“Failure to launch”? 

The 2019 federal budget was supposed to jump-start the Liberal election campaign. Instead, it made big business happy but provided little help to working class voters. 

see Page 6

Earth Day 2019: why militarism is the enemy of human survival

See page 5...

Phoenix still failing
Years after it was introduced under the Harper Conservatives, the Phoenix pay system continues to delay, miscalculate and lose the pay of federal employees. The mess is wrecking many lives. 

Page 2

Reds in the news
Alberta’s four Communist candidates in the April 16 provincial election are getting some long-overdue attention in Edmonton's mass media. They are confident about the party’s future. 

Page 3

NATO turns 70
Seventy years after its founding, marked the real start of the Cold War, and long after the end of the Warsaw Pact alliance, NATO continues to act as the military arm of global imperialism. 

Page 9

Bombing Gaza... again.
The bombs start again. Israel, as if on a timer, begins to pulverize Gaza. The bombs strike from one end of the country to another, a warning against the protests that have been ongoing for a year. 

Page 12
Phoenix pay system still broken

From Canadian Association of Labour Media

How long before the failed phoenix system will it take?

Thousands of federal government workers ask that question every day as they continue to suffer the tortures of the broken Phoenix pay system, three years after it was activated.

Phoenix began as the brainchild of the Harper government. It was designed in early 2012 to replace the current Liberal government.

It never worked. Salary overpayments, underpayments, or no payments soon became all but the norm. The range and depth of personal consequences for thousands of workers staggers the imagination.

Every attempt to fix Phoenix has failed. At least one in every two federal workers now has a problem because of the deeply flawed pay system. Worse, there is no final fix in sight.

Auditor general Michael Ferguson blamed the Phoenix debacle on a culture within government of bureaucrats avoiding reporting failures to their superiors.

Ferguson’s report costs have cost $1.1 billion dollars so far. It is expected that it will take at least twice that amount to patch it up before a new system to replace Phoenix is fully in place. That’s expected to be at least two years from now.

The Phoenix system took the jobs of 650 public service workers: 1,200 compensation advisers were replaced with 550 workers in a new pay centre in Miramichi, New Brunswick.

Each of the new workers were specialists in different types of pay issues. It was a needless complication of a straightforward operation that was working well.

It meant that, instead of one person handling a pay file, several might be involved. If someone made a mistake or paid a corrective pay, shift premium and annual leave, for example, it would now take the time of different specialists and three complaints to put things right.

To handle the increasing flood of complaints, the government had to triple the number of workers in Miramichi and in the satellite offices that had to be set up across the country. Things are getting better, it claims. That’s cold comfort for Tracy Gour, who works for Service Canada in Sudbury.

A year ago, when she was diagnosed with breast cancer. She was determined to keep working, to push through her chemotherapy, fearing what might happen if she were to take leave. Those fears proved to be entirely justified.

In March 2018, she “just about collapsed,” and had to take time off. Her sick leave ran out by the end of that month, but her pay continued to be directly deposited into her account until May.

That’s an overpayment of six weeks, while, at the same time, her short-term disability payments, intended to follow the exhaustion of sick leave, were fouled up as well. She only began to receive them in September, forcing her to use some of her overpayment over the summer just to live.

Tracy will be returning to work in February. “I am utterly terrified and nervous by the end of the month, that my house could lose my house, be unable to pay for food, transportation and medical care. The stress is staggering.”

From bad to worse The employer added to the stress: the government forced the workers who received unwanted overpayments to reimburse the gross amount of the overpayment which included CPP payments, income tax deductions, etc.—as much, if not significantly more than the amount they received.

Not only was this a financial burden on thousands of workers, it also resulted in years of tax return problems for them.

In January the federal government proposed tax legislation to fix the problem.

“Would we have preferred to have this legislation tabled years before the Phoenix crisis began? Absolutely,” Dave Lanthier, a long-time union activist with the Union of Taxation Employees, a component of the PSAC. Over the course of his union activities, Dave took a lot of union leave. In 2017, he noticed that money was being deducted from his paycheque.

Dave assumed the deductions were to compensate for his union leave, which he was right about. What he was wrong about was that it was for time taken off that year.

In fact, it was for the previous year, and in September, 2017. The PSAC caught up with what had happened, and began taking as much as 50% of his paycheque without warning for the previous year.

The sudden large clawbacks left Dave with so little money that he and his partner were forced to move into their house for non-payment of rent. They couch-surfed for two months before they finally found another place to live. Bills, such as car payments, came due. There was no money for Christmas. It was a disaster.

Lanthier lost his credit. And he was told there could be six months of this.

At that point he seriously considered suicide. “I was standing on a snowbank waiting for the bus, thinking of throwing myself over the edge,” he said. “I thought of my daughter and reconsidered.” Only in early 2018 did Dave receive some of the money he wasn’t being compensated.

Phoenix tried a workaround—generate a fake overpayment to put her acting pay in her hands. But the higher figure was never corrected, and appeared as her actual salary on her T-4, despite her not being actually overpaid at all.

There were dire consequences. Labelle-Rousseau has a special needs child, and had been receiving a special allowance of $1200/month. The Canada Revenue Agency informed her that her income was now too high for that, and cut it back to between $600 and $800. She also claimed that she owed back taxes for 2017.

“Now she is completely destitute. Her son, this remains unresolved. She has no idea where to turn. She has had to take stress leave because of complications. She has refused a promotion—three levels higher than her current job—and said no to acting assignments as well, because “I’m too afraid of Phoenix.”

A federal employee, unwilling to give her name, has worked 19 years in government, and is a single parent. In 2015, she worked considerable overtime, plus earning acting pay. This went uncompensated. Some has since been paid out, after she filed a grievance, but she can’t obtain a breakdown from the government. Instead, they said instead, they claimed she had been overpaid.

