GET OUT OF NAFTA - WHILE WE CAN

No, let's not make a deal. Instead of getting in deeper, losing ever bigger chunks of our sovereignty and independence, Canada should get out of NAFTA now while we can...

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BC labour movement:
"make workers' rights and higher minimum wage the top priority"
- see page 3 -

Trump says "no"
US President Donald Trump has pulled his country out of the Paris accord, denying scientific opinion on climate change, on an issue that may well determine the fate of the Earth and human civilisation.

Inside

Cuba takes the lead
The historic struggle to end homophobia and transphobia is an important part of defending socialism in Cuba, the "island of freedom".

Learning from history
Over 200 years ago, the people of Venezuela rose up against Spanish colonialism to win their independence. This historic episode is relevant for today's resistance against Yankee imperialism.
By Martin Khor

By withdrawing the United States from the Paris Agreement, President Donald Trump abided not only leadership but membership of the community of nations cooperating to tackle climate change, the most serious crisis facing humanity.

Trump’s announcement was shocking, even though it was not unexpected. It was shocking for showing the extreme lengths to which the President would go to deny scientific opinion on climate change and defy the position of almost all other countries, on an issue that may well determine the fate of the Earth and human civilisation.

The decision was against the advice of most members of his inner-most circle of advisors, many corporate leaders, and the other G7 leaders who spent an entire frustrating day in Sicily trying to explain to him the critical importance of the Paris deal. Just as it did as the withdrawal was Trump’s speech justifying it. He never acknowledged the existence of the climate change crisis, which poses the gravest threat to the survival of our planet. He lamented that Paris would hinder US jobs, mentioning coal in particular while ignoring the jobs in renewable energy that would increase manifold if the US adopted an energy policy to counter global warming.

His main groucho was that the Paris Agreement was “too soft” for the US vis-à-vis all other countries, as if it had been designed specifically to cheat the US. And he grumbled that the US would have to pay billions of dollars to developing countries through the Green Climate Fund.

The speech was riddled with many misconceptions and factual errors, which many scientists, politicians and NGOs are now busy refuting.

Condemnation came fast and furious from within the US and around the world. Trump indicated the US is open to re-negotiating the Paris agreement. But European leaders quickly responded there is no room for the possibility. The UNFCCC secretariat correctly pointed out that a single country cannot decide on a re-negotiation. Indeed, it would require a consensus of its 195 members to make amendments to the Paris Agreement or even agree to a re-negotiation.

That will not happen, as the agreement is a delicately balanced outcome which took many years of long and complicated negotiations to achieve. To re-negotiate it would in effect kill it.

The best response to the Trump decision is for others to take up the mantle and do everything to combat climate change. In the US itself, many states and cities have announced they will form an alliance and continue with their climate actions.

An increasing number of countries including China, India, Germany, France, Italy and Canada as well as the European Union leadership have announced they will honour their Paris commitments despite the US pull-out. There are no signs, so far at least, that any other country intends to follow the US out of Paris.

Indeed, the Trump decision to leave Paris will be a milestone marking a huge loss of international prestige, influence and power for the US. In a world so divided by ideology, inequality and economic competition, the Paris agreement was one rare area of global consensus and cooperation on climate change.

For the US to pull out of that hard-won consensus is a shocking abdication not only of leadership but of its membership of the community of nations in its joint effort to face up to perhaps its gravest challenge.

The lack of appreciation of this great crisis facing humanity and the narrow-mindedness of his concerns were embarrassingly evident when Trump made his climate change remarks. He was interested to revive the sunset coal sector than in the promise of the fast developing renewable energy industries.

He was convinced reducing emissions would cost millions of jobs, ignoring the record of many countries like Germany that have de-coupled emissions growth with economic growth. He was miserly towards poor countries which are receiving only a fraction of what they were promised and what they need for climate mitigation and adaptation, while celebrating hundreds of billions of dollars worth of new deals for his armaments industry.

