and to reduce the deficit, before the 2018 election comes. In this context, the Wall government is under public is cynical.

Medicare is also under threat from the upcoming NAFTA negotiations, and from the Charter challenge launched by Dr. Brian Day and Cambie Surgery demanding an end to the single payer system and allowing private health corporations to compete with the publicly financed Medicare system. The court case outcome is still underway, packed with witnesses advocating for private billing and two-tier healthcare, but the government wants the outcome to go either for, or against, universal healthcare in Canada, when a decision is rendered sometime sometime later this year or early next year. This is also a proposal from the Ontario Chamber of Commerce to the Ontario government, to ‘ease’ pressure on the public system.

Trudeau’s latest fall from grace is the decision to scrap the electoral reform that he promised and that Canadians voted for. The Wall government is in a bind to get its $3 billion from healthcare was a good idea. Originally united against the massive cuts, the provinces have pulled apart with the Atlantic provinces, the Territories, Saskatchewan and BC settling for the original offer with some small tweaks and top-ups. The biggest provinces, Ontario and Quebec have not settled, nor Alberta and Manitoba; however, the provinces’ intent to secure a new and better financed federal healthcare accord has broken apart, and the goal of a new federal healthcare accord is lost. The Saskatchewan settlement poses another imminent threat to Medicare in Canada because the federal government has chosen not to allow it to happen. The Wall government end its practice of allowing private pay healthcare to clear the backlog of people on the wait list for MRIs in the public healthcare system. The Wall government – a right-wing Tory government – is floating the Canada Health Act and the single payer public system with impunity. The government wants to do this because they want the $10 billion cut from their transfers over 10 years, to be used for infrastructure spending, and to reduce the deficit, before the 2018 election comes. In this context, the Wall government is under public is cynical.

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A message from George Gidora, leader of the Communist Party of BC and candidate in the riding of Surrey-Whalley

Upon taking office, Christy Clark tried to distance herself from the legacy of Gordon Campbell, the first minimum wage increase in over a decade. But the tax breaks were fully restored after Clark won the 2013 provincial election, and BC has again fallen near the bottom of provincial minimum wage rates.

A FUTURE FOR YOUTH

Under capitalism, working class young people face high unemployment, low wages, massive student debt burdens, and lack of access to post-secondary education and apprenticeship training. In this election, the Communist Party of BC demands:

- A $20 minimum wage; support the labour/student campaign for $15/ hour now
- Free post-secondary education
- Expand apprenticeship programs, and end unpaid internships.

EXPAND PUBLIC TRANSIT

The Communist Party of BC demands:

- Introduce a “Mixed Member” proportional representation system for BC elections.
- Set MLA salaries at the average wage of a BC worker
- Require corporate media to report the views of all candidates, and election flyers to provide equal treatment for all candidates.
- Degrade lastly the campaign expenses ceiling, and ban corporate political donations.

PROTECT HUMAN RIGHTS

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights includes the rights to employment, shelter, education, equality, trade unions and much more. In this election, the Communist Party demands:

- Re-establish the BC Human Rights Commission, and prosecute all police officers who commit human rights abuses.
- Enforce legal protections for trans and gender diverse people, who commit all legal and civil rights.
- Ensure access to legal assistance for low-income people.

FOOD SECURITY

Food security is crucial for human survival, but the BC Liberals are wasting agricultural land in the Fraser Valley and on the “Highway of Tears.”

The undemocratic “first-past-the-post” electoral system is biased against the interests of the working class, not the interests of the working class. In this election, we demand:

- Re-establish the BC Human Rights Commission, and prosecute all police officers who commit human rights abuses.
- Enforce legal protections for trans and gender diverse people, who commit all legal and civil rights.
- Ensure access to legal assistance for low-income people.

DEFEAT THE BC LIBERALS, vote for fundamental change

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Leader John Horgan has made a

For the campaigns to establish a

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"Our enemy is monopoly capital"

Despite urging President Jacob Zuma to quit, the South African union movement Cosatu did not support the big-business-backed “people’s march” on April 6 to get rid of him.

“We issue a clear and unambiguous message to our members to join in this march and not participate in any activities organised by Save South Africa,” the Cosatu leadership declared. “We are not confused about who our enemies are and in everything we do we will be guided by class interests. We will never march with the agents of monopoly capital to remove aademocratically elected government. Our strategic enemy is still monopoly capital and white monopoly capital in particular.