And on occasions 100% of her paycheque was clawed back, and once she received only $300. The government workers can only imagine what the future holds. At this point she is still outstanding. And now she believes she is being denied acting assignments, freely offered to her as a senior employee, because of the protests she has made.

The damage and misery Phoenix has done to these workers is the reality for thousands upon thousands of workers in the federal public service. Real harm and suffering endure week by week, month by month, by year by year. Real people. Promised fix by promised fix has failed to materialize.

All of this comes to happen because government workers are forced to fix a pay system that wasn’t broken—not to make things better for them to make things better for the employer. It is an old, old story. And it is one that government workers have to endure—certainly not when the employer is their own government.

Can the government—will the government—ever be able to completely fix a pay system that government workers can only hope so. In the meantime, their right to this system is simply to grin and bear it.
Edmonton daily reports on Communist campaign in Alberta

Since our previous issue was published, another Communist candidate has entered Alberta’s April 16 election campaign, bringing the total to four - the highest number of Communists on the ballot in Alberta since the 1980s.

The CP-Alberta is also getting some rare media attention, including coverage in the Edmonton Star by reporter Kevin Maimain, who interviewed Communist Party leader Naomi Rankin on April 4, campaigning in the Strathcona riding where she is among ten candidates on the ballot.

The Star article notes that Rankin is the longest-serving political party leader in Alberta, holding the position since 1992. Born into a radical political family (including her uncle Harry, the long-time Vancouver city councillor), Rankin joined the Communist Party in 1981. Rankin told the reporter that she strived for the Communist banner by bringing the party’s message to progressive groups at protests and other events, and to like-minded people to unite under the Communist banner.

She told Maimain about a recent gay-straight alliance rally, organized to protest a United Conservative Party platform point that would scrap Bill 24 and let teachers “out” kids to their parents, as one of many examples of Albertans mobilizing for inclusive social change.

“I don’t see the situation that people are static, or passive, or aslep, at all,” Rankin said.

The article presents some history about the role of Communists in Alberta and across Canada, including the struggle during the 1990s against Conservative legislation which automatically deregistered smaller parties which ran fewer than 50 candidates and seized their assets. It was a battle the Communists won 10 years later in the Supreme Court.

Rankin told the Star that “her belief that capitalism fosters inequality and suffering as the rich get richer off the backs of workers, and her desire for a united, militant working class to smash that paradigm, have never wavered.”

In this campaign, she is joined by candidate Alex Boykowich in Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood, Andrew Janewski in Edmonton-Mill Woods, and Jonathan Troutman in Calgary-East.

Janewski, who is 20 years old, left the NDP to join the Communist Party, which he considers the only one with adequate strategies to fight poverty and climate change.

As a Young Communist League member, Janewski works with the Edmonton Coalition Against War and Racism, anti-fascist movements, and labour groups. He believes that the party will gain votes and strength in the period ahead, telling the Star, “people are going to become radicalized when the way that they are living their lives is being threatened by climate change, and so they’ll start listening to more radical alternatives when that becomes an issue.”

The Communist Party-Alberta campaign literature specifically targets oil and gas workers, sympathizing with concerns over losing their jobs and declaring that “they don’t have to ‘wear a yellow vest’ and rail against Prime Minister Justin Trudeau.”

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**EDITORIALS**

**Sympathy from the devil?**

First, our apologies for the headline... but we couldn’t resist. Really, does anyone believe Andrew Scheer’s passionate cries demanding justice for the oppressed working class? We refer, of course, to the Tory leader’s stand against the Liberal government’s carbon tax, which Scheer claims to oppose because it will hurt working people. Coming from a political party which has consistently attacked the rights and liberties of the working class for over a century and half, this rhetoric has zero credibility.

But Scheer and other right-wing politicians will use any expression of popular discontent to win votes, even if it means reaching out to racist and fascist elements of the “yellow vest” movement and other forces aiming to stir up hatred and bigotry. The Ford government is known as the sponsor of a US-based oil and gas industry, which explains why they haven’t uttered a word about corporate gas-gouging at the gas pumps this spring.

It’s also true that higher taxes on gas and heating fuel will not help to hit Canada’s fossil fuel emission reduction targets by 2030. Contrary to claims by climate change deniers, a very real global crisis underway, with catastrophic impacts already affecting hundreds of millions of people. Canada does need an emergency sustainable economy.

The Tories are well-known as shills for the largely US-based oil and gas industry, which explains why they haven’t uttered a word about corporate gas-gouging at the gas pumps this spring.

The level of panic in Ottawa around the “threat of foreign influence” in the October election is astounding, including stern warnings by “experts” about the “danger to our electoral process” posed by... the Russians and Chinese! As “evidence”, news outlets are replaying the tale of a 2016 military raid against “Russian separatists” in eastern Ukraine, in which eleven Canadian soldiers were supposedly killed; this fabricated story was shared online in Russia thousands of times.

Please allow us to unpack this chilling narrative. First, election ballot stuffings in Canada are filled in and counted by hand. There is no way for9500 or 5000 or 3000 Russian soldiers to change the ballot stuffings. Second, the United States itself intervenes in foreign elections as an integral tactic in a wider strategy to protect its imperialist domination of the planet. If a serious electoral challenge ever arises against capitalist parties in Canada, would the US find ways to interfere? To ask is to answer.

Let’s examine the above case. How exactly would that “false news” story influence a Canadian election? There is no “pro-Russian separatist” party on the ballot here. This example does illustrate how some lies are woven completely, almost invisibly, into the fabric of bourgeois ideology. For years, we have been put away your tinfoil hats!

Put away your tinfoil hats!

40 years of Earth Day, but the planet is more poisoned than ever.