The US is asked to do more than others in the Paris agreement when in fact the US has the highest emissions per capita of any major country and its pledged rates of emissions reduction are significantly lower than those of others.

Just as alarming as withdrawing from Paris is Trump’s comprehensive dismantling of US climate change policies and measures. This will make the US a laggard – a country not necessarily interested to revive the sunset coal sector than in the promise of the fast developing renewable energy industries.

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ACTRA, the union representing over 23,000 English-language Canadian film and television performers, has written to the Canadian government to protect Canadian culture and cultural industries in the up-coming renegotiation of the North American Free Trade Agreement.

“We want to see Canadian stories on our screens, Canada’s government must maintain the power to set our own, uniquely Canadian, cultural policies,” said ACTRA National Executive Director Stephen Waddell. “Maintaining and enhancing a cultural exemption has been a key priority for ACTRA since the Free Trade Agreement with the U.S. was first negotiated in the 1980s. As President Trump looks for changes to NAFTA, Canada has to be clear: Canadian culture must not be up for negotiation.”

During July, ACTRA submitted its recommendations to the Canadian government as it prepares for a re-negotiation of NAFTA. Key recommendations include maintaining or strengthening the existing NAFTA cultural exemption and specifically avoiding adoption of the cultural paragraph found in the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement (TPP). The TPP’s cultural provisions are by far the weakest protection that developing countries, transparency of actions and of finance; and technology transfer.

Since Trump has already made clear the US wants to leave Paris, and no longer subscribes to its emissions pledges (nationally determined contributions) nor will it spend $35 billion pledged on the Green Climate Fund, it would be strange to enable the country to still behave in the negotiations with the same status as other members that remain committed to their pledges. How to deal with this issue is important so that the UNFCCC negotiations are not derailed in the four years ahead.

Finally, the Trump portrayal of developing countries like India and China as profiting from the US membership of the Paris Agreement was disgraceful.

China is the number one emitter of carbon dioxide in absolute terms, with the US second and India third. But this is only because the two developing countries have huge populations of over a billion each.

In per capita terms, carbon dioxide emissions in 2015 were 16.1 tonnes for the US, 7.7 tonnes for China and 1.9 tonnes for India, according to one authoritative estimate. It would be unfair to ask China and India to have the same mitigation target as the US, especially since the US has had the benefit of using or over-using more than their fair share of cheap fossil-fuel energy for over a century more than the other two countries.

A recent New York Times editorial (May 22) compared the recent performance of Indian and US investment in the renewable energy of the US under President Trump. It states: “Until recently, China and India were outpacing the US in the battle against climate change. That reputation looks very different. Countries like China and India have greatly accelerated their investments in cost-effective renewable energy sources and reduced their reliance on fossil fuels.” It’s America – Donald Trump’s America – that now looks like the laggard.”

It cites recent research that China and India now easily exceed their Paris agreement targets, with China’s emissions down 40% below their 2005 levels. India’s are down by 15% below 2005 and India and US have reduced their fossil fuel sources by 2022, eight years ahead of schedule. It criticises the Trump administration for taking any steps to undo the Paris agreement and through his reversal of Obama’s climate change policies, President Trump has reneged on his future negotiations with other countries he was sure would form an alliance and continue with their climate actions.

The decision was against the advice of most members of his inner-most circle of advisors, many corporate leaders, and the other G7 leaders who spent an entire frustrating day in Sicily trying to explain to him the critical importance of the Paris deal. Just as it did as the withdrawal was Trump’s speech justifying it. He never acknowledged the existence of the climate change crisis, which poses the gravest threat to the survival of our planet. He lamented that Paris would hinder US jobs, mentioning coal in particular while ignoring the jobs in renewable energy that would increase manifold if the US adopted an energy policy to counter global warming.