“We refuse to be useful idiots of those who want to remove President Zuma in order to remove the ANC from power and protect their monopoly of national policies and privileges. We do not support the regime change agenda.”

Cosatu general secretary Sam Dlamini and general secretary Bheki Ntshalintshali met President Zuma on April 5 to discuss the decisions taken by the federation’s special central executive committee, including the call for his resignation.

A CTUM meeting will be convened after Easter weekend, including Cosatu CEC members and the six ANC national offices based in Johannesburg.

Members and supporters of the South African Communist Party marched to the National Treasury in Tshwane on April 7, to demand protection of national finances and public resources and intensification of efforts to combat corruption, corporate capture, violence, and regulations and questionable dealings.

**Louis Vuitton workers strike**

Leather workers from some of Louis Vuitton’s ateliers in France staged their first strike in 15 years on April 5 to demand wage increases. Demonstrators gathered in front of their production facilities between 7:30 and 8:30 am to make a statement, one day before the brand’s annual salary negotiations were set to end.

Workers from many of the Vuitton ateliers countrywide took part in the demonstration. French trade unions said the turnout stood at 30 percent of employees in Issousavang and Condué, and more than 50 percent in Asnières.

Workers were pushing back against unionist suggestions that offer of a gross raise of 30 euros for every employee and individual increases of up to 70 euros for 20 euros for 80 percent of the workers.

The leather workers’ strike came on the heels of strong sales results last year. As reported, sales in the luxury goods division — the biggest leather goods division — which does not break out results of Louis Vuitton — advanced 8.2 percent in the fourth quarter of 2016 to 3.78 billion euros, or $4.01 billion at average exchange for the period. The label also registered 9 percent organic growth, beating analysts estimates of 5 percent.

“Despite urging President Jacob Zuma to quit, the South African union movement Cosatu did not support the big-business-backed ‘people’s march’ on April 6 to get rid of him.”

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**General strike slams Macri**

Protesters in Argentina clashed with police during marches on April 6 over government austerity — a label the nation has long challenged the president, Mauricio Macri, in the first general strike since the first office 16 months ago.

Security forces used high-powered water cannons and tear gas against picketers who had blocked the Pan-American Highway, the main road leading from the north to capital city Buenos Aires, where normally bustling streets were half-empty and businesses were closed. “No customs officials and there will be no exports or imports today,” said Guillermo Wade, manager of the maritime chamber at Argentina’s main grain hub of Rosario. The country is the world’s top exporter of soybean livestock feed and the third-largest supplier of soybeans.

Macri took office in December 2015. He eliminated currency and trade controls and slashed government spending, including gas subsidies, a move that sparked a spike in home heating bills. A poll last month showed that for the first time, more Argentinians disapprove than approve of Macri’s performance.

Unions are demanding wage increases in line with inflation, which was stuck at 40% last year and is expected at about 20% in 2017. “The situation is dramatic,” Julio Piumato, a spokesperson for the labor umbrella group CGT. “Wealth is being concentrated in the hands of a few at the same rate that poverty is growing. Urgent measures are needed to create employment. One out of every three Argentinians is poor.”

**Trump cancels equality order**

With little notice, Donald Trump recently signed an executive order that rolls back hard-fought victories for women in the workplace.

On March 27, Trump revoked the Fair Pay and Safe Workplaces order which Barack Obama signed to ensure that companies with federal contracts comply with 14 labor and civil rights laws. The Fair Pay order was put in place through the U.S. Office of Federal Acquisition Accountability Office investigation showed that companies’ pay practices were being awarded millions in federal contracts.

In an attempt to keep the worst violators from receiving taxpayer dollars, the Fair Pay order included two key steps to making sure women workers: paycheck transparency and a ban on forced arbitration clauses for employment, sexual assault or discrimination claims.

Out of the 50 worst wage thief violators that GAO examined between 2005-2009, 60 percent had been awarded federal contracts after being penalized by the Department of Labor’s Wage and Hour Division. Similar violation rates were tracked through the Occupational Safety and Health Administration and the National Labor Relations Board.

But the research did not reveal much about sexual harassment or sexual assault claims. That’s because forced arbitration clauses — also known as “cover-up clauses” — are commonly used to keep sex discrimination claims out of the courts and off the public record.