**The Price of Education**

I’m writing this to give you, the reader, an idea of what it takes to provide proper supports and bring about positive change and meet the needs of young people and spoiler alert: it takes multiple resources and time. The current average class sizes in both elementary and secondary are well over 20 students and many of those students have an IEP (individual Education Plan) which means they have very specific learning needs, or a BMS (Behaviour Management System) which means they have very specific behavioural issues (ODD or ADD or ADHD), or both. Many of these students would have previously been placed in a section class due to their high needs, but now are placed in a regular classroom. Not to mention all the students without an IEP or BMS who also have specific learning and emotional needs that need to be met. In a regular classroom the needs of all these students, your children, can never possibly be met and to ask a teacher to do this is an impossible task and will only be worse if the proposed cuts go through.

The in class supports that were provided were a result of the support mechanisms that were put in place, the low student to teacher ratio, and the support of the caregivers. This took tremendouscoordination between multiple agencies including the school board, the classroom support staff, Children’s Mental Health, psychologists, social workers and the student’s family members and even then, with all these supports in place, success was far from certain. The proposed cuts by the Ford government make this kind of coordination impossible and will ensure that student’s educational, social, and psychological needs will be far from adequately met, but even worse it will put the safety of everyone in the classroom at risk. This is not how you “put people first,” it’s how you condemn our future and ensure our kids finish last.

Bill Kilpatrick
The deepening global environmental crisis is increasingly a critical issue for many Communist parties around the world. At the upcoming 39th Central Convention of the Communist Party of Canada, delegates will update the Party’s program—in its basic political document. One key section of the Program provides a brief but highly important analysis, linking the scope of the crisis with the capitalist system’s drive for profits, and calling for socialist solutions to save the planet.

This topic has become even more timely since the updates to the Program will be discussed by the CPC were issued last fall. As the updates to the CPC Program state, the contradiction between global capitalism and the environment is now a threat on the level of the danger of thermonuclear weapons and the spread of imperialist wars.

The deepening contradiction by climate scientists that humanity has only about a decade to prevent catastrophic climate change is the most serious indication to date of the supreme urgency of reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Contrary to some who had shrugged off climate change as a myth, Canada has now reported that average annual temperatures are rising faster in Canada than in countries further geographically south.

Here are the paragraphs of the Program Update which will be debated and amended at the CPC Convention:

Under capitalism both labour and nature are drawn down until they are exploited for the capitalists’ overriding objective—private profit. As a system, capitalism can exist only by continually increasing the extent and intensity of exploitation to offset the inevitable impoverishment of labour and plunder of the environment.

Communist contingent at anti-Kinder Morgan rally in Burnaby

The imperialist system is the fundamental cause of environmental degradation and resource-use inequality. Capitalism, as a mode of production and consumption, has led to the destruction of nature at historically unprecedented levels. Some examples in Canada include: the devastating social and health impacts of tar sands extraction on the Indigenous peoples of northern Alberta, the collapse of many East Coast and Pacific fish stocks, the threatened disappearance of Canada’s rainforest and old-growth forests due to clear-cutting practices, the worsening pollution of the Great Lakes watershed, and the further deterioration of the urban environment in many cities.

The deepening contradiction between the capitalist mode of production and the global environment threatens the entire planet. The extent of capitalist expansion over the earth’s territory, combined with massive resource consumption and waste, and the proliferation of new forms and concentrations of toxic products and production has caused an unparalleled destruction of the natural environment and ecological systems and species. Referred to by many scientists as the Anthropocene, the sixth major wave in the Earth’s history of extinctions and loss of biological diversity is directly related to the impact of human economic activities, especially climate change and global warming caused by carbon emissions. Whole regions have been blanketed in air pollution, lake and river systems made toxic, ocean waters and shores despoiled, and soils degraded. The earth’s last major forests are under serious threat. Urban sprawl, traffic, and garbage problems proliferate, nuclear wastes accumulate, water tables are falling, and animal habitat loss continues. While no country is immune, the most severe elements of environmental degradation such as rising ocean levels and droughts, are affecting the peoples of the global souths, who are demanding climate reparations from the transnational corporations and the imperialist powers.

Canada has some of the largest resource bases and remaining environmental reserves in the world. Yet corporate environmental abuse, and government inaction to halt and reverse such devastation, threatens our lands, rivers and coastlines, the air we breathe, our flora and fauna, and the health of the people. Capitalism by its nature is incapable of resolving the environmental crisis since its inherent drive for profit tends to accelerate the expansion and intensification of both resource exploitation. Even the smallest reforms such as specific, limited moratoria on resource use that are being met with stubborn resistance. The hunt for ever-increasing profits is being disguised as a concern for jobs.

Labour’s struggle for safety, health, and job security in the work environment is indivisible with the struggle to protect and restore the whole environment, and for a fundamental shift in thinking and economic relations with the environment.

The greater scale of capitalist exploitation and crises means that environmental concerns are now increasingly linked up to working-class living conditions, including in Canada. Parts of organized labour, particularly some resource-based unions, have bought into the corporate argument that environmental protection is against employment. Protection of the environment is in the interests of sustainable employment, requiring unity of Indigenous peoples and trade unions to pressure governments to act in the real interests of sustainable employment and workers against their common enemy, monopoly capitalism.

Environmental reforms alone cannot stop the global trend of environmental destruction. Many of the protections achieved are being weakened or destroyed in an attempt to make even marginal cuts. Capital has never fully appreciated the scale of potential strategies for breaking the vicious cycle fueled by military as free from restriction or control. Within reported emissions, the US Department of Defence is the largest single institutional emitter of greenhouse gases, while Canadian National Defense emits more greenhouse gas than any other Canadian government department, by a factor of five. And yet, it is still difficult to know the scope of military carbon emissions.

In recent years, this careful omission of key operations and facts from the public debate on this issue has become a focal point for environmental activists. As Oil Change International Director Stephen Kretzmann told the Guardian in 2015, “the atmosphere certainly counts the carbon from the military, therefore we must as well.” In 2010, the DOD recognized climate change as a factor that magnifies security risks, and in 2012, the DOD had an agreement to decrease using alternative energy.