His main groucho was that the Paris Agreement was “too soft” for the US vis-à-vis all other countries, as if it had been designed specifically to cheat the US. And he grumbled that the US would have to pay billions of dollars to developing countries through the Green Climate Fund.
Labour leaders join BC NDP cabinet

On July 18, the new B.C. NDP cabinet, led by Premier John Horgan, was sworn in at the Legislature, marking the first time in 16 years the province has seen a change in leadership. Horgan, along with most of his 30-cabinet team, were sworn in by the Minister of Labour. Prior to running for office, Bains was a member of the Board of Governors at Kwantlen University College from 1993 to 1999, serving as vice chair for 3 years. He was also an elected officer of Steelworkers-IWA Canada Local 2171 for over 15 years. He served most recently as vice-president of his local, where he led negotiations and engaged in bargaining for better working conditions for both workers and employers. In opposition, Bains was the NDP critic for Jobs, Employment, Labour and Worksafe BC. His hiring came over a 10-year period, where he became active in union affairs, the Canadian Auto Workers, Local 111 – and led successful campaigns as a transit advocate. His new role is as Parliamentary Secretary for Prosperity and Recovery.

Melanie Mark, the new Advanced Education Minister, is the first female Indigenous cabinet minister in British Columbia. Mark’s portfolio will focus on eliminating interest rates on post-secondary loans, and finding other ways to improve affordability.

Heritage Toronto has honoured the 135th anniversary of the hiring of the city’s first black letter carrier. Albert Jackson was 25 when he worked his first day for the Post Office, on May 12, 1882. His achievement was honoured on July 21 with a commemorative plaque project forward.

VDLC debates civic byelection

By Peter Marcus

The guest speaker at the July 18 Vancouver and District Labour Council meeting was Adrian Wu, who addressed sex worker rights and a Labour Council policy toward the issue. As a result of the resignation of Vision Vancouver City Council member Geoff Meggs, who is now the chief of staff for John Horgan, the new NDP provincial premier, a bye-election will be held on October 14 for his replacement. The Labour Council will strike a union vetting committee to decide which candidate to support. There may be a need to hold a bye-election for the School Board as well, as the previous nine trustees were fired and replaced by a single appointee by the previous Christy Clark Liberal government. The VDLC committee may be considering candidates for trustee as well.

The meeting heard that the Hospital Employees’ Union contracted with social service companies who have supported job action with a 96% strike vote. Wages and benefits are the main issues. The United Food and Commercial Workers won an 8 to 12% increase for members at Safeway and SuperValu.

The Council delegates voted to send a letter to Justin Trudeau, with copies to the other federal leaders, supporting the settlement agreement with the City of Quebec, which would allow Quebec to maintain its provincial government. The issue was discussed during the pizza educational before the meeting led by Cathy Copps of Free Omar Khadr Campaign. On what Faisal, which included support for the processing of raw logs. A rally for locked out CUPE 1816 members at Pacific Blue Cross, which handles medical, dental and extended medical benefits for many union members, was announced for July 20. Many union members turned up that day at the Vancouver offices of Pacific Blue Cross to show solidarity.

Toronto honours first black letter carrier

The first priority needs to be decision. The country’s highest education critic, Glen Hansman, president of the BCTF, echoed Lanzinger’s approval of “giving teachers the education system to come up to speed” about the issues facing the education system, said Hansman. But that hasn’t happened, said Hansman. Many districts were “scrabbling” in June when they learned they weren’t going to receive the money they had expected, he said. This includes large districts, like the Vancouver School District, Hansman isn’t the only union president to say they need that staff immediately, said Lanzinger. “It is not optional,” she said. “It means teachers will be able to have collective bargaining agreements, and for example, the government has spent years changing the curriculum. The government supports many of those changes, he said. But other changes, like those to assessment and report cards, caused a lot of stress for teachers.

Teachers are “faced with a lot of changes and not enough resources in place in schools to make them successful,” he said. “It’s important to recognize the importance of people who have so much on their plate.”

Hansman wasn’t the only union leader on the government to take action on education. Paul Faoro, president of the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) BC said in a statement that he hopes the government will work with Minister Fleming to “restore the system after 16 years of chaos”.

The release singles out the need for the ministry of education to provide better services in time for the next school year.