Arbitrations are private proceedings with secret hearings and private attorneys, and they often help hide sexual harassment claims. The American Arbitration Association says that sexual assault arbitration clauses are increasingly used in employment contracts, banning claims of either sex.

Many first learned about forced arbitration clauses when Fox News anchor Gretchen Carlson doted her own contract’s arbitration clause by directly suing former CEO Roger Ailes rather than the company. Ailes’ lawyers accused Carlson of breaching her contract, and pressing for the private arbitration to try to keep the story out of court.

By overturning the Fair Pay order, Trump made it possible for businesses with federal contracts to continue forcing sexual harassment cases into secret proceedings, where the public, or other employees, may never find out about rampant sex discrimination claims at a company.

Trump also moved to eliminate paycheck transparency, which required employers to detail earnings by pay scale, salaries, and other details, one of the few ways to ensure companies pay women workers equally to their male colleagues.

According to the Economic Policy Institute’s analysis, the median wage for U.S. women is about 16.5 percent less than the median wage for U.S. men making about 83 cents to a man’s dollar. That gap increases as women move more frequently and climb the corporate ladder. For example, women in lowest-paying hours on $11,000 a year can make $11,000 less per year than men in the same jobs. But women with at least a college degree make $14,500 less per year than their male coworkers.

**BC bans high heel dress codes**

Days before the launch of the May 9 provincial election campaign, the BC government has banned workplace dress codes which require employees to wear high heels. The announcement comes after Green MLA Andrew Weaver introduced a private member’s bill in the legislature to prevent employers from setting workplace rules and other requirements based on gender, gender expression or gender identity. Weaver’s bill covered all workplaces, including retail and corporate offices. But instead of implementing it, the Liberal government opted to amend foot ware rules under the Workers’ Compensation Act.

The new regulation states that workplace footwear must be “of a design, construction and material that allows the worker to safely perform their work and ensures the worker is able to require footwear contrary to this standard”. The new guidelines, drafted by WorkSafeBC, are expected to be available by the end of April.

The government says that footwear should be designed to allow workers to operate safely. It says that high heel wearers face a risk of physical injury from sliding or falling as well as possible damage to the feet, legs and back.

**Myanmar cuts New Year holidays**

Private sector workers in Myanmar are rallying in opposition to a decision by the government to unexpectedly and unilaterally cut holidays surrounding the Thingyan water festival, the Burmese New Year holidays in mid-April, from ten down to only five.

On March 26 more than 5000 members of the Confederation of Trade Unions of Myanmar (CTUM) marched to the Town Hall of Yangon, the country’s largest city, demanding the government rescind the policy.

“We are not government serv-ents. We are from the private sector, and we can only see them leave, while government staff have several holidays”, Yangon regional CTUM chair Ma Win Thawee Sai said. “Most of the workers at my factory are from far from the Yangon Region. They def-initely cannot go back to their hometowns within five days. We will only accept 10 days off as usual.”

The CTUM says that this decision did not involve any consultation with worker representatives. Following a round of meetings with party leaders, the government’s special central executive committee, including the call for Zuma to quit, the South African union federation Cosatu did not support the big-business-backed “people’s march” on April 6 to get rid of him.

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UK unions warn Tories over Brexit

By Liamait Sabih, Morning Star

The British Labour Party and trade unions have warned Prime Minister Theresa May against seeking a deal with European Union officials as an excuse to ditch laws that protect workers, consumers, and the environment, as talks kick-start the two-year separation process.

The Labour Party’s shadow Brexit secretary Keir Starmer attacked former Tory work and pensions secretary Iain Duncan Smith following his call for a “radical root-and-branch” review of EU regulations.

Starmer said these “costly” regulations hated by right-wingers included basic workers’ rights, adding: “It is increasingly clear that rights and protections are seen by many senior Tories, including the Cabinet, as an ‘expensive’ luxury that British workers and consumers can do without. That is why one of Labour’s six tests for the Brexit deal is that it defends hard-fought-for rights and protections and doesn’t lead to a race to the bottom.”

Communist Party general secretary Robert Griffiths said leaving the EU must not become “an excuse for diluting people’s already meagre rights at work,” but said the left should “set its sights on the opportunities the negotiations present.”