The relationship between greenhouse gas emissions and the American military has become an increasingly urgent topic among environmentalists. According to the US Department of Defence, the American military is responsible for emissions equivalent to 18 per cent reduction from 2005 levels by 2020. In 2017 the DND reported emitting 639,619 tons of CO₂—as much as its average house would emit over 48,000 years, and only 17 per cent reduction from 2005 levels.

At the moment, much of the DND’s reported emissions come from military fuel, and gasoline, whose emissions per kilometre are difficult to offset because of their dependence on fossil fuels and commercial vehicle fleets— all military equipment and overseas operations are exempt. It’s impossible to say what percentage of the Canadian military’s total emissions are counted among these domestic buildings and commercial fleets, let alone how much expenditure has any target or accountability for its emissions. Within this sector, however, the DND is pursuing sustainable planning. In it, they plan $325 million to infrastructure projects that will aim to reduce emissions 40 per cent by 2025. In 2017 the DND reported emitting 639,619 tons of CO₂—
there is nothing, the budget only, the government
get the Liberals another majority
a better future – a better life. To
turn public opinion around for
palpable, after thirty years of
big business parties is
People’s”. The federal budget was supposed
to stop the prosecution of SNC-
just look at their contorted efforts
improved transportation for all.
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By Liz Payne

In early April, foreign ministers from NATO countries are in Washington DC for a series of events to mark the 70th anniversary of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation. Signed in that city on April 4 1949 by the US, Canada, Britain, France, Luxembourg, Belgium, the Netherlands, Italy, Portugal, Denmark, Iceland and Norway, it was the first military treaty binding together the US key imperialist states in Europe and their allies on both sides of the Atlantic to pursue what Winston Churchill had referred to in his Fulton, Missouri speech in 1946 as the US-led “overall strategic concept.”

However dressed up, the plan was to secure the post-war world for monopoly capitalism, bring down the Soviet Union and socialist countries of eastern Europe and crush any green shoots of socialism wherever they might spring up — in the heartlands of imperialism or in the newly liberated former colonies. Article 5 of the Treaty provided for mutual assistance should any member be attacked. The Soviet Union was cast as an existential threat — though all its energy was directed towards rapid post-war reconstruction, securing international arms reduction agreements, banning the use of nuclear weapons and achieving peaceful coexistence.

The mass media whipped up fear of the “Red peril” — a war front attack through conventional warfare and weapons of mass destruction — even by the Kremlin and its Red Army. The treaty and media-induced panic facilitated the moulding of Western Europe as a vast military bloc, the maintenance of huge armies with massive armaments, conscription, the proliferation of US and other military bases in Western Europe as a base for deployment of US troops and warplanes. It also stimulated soaring expenditure on research into ever more lethal warfare, eating up the government science budgets of member countries which could have been directed to meeting people’s needs.

In Britain, government spending on science increased from £5 million in 1937 to £78m in 1947 to £234m in 1953, 80 per cent of which was war-related. It engaged the Soviet Union in an unwanted and economically devastating arms race, forced the formation of the Warsaw Pact alliance for the self-defence of the socialist countries in 1955, and terrorised the whole world with the threat of nuclear annihilation — anything by any method to halt the progress of socialism.

These developments did not, of course, come out of nowhere. While the war still raged across the continent and people everywhere hoped for peace, democracy and freedom from colonial oppression, imperialism was laying the foundations of a very different world that would meet its need for hegemonic control of resources, labour and markets once the current hostilities had ceased. Winston Churchill was on the case on behalf of the right-wing British establishment before the ink had even time to dry on the document bringing war in Europe to a halt. On May 9, 1945 in Berlin, the German high command formally ratified the instruction of total and unconditional surrender. Duplicitious Churchill told Stalin that the future of humanity depended “on the friendship and understanding between the British and Russian peoples,” to which, on May 10, Stalin replied, looking forward to “the further successful and happy development in the post-war period of the friendly relations which have grown up between our countries in the period of the war.

But Churchill had no interest in such things. On May 12 he telegraphed US president Harry Truman that an iron curtain was drawn across Europe, that what lay behind it was unknown and that, from behind it, the Soviet Union might advance at any time to the North Sea and Atlantic shores.

This theme he substantially developed in his infamous Fulton Missouri speech on March 5 1946, considered a key opening salvo of the cold war, declaring the USSSR as aiming at “the indefinite expansion of their power and doctrines” and promoting a proposed “special” relationship between Britain and the US. Only months later, on March 12 1947, the Truman Doctrine announced that the US would provide political, military and economic assistance to all democratic nations under threat from external or internal authoritarian forces.

Truman, of course, had the Soviet threat clearly in mind and thus instigated the equation of communism and totalitarianism and “justification” for US intervention across the globe in any country that didn’t fall in line with imperialism’s plans, as exemplified almost straight away by US economic and military intervention to defeat the communist forces in the civil war in Greece.

The truth was that things had not gone entirely as anticipated for the West. During the 1930s, the capitalist powers had hoped that Hitler fascism, working in favour of the most reactionary monopoly capital in the world, would obliterate socialist thinking and aspirations, together with the labour and political organisations of the working class in Germany and other European states over which they took control.

This had not happened despite all the terror unleashed on communists and left and progressive people everywhere. Moreover, the allies had hoped that the fascist armies would be turned on the socialist Soviet Union and finish it once and for all. But the defeat of fascism by the Red Army in the USSR and Eastern Europe showed that the great tide of revolutionary transformation initiated by the Great October Socialist Revolution could not at that time be withstood.

At the same time, the European capitalist heartlands were battered out and devastated; businesses, industry and infrastructure were wrecked, international trade was virtually wiped out; economies were in ruins, people were hungry and food could not be produced to feed them and governments were bankrupt. At the same time, leadership of imperialism was inevitably passing to the US on whom the west European states by the end of the war relied for bank-rolling their economies and protecting their interests. The need was mutual. For the US, Europe was crucial for its drive for domination. It is ironic that, all after the efforts to create the alliance by the most reactionary forces in Britain, it was the post-war Labour government that took the country into NATO.