The government also needs to re-evaluate long-term educational gains. As a result of recent gains, the government has spent years changing the curriculum. The government supports many of those changes, he said. But other changes, like those to assessment and report cards, caused a lot of stress for teachers.

The government needs to ensure that the new government will have a less “chaotic” relationship with unions. The Liberals were known to “use the legislative hammer” to gain concessions, calling their relationship with labour a “dark cloud” hanging over the province. The government needs to ensure that the new government will have a less “chaotic” relationship with unions. The Liberals were known to “use the legislative hammer” to gain concessions, calling their relationship with labour a “dark cloud” hanging over the province.

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Another longstanding demand by a wide range of anti-poverty groups has been a serious increase in social assistance and disability rates. The government has raised the rates by $100/month, which is seen as a first step but far from sufficient. (Photo by K. Cario)
The hate campaign against Khadr

The nauseating campaign to whip up hatred against Omar Khadr is a signal of the direction the Conservative party intends to take leading up to the 2019 federal election. Aiming the racist rhetoric of Donald Trump and other demagogues, Tory leader Andrew Scheer has been playing the classic bait and switch game, falsely appealing to the public on completely irrelevant grounds. Their true intention is not to force the federal government to reverse the court ruling in the Khadr case (which would be utterly illegal) but to create a reactionary political and social terrain for the next election, making it easier for the Tories to regain a majority.

This hate campaign is not about whether military veterans should receive adequate pensions, or whether Indigenous communities should have clean drinking water, to give just two examples. The Conservative Party had a decade in office to address these and many other issues. Instead, they chose to relentlessly slash taxes for the big resource corporations and the rich, making it "necessary" to chop public services.

Who is really at fault here? The young boy thrown into a US war of terror by our trusted allies, to make it easier and just recently, trying to raise the Access Pipeline, trying to raise $15 billion to destroy our commons. The torrent of hate against Omar Khadr is a sickening foretaste that we, as a sovereign nations, have not consented to and will all pay for.

The young boy thrown into a US war of terror, wounded in battle, and then jailed for ten years until he reluctantly signed a "confession" so that he could eventually return home? Or the politicians who refused to lift a finger while this child, this boy, was thrown in jail?

The torrent of hate against Omar Khadr is a sickening foretaste that we, as a sovereign nations, have not consented to and will all pay for. But this strategy can be defeated, starting by speaking out in support of the compensation agreement, and against the vicious bigots who use the Conservative party to advance their agenda.

Celebration and caution

More than two months after voters cast their ballots for change in Victoria, the Liberal era in B.C. expired on July 18, with few tears shed. One of Christy Clark’s bizarre tactics to cling to office was her final throne speech, plagiarizing from the NDP and Green platforms in the May 9 election. Her gambit showed that public opinion in B.C. has swung against letting the big resource corporations run the province, even among Liberal voters. The question is whether the NDP will act on its campaign promises, and how quickly.

The BC Federation of Labour has called on the new government to improve labour rights and raise the minimum wage. It seems likely that the NDP will pledge to implement a $15/hour minimum wage by 2019 will be kept, despite sharp resistance from the big fast food monopolies and other corporate interests. Even $15 is far from a living wage in the most expensive province in Canada, and we urge the labour movement to press for higher increases. Changes to the Labour Code are also needed, to make it easier for employees to join unions, which are vital to help narrow the enormous gap between rich and poor. Struggles around bread and butter issues will continue, no matter which party is in office.

Anti-pipeline activists and few people welcomed the NDP’s move to raise social assistance and disability rates by $100 per month. But these increases still fail the skyrocketing costs of rent, food, and other necessities. The new government reversed the huge tax breaks given by the Liberals to upper income brackets and the corporations, the one-percent in British Columbia will keep getting richer, while the poor get poorer – but maybe at a slightly slower pace.

Our advice in this remarkable situation? Celebrate the positive gains, but keep the heat on the Horgan government.