Referring to the section of the Lisbon Treaty that allows for unilateral EU exit, Griffiths said, “Triggering Article 50 opens the way to progressive policies outside the EU to control capital, raise public funds for infrastructure investment, enforce equal rights for migrant workers, and radically cut or abolish VAT. Such policies would remain unlawful if we stay in the single market.”

Frances O’Grady, secretary general of the Trades Union Congress, Britain’s largest labour federation, said: “The best deal will guarantee that hardworking British keep their hard-won rights at work – and that in the years to come they won’t miss out on protections that Dutch, Spanish, and German workers get. The best deal has to protect good jobs, with decent wages, by keeping our trade free from tariffs and unnecessary bureaucracy. And it has to end the disgraceful inequality for workers from other EU nations who’ve made the UK their home. The Brexit deal will define Britain’s future for a generation. We owe it to ourselves and our children to take the time needed to get it right.”

But Trade Unionists Against the EU’s Doug Nicholls saluted what he characterised as “a great day” for workers in Britain. “Forty years of being controlled by those we don’t elect will soon be over, and we can rebuild a full-employment economy.”

Stand Up to Racism condemned the government for not making rock-solid promises over the residency rights of EU citizens whose families may be separated and whose jobs could be lost.

George Galloway, who has been a prominent resident in Britain for 28 years and who has already been questioned by border control officials as to how long he intended to stay in Britain and whether he wants to work there.

She said, “I wonder how many vulnerable people are getting targeted even before Britain has left the EU.”

Global Justice Now said that efforts should go into preventing the PM from having an “unprecedented” carte blanche to “pick and choose” from existing EU laws.

German Green MP Dietmar Bartsch said, “We don’t have the luxury of sitting around and lamenting the fact that Theresa May has triggered Article 50.”

Using ‘Henry VIII powers’ could mean ministers making significant changes to important legislation without parliamentary approval – something which many countries would deem unconstitutional.

By Liamait Sabih, Morning Star

Statement by the South African Communist Party on the political and economic crisis following a cabinet shuffle in which President Jacob Zuma removed Finance Minister Pravin Gordhan, an SAPC member who has a long and prominent figure in efforts to eliminate corruption.

The Political Bureau of the South African Communist Party met in Gauteng today [March 31] in the context of the deep crisis into which the reckless actions of President Zuma have once more plunged our ANC-led movement, the looted and gangsterised institutions, and our country in general.

The recall of an overseas trip of President Zuma to Germany and Luxembourg, plus the firing of Mcebisi Jonas while on a promotional tour in South Africa’s interests, and now the firing of these comrades and other well-performing ministers is more than regrettable. It is a pity and outrageous, particularly while the worst performers in cabinet continue to enjoy presidential protection and even, in some cases, promotion.

This recklessness has provoked widespread concern and anger within the ANC itself, and across all sectors of our society. We have reached a decisive moment in which, in the considered view of the SAPC leadership, Zuma must now resign.

The coincidence of the dramatic cabinet events with the desperate application this week in the Pretoria High Court by the Gupta-linked Vardospan company should not be a coincidence. It is a clear indication of the ANC’s democratic illegitimacy. We have seen a clear example of how the Gupta family and their associates have tried to stop the ANC removal of an important minister through the courts.

The timing of Zuma’s cabinet reshuffle and the deepening banking troubles faced by the Guptas was not for nothing, for sure. Once more it lays bare a disturbing reality. Increasingly our country is being ruled not from the Union Buildings, but from the Gupta family compound. More and more, critical ANC decisions are being made not by elected and collective structures in Luthuli House but in Sowetown.

In the coming days the SAPC will be meeting with our provincial structures, all our alliance partners and a wide range of social movements and formations. It is imperative that popular anger is mobilised and organised in constructive ways that unite South Africans of all persuasions and backgrounds in the defence of our country’s interests.

This is not a struggle against an individual. This is not a factional struggle. It is a struggle against a network of parasitism and patronage in defence of our hard-won democratic sovereignty. Let us roll, come what may, to protect the state! Let us call for the South African passports and residential rights of the Guptas to be revoked immediately! Let us call for the resignation of Jacob Zuma, who is clearly implicated in this.