In April 1949, the executive of the Communist Party (CPGB) stated categorically that “The Atlantic Pact is not a pact for peace but a pact for war. It is the direct continuation of the policy of Churchill’s Fulton speech and the Truman Doctrine — openly directed to the aim of building up a war front against the socialist Soviet Union and the people’s democracies of eastern Europe.”

And this is what for 42 years it proved to be — thus directly ensuring that the Cold War in 1991 — with the destruction of the Soviet Union, the bringing together of the capitalist countries of eastern and central Europe and the break-up of the Warsaw Pact — was completed.

However, the years that followed saw an extensive diminution of the alliance’s reach — with countries “strategic” to imperialism, including the former socialist countries of eastern Europe, offered full membership or others drawn into the NATO net through its misnamed “Partnership for Peace.”

As NATO expanded and gained in strength, so its belligerence increased, beginning with its invasion of Yugoslavia, whose government posed no threat to the security of any NATO ally. That NATO would not commit against a tiny country and its people. US president Michael C. Short, the chief of the NATO assault on Yugoslavia, summed it up into two: “One cannot win a war without destroying the possibility of a normal life for the population. We must take away from them water, power supply, food and killing air to breathe.” It was a herald of the horrific interventions yet to come to Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq, Libya, Mali, Syria.

This is what contemporary NATO is, the military arm of world imperialism extending and protecting its interests and challenging all rivals, capitalists or those on the path to socialism. 29 countries now have full membership in the Partnership for Peace. US and NATO bases enircle the world.

The growth of the military industrial complexes, members and allies are investing in the latest military hardware and software — missiles, drones, fighter aircraft, bombers and naval vessels — and huge arms systems for WMDs and “shields” from attack, surveillance apparatus, internal security systems and the means for dealing with mass dissent. The billions to be had in profit drive the quest for “new” and “better” means to kill.

NATO’s secretary general Jens Stoltenberg told the world’s media on Monday this week (April 1 - Ed.) that the anniversary programme in Washington would be “an opportunity to celebrate seven decades of peace and prosperity for the transatlantic nations and an opportunity to look to our future together.”

This is the stuff of nightmares.

There is nothing that NATO has done or plans to do that gives the peoples of the world any reason for cause for celebration. We reject it absolutely. We call for Britain to come out of NATO, for NATO itself to be disbanded and for a left-led government that represents a truly international foreign policy of peaceful coexistence and solidarity.

However, it is limited to workers employed by contractors who are members of the Incorporated Master-Builders Association of Jamaica (IMAJ), who are represented by the Bustamante Industrial Trade Union (BITU), the National Workers Union (NWU) and the National Union of Public and Social Security (MLSS).

The JIC workers received a six per cent pay increase this year, with a further five per cent increase scheduled for February next year in their hourly rates for a normal 40-hour work week lasting over five days. They are also paid an overtime rate of time-and-a-half for working extra hours Monday to Friday, and double time for Saturdays and Sundays. Other allowances include: height and weight, deep-pit work, night pay, over water; subsistence allowances; and night premium.

Macri’s route to re-election. “We are heading to the abyss,” said another worker to Agence-France Presse. “As consumers, indiscriminate inflation, massive dismissals that have no reason, and who are represented by the Union National of Public and Social Security (MLSS). The JIC workers received a six per cent pay increase this year, with a further five per cent increase scheduled for February next year in their hourly rates for a normal 40-hour work week lasting over five days. They are also paid an overtime rate of time-and-a-half for working extra hours Monday to Friday, and double time for Saturdays and Sundays. Other allowances include: height and weight, deep-pit work, night pay, over water; subsistence allowances; and night premium.

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Venezuela is America’s current target for mass destabilization

By independent journalist Eva Bartlett, https://21stcenturywire.com

date: April 4

America has for years been waging war against Venezuela, including debilitating sanctions which have dramatically affected the country’s ability to purchase medicines, and even mundane replacement parts needed in hospital emergency equipment. Alongside the economic war there has been a steady propaganda war. Over the past months the propaganda has escalated dramatically, from corporate media to the social media echo chambers.

I’ve been in various areas of Caracas since March 10, and I’ve seen none of this “civil unrest” that corporate media are talking about. I’ve walked around Caracas, usually on my own, and haven’t experienced the worry for my safety corporate media is telling Venezuelans they should suddenly feel more than normal in Venezuela.

In fact, I see little difference from the Venezuela I knew in 2010 when I spent half a year here. In both periods the system is absolutely worse and in my absence I missed the years of economic collapse, government corruption, opposition supporters street violence – a benign term for the guarimbas which are outbreaks of violence by burning people alive, among other violence against people and security forces.

On Feb. 23, a month after a previously largely-unknown, US-backed man named Juan Guaido claimed he was the president, there was a short-lived period of instability at the Venezuelan border with Colombia, when America insisted on forcing aid trucks into Venezuela.

Aid trucks that burned that day were the result of attacks on masked young men on the Colombian side, and not from the Venezuelan military as western corporate media and many on social media would have you believe. Less-known is that the ‘aid trucks’ contained very odd humanitarian aid, including nails and wire.

Were their fake concern genuine, US corporate media could have told us what China, Russia, and others, among others, have done and sent the aid through appropriate channels, like the UN and the Red Cross. America’s attempt to ram trucks through Venezuela’s border has been revealed as the cheap propaganda stunt that it was.

A couple of weeks later, suddenly there was a very timely country-wide power outage for six days, affecting most things here and across the nation. Around 300 community brought their meat and vegetables here to help the people. My fridge is empty, I stored it. We brought and I’ve heard complaints of boxes being late in reaching some communities. However, I’ve been told – including by a woman I interviewed yesterday who works herself in CLAP distribution – that problems lie in corruption on a local level, individuals in communities not distributing fairly or evenly.

Heathens like Marco Rubio, and script reading corporate media, try to maintain that President Maduro has little support. But massive rallies of support, and a notable absence of opposition rallies of recent, counter that propaganda.

On March 16, for two hours I walked with Venezuelans at their anti-Imperialist, pro-government march, filiming them, speaking with them, hearing person after person insist on their support for their elected president, Maduro.

Many or most of those marching were from Caracas’ poorest communities, the darker skinned, Afro-descendant Venezuelans that are scarcely given a voice by corporate media, almost certainly because they are ardent supporters of the government and Bolivarian revolution.

When I asked about their feelings of corporate media coverage of Venezuela, people told me it wasn’t depicting the reality, “they make it up, it’s all lies, all lies. The only president we recognize is Nicolas Maduro. And we want this man, Juan Guaido, to be arrested immediately”.

A young tax lawyer told me: “We’re here to support our (Bolivarian) project. We don’t want any war. We want medicine for our people – we don’t want sanctions from any government that prevent us from purchasing medicine. It’s very difficult for us to bring what’s needed for our people.”

Leaving the still crowded downtown where thousands of Caracas’ eastern districts, hoping to attend one of the three or four opposition actions that a local journalist told me they had been tweeting about. None panned out. We ended up in a cistern here. Around 300 of us were from Caracas, and in it’s upper middle-class areas of Chacao and Maracaibo, where electronics were the first to go.

Venezuela is America’s current target for mass destabilization by a combination of cyber, electromagnetic and physical attacks on the power grids (like the alleged secret US plan to do the same to Iran’s grid), and the latter a direct physical attack on the Guri complex, causing a fire at three transformers.

Clearly, the goal of such attacks is to create so much suffering and frustration among the public that there is chaos, and a “needed” US intervention.

The chaos has not happened, the people have refused it.

Join the 2019 Guevara Volunteer Work Brigade to Cuba!

Register on-line today!

www.canadianworkoncubacuba.ca/brigade

canadianworkoncubacuba.ca/brigade

A project of the Canadian Network on Cuba in partnership with Cuban Institute for the Friendship of the Peoples (ICAP)

A Canadian formed in Haiti and the Dominican Republic, the Americas Organizing campaign over the past 30 years, with the moral and political support of people around the world, has developed a significant base of support for longer term solutions to the problem of underdevelopment in the Americas. The campaign has been successful in bringing to the attention of the world, the public and the governments of the region, the urgent need for solidarity and the need to address the root causes of the problems that affect the region.

Long censored exposé makes a comeback


Join the 2019 Guevara Volunteer Work Brigade to Cuba!

Join volunteers from across Canada to learn about Cuba in a unique way: volunteering side by side with Cubans!

Experience Cuba through volunteer work, workshops, meetings, culture, travel, and friendship.

The 2019 Brigade is going to:

- Matanzas, a centre of Afro-Cuban culture
- Vinales Valley, a natural wonder
- Havana, celebrating its 500th anniversary!

Dates: May 23 - Jun 6, 2019
Price: $1,100 (excludes airfare to and from Cuba)
Includes all in-Cuba travel, accommodation, meals.

Accommodation is in an international solidarity camp outside Havana and a hotel in Matanzas.

Have questions? Need help fundraising?
Contact coordinator Salesh Wazzuuddin
289 990 7063 chevronbrigade@gmail.com

Military GHG emissions...

Mexico on enormous salaries, only to have their hearts plucked out and eaten by the Moguls of modern mammon.”

This is what O’Flaherty must have experienced with the filming of his own novel The Informer by his distant cousin John Ford. Instead of truism to his original, set in the slums of Dublin, Hollywood’s celluloid manifestations of his two central female characters are sophisticated, elegant, and photogenic, mocking their originals. Instead of making a film based on the Dublin working-class experience, O’Flaherty realises them clearly and exposes their early roots.

Apart from the imposition of Hollywood-friendly names and appearances, he exposes the use of cosmetic surgery, drugs, screenplay factories, power war and sex as something hardly as intrinsic to the industry. While these are now slowly becoming more obvious to the public, along with their toll on the mental health of those involved, O’Flaherty recognises them clearly and exposes their early roots.

Here, it is a struggle to hold on to the cinematic integrity and identity. Power and money swallow everything, without regard for human life. Apart from the narrator, who frequently links up with the Communist Party, Proletarian Power, reveals “Hollywood Cemetery” as a cemetery where the remains of day bourgeois intellectuals are buried, after being fattened like the sacrificial victims in ancient in the inhabitants of tenements beyond their monetary value.

While in Hollywood, O’Flaherty believe that the genuine masterpiece, the historical novel of which O’Flaherty is the major artistic grappling in Ireland with the nation’s 19th-century colonial holocaust. O’Flaherty presents a differentiated panorama of the starving peasantry, the impoverished gombeen men, clergy with and without a spine, and deeply inhuman British colonists.

O’Flaherty hoped that Ford would make Famine into a film after he approached in 1937. Had Ford taken on this material, and resolutely portrayed this Ireland, along with its resistance, it could have made significant contribution to a cultural acknowledgement of colonialism in all its inhumanity. This did not happen. Hollywood Cemetery is a part answer as to why not.

Fight back, for the assertion of humanity even when confronted with great adversity, is always a theme in O’Flaherty’s work. Significantly, the two Irish masters are a film cemetery rebel. The novel also attacks the Irishmen whose intelligence flies in the face of the gender role assigned to them by Hollywood. A gender-fluid rebel, who yearns for the novel in which O’Flaherty seems to speak out twice on our times and is surely far ahead.

O’Flaherty had started the book while still in the US and finished it in France during the summer of 1935. His first draft was returned to him by his London publisher as too outspoken. Following its revision, it was finally published on November 18, 1935.