Let us demand an immediate end to the Gupta media operations and to the Gupta’s private hospital in the Nkandla scandal? Let us ensure that the dodgy Tegeta deal is exposed. Let us insist that those involved in the whole-sale rippings off of the public broadcasting the SABC and of key State-Owned Corporations, including PRASA, Eskom, DENEL, and SAA are brought to book. Mainstream corporate outfits like Allan Gray and the Resputic, Remgro must own up to their profit-driven collusion with Cash Pay Master Services, Net1, and Grindrod in the exploitation of vulnerable social grant beneficiaries. Politicians and officials who have benefited from back-handers in all of this must be exposed.

Inevitably, SAPC members who serve in executive positions in government are now being asked if they will resign. The Politburo’s instruction to these comrades is: Remain at your posts. This is not because there is any individual entailment. You are serving in various capacities because of the support you enjoy across the ANC movement, because of your struggle credentials, and because of your performance in government. You have a responsibility to serve a massive constituency and the country at large - now more than ever. If you are fired at the behest of the Gupta network because of your struggle credentials, and because of your performance in government. You have a responsibility to serve a massive constituency and the country at large - now more than ever. If you are fired at the behest of the Gupta network because of your struggle credentials, and because of your performance in government. You have a responsibility to serve a massive constituency and the country at large - now more than ever. If you are fired at the behest of the Gupta network because of your struggle credentials, and because of your performance in government. You have a responsibility to serve a massive constituency and the country at large - now more than ever. If you are fired at the behest of the Gupta network because of your struggle credentials, and because of your performance in government.

The Communist Party of Britain campaigned for a “Lexit” vote to leave the EU.

Time for Zuma to resign, says SAPC

The Communist Party of Britain campaigned for a “Lexit” vote to leave the EU.
Marking the 40th birthday of punk

By Darrell Rankin

Premier Pallister's April 11 budget will take a flame thrower to health, public sector wages and access to higher education, among other social atrocities. The treatment of Manitoba's workers and movements are rallying on Saturday, April 22 to reject the reactionary budget. The rally is at Oodena Circle at the Forks in Winnipeg starting at 11:30 am.

The Pallister government announced ahead of the budget it will freeze public sector wages for two years, close half of Winnipeg's emergency care centres, and allow universities to hike tuition by up to 11 per cent annually over inflation.

Pallister's budget cuts are just the latest of several recent punitive measures. The Tories ended free trade - single desk marketing, running hundreds of mainly Indigenous fisherman's families.

They attacked the working poor by refusing to increase the minimum wage, a measure condemned by the Manitoba Federation of Labour. Devastating crises in Indigenous communities have intensified, prompting a significant rise in suicides. Nearly 2,000 First Nations people are still “evacued”, spread out over the province after losing their community to flooding in 2011, caused by a provincial diversion of water to save the City of Winnipeg.

Last year the Pallister Tories massively defeated the Manitoba NDP which had been in power for 17 years. Pallister promised to reduce the hated sales tax, hiked by the NDP, and to protect “front line” jobs. Many workers voted for the Tories expecting a few hundreds more in their paychecks from a reduced sales tax. The NDP vote dropped 43% to 112,748, a number not matched since the first NDP government in 1969.

But now Pallister is showing his true agenda, taking neoliberal austerity for workers and boosting corporate profits.

Cuba condemns US attack on Syria

HAVANA, Cuba, Apr 8

Statement by Rogelio Sierra Diaz, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Cuba, condemning the unilateral attack by the United States against Syria

I express our strong condemnation of the unilateral attack by the United States on April 6 with cruise missiles against the Shayrat air base in the Syrian Arab Republic, using as a pretext the alleged use by the Syrian government of chemical weapons against civilians.

This illegal action of force outside the United Nations constitutes a serious and flagrant violation of the Charter of the United Nations and of International Law and a violation of a sovereign State, while aggravating the conflict in that country and in the region, and moves away from achieving a negotiated solution.

Cuba, an original signatory and State Party to the Chemical Weapons Convention, also firmly rejects the use of chemical weapons by any actor, regardless of any circumstance, including terrorist groups. Action has been taken against the Syrian Republic because of its action or in any circum-stance, including terrorist groups.

We express our deepest condolences for the loss of lives, among them children, in Syria as a result of this and previous attacks.
Cruise missiles... continued from page 12

yield to international law is naive and therefore any discussion of whether this or that of the United States violates international law is a discussion of no consequence.

The White House is able to violate US law without punishment by eliciting at least the passive acceptance of the US public and its representatives for its wars of aggression; accordingly, with the Cold War over and the US military on the opposite side, there’s no one to hold the White House to account before the self-appointed vantage point of the public, a moral insatiable appetite for moral lapidation and florid language about “murderous regimes,” brutal dictators,” and “moral disgrace,” pronouncements of US officials colonize, contribute to the mobilization of consent for war and to an international class struggle yielding to international law is naïve believing (or if they weren’t duped, to ardently propagate) whether this or that act of the continued from page 12.

By Gillian B. White, The Atlantic

The discrepancies in earnings, wealth, and other markers of financial success between black and white Americans are stark. Both groups have increased their wealth, but much less wealth and have higher rates of unemployment. But perhaps more surprising than the gaps themselves is the fact that even as many black Americans make progress that should help bridge the divide, such as by seeing more women, more than they have in the past, see their income-earning capacity increase.

Valerie Wilson and Janet Currie, economists at the left-leaning Economic Policy Institute, took a look at labor data for black and white workers between the years 1979 and 2015. They found that both black and white workers, born into families 25 years old, had increased their number of paid, annual hours of work in the past 36 years. According to the analysis by Wilson and Jones, the average black worker in 2015 put in 1,805 hours, or 12.4 percent more hours than they did in 1979.

By logging the earnings of the average white worker, put in 1,888 hours, for an increase of around 1 percent. While those discrepancies are similar, the picture looks a lot different when it comes to the lowest-wage workers in each racial group. When looking at the lowest earners, black workers have seen much more significant increases. In both 1979 and 2015, poor black Americans worked more than their white counterparts did.

The poorest black workers have increased their annual hours of work from 1,524 to 1,574, a gain of 3.4 percent from 1979, compared to the 1,445 and 1,473 hours and 1 percent gain of white workers.

Unsurprisingly, in both groups, women had the largest gains when looking at the number of hours worked, in part because more women entered the workforce. But low-wage black women in particular have seen the largest increase in the amount they work each year of any, gender, or income-group combination, logging 30 percent more time on the job since 1979. With the increased hours of labor and economy, it is clear to see that black workers in 2015 were in a better economic position than they were in 1979 but that’s not really true.

Black-white wage gaps are actually larger than they were in 1979. The growing discrepancy is even more pronounced for the lowest-paid workers, who add the most work hours. In 1979, white workers in the bottom 20 percent of earnings such as this one, add 3.6 percent more than black workers in the lowest income bracket. In 2015, black workers added 11.8 percent more.

Wilson and Jones say that these differences come from being black workers and low-wage workers who are coalescing for racial wage gaps, saying that they should do something from getting more education to simply making workers work. “Those arguments, they write, ignore the impact of racial discrimination in the labor market and perpetuate stereotypes about the work ethic of black Americans that aren’t supported by data. For all black workers, bridging economic progress remains difficult. Though unemployment numbers have improved across the board, the same discrepancies persist: white Americans had an unemployment rate of only 4.5 percent at the close of 2016, but black workers had an unemployment rate of 7.9 percent.

(That’s assuming small gaps considering that, historically, the unemployment rate among black workers is at least double that for white Americans.)

The racial wage gap has also widened over time, according to PewResearch. In 2004, white families held on average seven times as much wealth as black families; by 2013, that ratio had grown to the largest gap, and economic research suggests that the Great Recession has long hit black families harder than white ones; the American Psychological Association observed similar effects after both the 2001 and 1990 recessions. These differences only grow: A report from the American Civil Liberties Union looking at the long-term effects of the Great Recession that while 2031, white families will have wealth that is 13 percent lower due losses in the recession, while black families will lose far less of their already lower wealth. There’s reason to be concerned about what that means for the future. Not only do black Americans, especially poor ones, not have as much savings and as few assets, but they are also unemployed at higher rates. And when they do find jobs, they are often paid less and scrutinized more. The result is a cycle of economic disadvantage that’s hard to break.

Celebrate May Day in Toronto: for justice, peace and socialism

The United May Day Committee keeps alive the tradition of International Workers’ Day by organizing an indoor rally to complement the annual march on the streets of Toronto. We bring together labour, political, and international speakers with a rich array of talents, singers, poets and musicians to represent cultural backgrounds.