Lucia Lorincz, a PhD candidate at the Halifil School of International Affairs is one of Canada’s foremost experts on Joint US/Canadian report from Oil Change International found that US spending on the Iraq war, 2003-2010, included a $30 billion cost of all greenhouse gas emissions. She is adamant that this is a fundamental issue for environmentalists, but one that is often avoided: “Not only is it a neglect of several billion dollars and no one is talking about the global investments in renewable energy that would be sufficient to deal with global warming today.”

Tackling the issue and exclude carbon emissions for the military in all their reports.

The lack of information, as well as the apparent lack of drive from prominent political figures can impede action on decreasing defense emissions. Lorincz, however, is hopeful that change can happen and can be catalyzed by individuals.

Lorincz recommends calling your MP as well as your local environmental group to organize against the buying of new fighter jets. “We need a national campaign which will, she predicts, purchase $3.5 billion for the F-35 fighter jet. Lorincz suggests a more specific call to action in our province, “Nova Scotia specifically has a responsibility to prevent the building of new warships in the province.”

The carbon emissions from...
UNTITLED, 2017, the words Uygur and Xinjiang were virtual unknowns in Canadian media. Suddenly, in the last week, the mainstream corporate media in Canada began to boost a steady, and growing number of articles and reports about the Chinese government’s clampdown on ethnic minorities, and reports and articles about the Chinese government’s clampdown on ethnic minorities in its northwestern province. Specifically, the reports repeat the mantra that China has imprisoned over 1 million members of the predominately Muslim Uyghur minority in Xinjiang, placing them into forced labour and indoctrination camps.

Why the sudden interest?

Certainly, China has intervened quite forcefully in Xinjiang over the past decade. This is a coordinated intervention that emerged in the early 1990s, by “forces inside and outside” that its approach to Xinjiang reflects “a policy that strikes the balance between compassion and its anti-poverty strategy.

Moreover, Xinjiang has been part of China’s territory, reflecting an expansion of states back at least to 200 BCE. In 1955 the People’s Republic of China created the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, which remains both the territorial integrity and economic core of the country. However, separatist sentiment also has a long history among Uyghurs in the region, often expressed through calls for autonomy and independence.

By the beginning of April, members of the World Uyghur Congress (WUC) visited Ottawa to lobby the Canadian government to impose sanctions and coordinate an international campaign to pressure the Chinese government. In the last month, the WUC made similar visits to New Zealand, Italy, and the EU.

The Liberal government’s response to Xinjiang, while consistent with the Western imperialist mandate to impose sanctions (and, in the process, to justify various forms of foreign interference in China’s sovereign affairs), is notable for its economic dimensions. With Xinjiang’s rich mineral and energy resources, the WUC circulates stories accusing the Chinese government of systematically harvesting live organs from imprisoned Uyghurs, to sell on the underground market to transplant recipients.

Add up – a million prisoners among a population of about 25 million, restrictions on growing boards or abstaining from tobacco and alcohol, systematic living conditions that – it starts to sound like the stuff of cheap Cold War movies. The purpose of this article is to not let this political narrative go unexamined. This isn’t a story of Xinjiang’s freedom movement. It’s a classic case of the “White Man’s Burden” that deeply embroils the modern humanitarian intervention is the noble enterprise of civilised nations to rescue their oppressed and savage cousins. (And, in the process, to justify brutal colonization, division and subjugation.)

The Canadian government has enthusiastically promoted humanitarian intervention (in Responsibility to Protect) as a bulwark against imperialism aggressions against Yugoslavia, Libya, Syria, Venezuela and many other sovereign countries. Further, it has an enormous interest in securing access for Canadian contractors to Xinjiang’s rich mineral and energy resources.

This interest must be exposed and stopped.

By Dave McKee, Toronto

APRIL 16-30, 2019 | 11

WHAT’S LEFT

Vancouver, BC

The Coming Federal Election, forum with Communist Party leader Liz Rowley, Wed., April 24, 7:30 pm, at the CSE, 706 Clark Drive.


May Day March, Wed., May 1, gather 5:30 pm at Cornwall Park (NE corner of 41st & Victoria Dr.); rally at Thornton Park (Main St. Skytrain), organized by Vancouver & District Labour Council May Day Ctte.

People’s Voice Banquet, celebrate the PV Press Fund Drive and mark the 100th anniversary of Winnipeg General Strike. Sun., June 15; doors 5:30 pm, Victoria Drive Community Hall, 2026 E. 43 Ave for tickets call 604-254-0936.

ONTARIO

Ontario Federation of Labour province-wide day of action response to provincial budget, Wed., April 17, details at www.oflevents.ca.

Toronto, ON

Protect and improve public health care! NO to cuts & privatization. Rally at Queen’s Park, Tuesday, April 30, Noon-1 pm. Organized by Ontario Health Coalition.


CPC CONVENTION BANQUET, Sat., May 18, 6:30 pm, at Casa Madeira Hall, 1621 Dupont (at Dundas St. West), dinner, cash bar, live music, tickets $30

PEOPLE’S VOICE

Deadline for the issue dated May 1-15, Thursday, April 18 for the issue dated May 16-31, Thursday, May 2.

Send submissions to PV EDITORIAL OFFICE, 706 Clark Drive, Vancouver, BC, V5L 3J1, pvvoice@telus.net.

People’s Voice

The Liberal budget: failure to launch…

The Liberal budget: failure to launch…

continued from page 6

elsewhere. On taxation.

Overall, this is a budget for Big Business and the military. It aims to portray the Liberals as the natural governing party for corporate Canada in increasingly difficult times, with a recession on the near horizon and right wing populism on the rise. It aims to maintain the “stability” with the Tories’ embrace of right-wing populist, and a People’s Coalition that

We need new governments and new priorities: a people’s agenda and a People’s Coalition that will put people’s needs ahead of corporate greed.

Curb corporate power.

Strengthen democracy. Unite the labour and people’s movements, and create a fighting force for real, progressive change, and in the composition of Parliament.

Washington-based Carpenter’s journal and the Winnipeg Free Press.

As an active member of the GDR-Canada Friendship Association, he visited the German Democratic Republic on several occasions, meeting with state and movement leaders. He was a committed communist who emphasized internationalism, particularly with the GDR, and was deeply involved in the revolutionary workers’ movement, Marxism, all of which he did.

Romeo joined the Communist Party in 1967 and remained an active member until his final year, distributing the People’s Voice in his neighbourhood.

Romeo was predeceased by his beloved wife Barbara, also a WLC delegate and Party member. Together they had three children, and Romeo leaves also grandchildren and great-grandchildren. ●
The bombs start again. Israel, as if on a timer, begins to pulverize Gaza. The bombs strike from one end of the country to another, striking with the most devastating force against the protests that have been ongoing for a year. There is a shudder from Gaza, phone calls to friends who say that they are fearful that this bombing run will escalate. Nothing is beyond Israel’s Benjamin Netanyahu, who will use these bombs as an advertisement for his campaign to be re-elected as Israel goes to the polls on April 9. The phone lines are clogged by the sound of scared children and anxious adults, a building demolished, the warplanes shrieking overhead.

Abu Artema’s Birds

In January of last year, the Palestinian journalist Ahmed Abu Artema sat at his computer in his home in Rafah (Gaza, Palestine). He had just returned home from a hike along the 13-kilometer fence that sits on the Mediterranean Sea. There is a hint of paradise in Gaza—there is one side, the citrus groves on the other. But the entire piece of land is dotted with barbed wire fences and ditches, with armed guards on alert to shoot where and when they will, and the sea is patrolled by Israeli naval vessels, which routinely stop and arrest Palestinians—whomever is hemmed in by the Israeli occupation. The land is dotted with barbed wire fences and ditches, with armed guards on alert to shoot where and when they will, and the sea is patrolled by Israeli naval vessels, which routinely stop and arrest Palestinians—whomever is hemmed in by the Israeli occupation.

Abu Artema decided to answer, plainly, was that they would be shot.

Land Day

In 1976, the Israeli government announced the scorch of 20,000 dunams of land in the Galilee. The government declared a curfew so that it could proceed with the land theft without protest. It miscalculated. Pressure grew from below, so Yawf al-Kid— the mayor of Nazareth (the largest Palestinian city inside Israel’s 1948 lines)—called for a general strike. The strike on March 30, 1976, was almost total, with the Israeli State reacting to it with ferocity. The land was seized, but March 30 became a monumental day. Land Day, an annual commemoration of the struggle against the Israeli occupation. Abu Artema’s plan was to start the protests on Land Day and then continue until May 15, the day to commemorate the Nakba or the expulsion of the Palestinians from their homeland in 1948. But the energy opened up by the Great March of Return could not be contained. This protest, held each Friday, began with 30,000 Palestinians on Land Day and in 2018 with tens of thousands of Palestinians each week.

Suffocation

When Abu Artema took to his Facebook page, he would not have been able to drink water—even if boiled—from his tap. That month, the Palestinian Water Authority warned that 97 percent of Gaza’s water was undrinkable because of high levels of sewage and salinity. It was lucky that Abu Artema was able to get on Facebook. Gaza only gets power for about four hours per day. The Israelis blame the Hamas government in Gaza for these problems. Such a story is only possible for someone with no memory.

In each of the punctual bombings of Gaza since Operation Hot Winter (2008), Israel has targeted Gaza’s power plant and its water sources (wells, water towers, sewage pipelines and sewage treatment plants). Millions of dollars of damage are done to Gaza’s infrastructure, which then cannot be repaired because Israel prevents materials from entering the enclave. Because of the Israeli bombings, there is no electricity in Gaza, the United Nations has found, will become “uninhabitable by 2020.”

It is no wonder the Great March of Return has seen such large crowds, so many people—including children—coming to the fence each week despite the tear gas. Palestinians set up tents out of range of the snipers so that they could feed the protesters and heal them. The destruction of infrastructure put a heavy burden on Palestinian women, knowing they were clearly recognisable as such. The Chair of the panel, Santiago Arizpe, went further, saying that the panel “has reasonable grounds to believe that during the Great March of Return, Israeli soldiers committed violations of international human rights and humanitarian law.” Of these violations may constitute war crimes or crimes against humanity and must be immediately investigated by Israel.

Israel

So, there it stands. The International Committee of the Red Cross panel says that war crimes were committed, but the legal question of whether there is a case against Israel is for the government of Israel. Must be immediately investigated by Israel. But Israel will do no such thing. It has rejected the panel and its findings. There will be no investigation of the war crimes beyond what the panel has found. Instead, Israel has begun to bomb from the sky. Israel will hold an election on April 9, a little more than a week after the first anniversary of the Great March of Return. On the anniversary itself, tens of thousands of Palestinians are expected to walk towards the perimeter. Last Friday, on March 22, Israeli soldiers killed Nabi Abu Salhe (age 29) and Jihad Manir Khadarah (age 24). Israeli tear gas continues to flow into the medical field station at Bureij Refugee Camp. About 181 Palestinians were wounded on that day. This shows that neither the Palestinian protesters nor the Israeli soldiers will back down.

Israel’s government is undaunted by the UN findings. The Palestinians have no choice but to protest. The confrontation will escalate on the first anniversary of the Great March of Return. The Israelis will be harsher, harsher to give Benjamin Netanyahu the kind of massive support that allows him to bully his way back to power. Abu Artema’s birds—perhaps they are terns or gulls—continue to fly back and forth. They emerge out of the sea with the memory of Malcom Darwish, the poem that asks, Where should we go after the last freedom? Will the birds fly after the last sky? Palestinians will remain in this vast congested open-air prison called Gaza, hemmed in and forgotten, bombarded once more, mercilessly, by the regime of Israel.

By Vijay Prashad