This year’s event, on Saturday, April 29, is the seventh anniversary of our celebration at the Steelworkers Hall. We are again offering a program with powerful, relevant speakers and outstanding entertainment. Featured among the speakers will be labour activist and former President of the Ontario Federation of Labour, Dave Sparrow, and Dan and Dave McKee, leader of the Communist Party of Canada (Ontario).

Artists in this year’s cultural program include drumming ensemble Baro Dununa, Chiloe-Canadian singer-songwriter Marcelo Puente, the duo of Tony Quarriington & Ligtin Tressou, and Molok Ali (The Socialist Vocalist). O Puck will open the evening with a blessing from the First Nations tradition.

Doors open at 6:30 pm at Steelworkers Hall, 25 Cecil St. All are welcome, admission free, childcare provided. Food & refreshments available. For more information visit our Facebook page: “United May Day 2017 Toronto Celebration.”

Celebrate May Day, Sat., April 29, 6-8 pm, Steelworkers Hall, 25 Cecil St., free admission, food & beverages on sale. Organized by United May Day Committee. Speakers include former OFL President Sid Ryan and Communist Party leader Liz Rowley. Cultural performers include drum ensemble Baro Dununa, poet Mohammed Ali, musical duet Tony Quarriington and Laura Fernandez; and Marcelo Puente.

Celebrate 40 years - AGM, Canadian-Cuban Friendship Association Toronto, Sat., May 27, 6-8:30 pm, 60 Lowther Ave.

What’s Left

Vancouver, BC

March for Jobs, Justice & the Environment, Sat., April 19, 1 pm, Creekside Park (Science World), organized by Climate Convergence.

May Day Info Fair, Sunday, April 30, 2-4 pm Granville Park (1200 block Commercial Drive) displays displays left, labour, community groups.

Left Film Night, Sunday, April 30, 7 pm at the CSE, 706 Clark Cr., Vancouver, 604-254-2041 for details.

Annual May Day march and rally, Monday, May 1, gather 5 pm at Clark Park, 14th & Commercial, organized by Vancouver & District Labour Council. After the rally, come to the CSE at 706 Clark Drive for a political social, and meet east Vancouver Communist candidates in the BC election.

Mother’s Day Brunch, Sunday May 14, 11 am-2 am, 1600 block 10th Ave. North (Dundie’s Bella Vista), $15; kids $10. All proceeds to People’s Voice.

A Tribute to Fidel, Sat., June 17, doors open 5:30 pm, Russell Hall, 3555 W. Broadway, $20 (for students & unwaged) from 604-254-9836.

Edmonton, AB

A Tribute to Fidel, Sat., April 22, 6-11:30 pm, 1018 97 St. NW. Special guest speaker - Liz Rowley, leader of the Communist Party of Canada. All our friends are invited to participate. We invite music, song, poetry and theatre performances on the theme of A Tribute to Fidel. Tickets $20/ $10 for a Caribbean-theme dinner and silent auction, proceeds to People’s Voice.

Mississauga & Toronto

Washington’s Long War on April 19, 6-8 pm, the Downtown Library, 3850 Dixie Road; Mississauga, 905-678-1777. Stephen Gowsan (see p. 12), MISSISSAUGA: Sunday, April 23, 2-9 pm, 1870 Dixie Library, 3850 Dixie Road; Price $5 (students & unwaged). Defeat BC Liberals... by Wilson and Jones, the average black worker in 2015 put in 1,805 hours, or 12.4 percent more hours than they did in 1979. By logging the earnings of the average white worker, put in 1,888 hours, for an increase of around 1 percent. While those discrepancies are similar, the picture looks a lot different when it comes to the lowest-wage workers in each racial group. When looking at the lowest earners, black workers have seen much more significant increases. In both 1979 and 2015, poor black Americans worked more than their white counterparts did.

The poorest black workers have increased their annual hours of work from 1,524 to 1,574, a gain of 3.4 percent from 1979, compared to the 1,445 and 1,473 hours and 1 percent gain of white workers.

Unsurprisingly, in both groups, women had the largest gains when looking at the number of hours worked, in part because more women entered the workforce. But low-wage black women in particular have seen the largest increase in the amount they work each year of any, gender, or income-group combination, logging 30 percent more time on the job since 1979. With the increased hours of labor and economy, it is clear to see that black workers in 2015 were in a better economic position than they were in 1979 but that’s not really true.

Black-white wage gaps are actually larger than they were in 1979. The growing discrepancy is even more pronounced for the lowest-paid workers, who add the most work hours. In 1979, white workers in the bottom 20 percent of earnings such as this one, add 3.6 percent more than black workers in the lowest income bracket.

In 2015, black workers added 11.8 percent more.

Wilson and Jones say that these differences come from being black workers and low-wage workers who are coalescing for racial wage gaps, saying that they should do something from getting more education to simply making workers work. “Those arguments, they write, ignore the impact of racial discrimination in the labor market and perpetuate stereotypes about the work ethic of black Americans that aren’t supported by data. For all black workers, bridging economic progress remains difficult. Though unemployment numbers have improved across the board, the same discrepancies persist: white Americans had an unemployment rate of only 4.5 percent at the close of 2016, but black workers had an unemployment rate of 7.9 percent.

(That’s assuming small gaps considering that, historically, the unemployment rate among black workers is at least double that for white Americans.)

The racial wage gap has also widened over time, according to PewResearch. In 2004, white families held on average seven times as much wealth as black families; by 2013, that ratio had grown to the largest gap, and economic research suggests that the Great Recession has long hit black families harder than white ones; the American Psychological Association observed similar effects after both the 2001 and 1990 recessions. These differences only grow: A report from the American Civil Liberties Union looking at the long-term effects of the Great Recession found that by 2031, white families will have wealth that is 13 percent lower due loss
Cruise Missile Attacks: A new step in Washington’s long class war on Syria

By Stephen Gowans, April 8, 2017

Washington has added a new dimension to its long war on Syria: direct military intervention.

Since the mid 1950s, the United States has tried to purge Damascus of an Arab nationalist leadership which has zealously guarded Syria’s freedom from US domination and follows an Arab socialist development path which is at odds with the global free enterprise project advanced by Washington on behalf of its Wall Street patrons.

Until now, Washington has refrained from directly attacking Syrian forces, though it has intervened militarily in Syria to hold the Islamic State in check so that the militant group remains strong enough to weaken Syrian forces but not so strong that it captures the Syrian state.

This limited Islamic State- directed US intervention in Syria has involved both airstrikes and an estimated 1,000 boots on the ground. However, the principal modus operandi of Washington’s long war on Syria has been war waged through proxies, both Israeli, which annexed Syria’s Golan Heights and has carried out 40,000 air attacks, and Islamist guerrillas, who, from the 1960s, have waged a jihad against what they view as Syria’s heretical government.

The United States contemplated direct military intervention in Syria in 2003, as a follow-up to its invasion of Afghanistan and has carried out that form of warfare in Syria, Iraq, and Afghanistan. However, according to the New York Times, “US and EU sanctions on Syria” were “causing huge suffering among ordinary Syrian people.”

One source was the White Helmets, which bills itself as a neutral civil defense outfit, but is in reality funded by governments allied with Washington in its long war on Syria. It is enmeshed, too, or at the very least, cooperates with, al-Qaeda. The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a group that Israel and the US consider terrorists, reported that the White Helmets supplied chemical agents to roughly 300,000 Syrian troops.

Until now, Washington has added a new dimension to its long war on Syria: direct military intervention. In place of a muscular boots on the ground strategy, Washington imposed an economic blockade in 1966, which, by 2012, had caused Syria’s economy to buckle, according to the New York Times. “Sanctions far exceeding any that had induced financial haemorrhaging had ‘forced Syrian officials to stop health care and other essential services in some provinces in the course of action."

By 2016, “US and EU economic sanctions on Syria” were “causing huge suffering among ordinary Syrians and preventing the delivery of humanitarian aid, according to a leaked UN document.”

The US Defense Intelligence Agency reported that the Muslim Brotherhood and Al-Qaeda were responsible for the 1979 attack on the US embassy in Tehran.

The American military colossus, the Pentagon itself can wield, enmeshed, too, or at the very least, cooperates with, al-Qaeda. The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a source that Washington considers a terrorist, whom the White Helmets supplied chemical agents to roughly 300,000 Syrian troops.

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