From the Union of BC Indians

An assembly of Tribal leaders of the Great Sioux Nation along with leaders of the Ponca Nation in Nebraska and Oklahoma today met, in the sacred Black Hills in South Dakota, with a large delegation of Chiefs from First Nations from Canada who have signed the Treaty Alliance Against Tar Sands Expansion. The tribal leaders and chiefs sent a clear message on this July 4th US “Independence Day” about their independence as Sovereign Indigenous Nations and to announce a new cross-border alliance to stop the Keystone XL pipeline.

The historic gathering challenging the pro tar sands US and the US to harm their lands and pollute their water comes on the heels of widespread Indigenous resistance in Canada challenging the July 1st celebrations of Canada's 150th anniversary. The Treaty Alliance Against Tar Sands Expansion, after the signing today of the 10th 1st Nation’s First Nations from the Great Sioux Nation, Ponca Nation and Blackfoot Confederacy, now counts over 130 First Nations and Tribes who have signed the Indigenous Treaty barring the passage of each of the four pipelines that the Tar Sands industry of Alberta is hoping to build in order to expand production. TransCanada's Keystone XL, Enbridge's Line 3 pipeline through Minnesota, Kinder Morgan's Trans Mountain Expansion through B.C. and TransCanada's Energy East.

“If you don’t think we’re nation-to-nation you’ve isolated remnants of a bygone era, just watch us exercise our sovereign right to protect our land and our people by stopping these pipeline abominations from threatening our water and our very future,” said Casey Camp-Horinek on behalf of the Ponca Tribe of Oklahoma, who will in fact be organizing a similar type ceremony in Nebraska in the coming weeks where the broad cross-section of opponents of the Keystone XL will be invited to sign a declaration against KXL first signed on May, 17 in Calgary, AB. “Today is not just about our independence as Nations, but also everyone’s much needed independence from the shackles of oil, and especially Keystone’s dirty tar sands oil.”

Present for the formation of this cross-border Indigenous alliance against Keystone XL were most of the Tribes whose lands the pipeline would cross, from Pikani Nation of the Blackfoot Confederacy at the start of the pipeline in Canada to the Great Sioux Nation and then finally the Ponca Nation in Nebraska and Oklahoma where the pipeline would end.

Also signed on this day was The Grizzly: A Treaty of Reconciliation, Cultural Revitalization, and Restoration, an Indigenous Treaty spearheaded by the Blackfoot Confederacy, now also counts over 130 signatory First Nations and Tribes from across the continent. The Treaty Alliance will present at the ceremony today pledged to work together to preserve the sacred Black Hills and combat the recent move by the Trump administration to delist the grizzly of Yellowstone from the Endangered Species Act. Indigenous Peoples in Canada, led by our women and youth grassroots water protectors, just finished crossing the July 1st ‘Canada 150’ celebrations, letting Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and all of Canada know that not only can they not thwart our history, but they cannot continue to run roughshod over our Nations by looking to ram pipelines like Kinder Morgan’s Trans Mountain Expansion through our lands,” said Grand Chief Stewart Phillip, President of the Union of BC Indian Chiefs on behalf of the Treaty Alliance Against Tar Sands Expansion.

“These are more than pipelines: they are lines in the sand for our sovereignty as sovereign Indigenous Nations,” said Chair Brandon Sazue of the Crow Creek Sioux Tribe who invited leaders to the event in the spirit of “Remaking of the Sacred Hoop”, a rekindling of the alliance between the Great Sioux Nations and the Blackfoot Confederacy.

“These tar sand pipeline fights like Keystone XL, or Enbridge’s Line 3 which passes through our lands in Manitoba, is about protecting our Mother and will also end up being the turning point for relations between our Nations and state powers – the point where we say no more,” noted Kevin Hart, Assembly of First Nations Regional Chief for Manitoba, on behalf of the Treaty Alliance Against Tar Sands Expansion.

“More than pipelines: they are lines in the sand for our Nations.”

People’s Voice

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LETTERS

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No to war and occupation: Stop Trudeau’s spending increase!

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

The Communist Party of Canada condemns the federal Liberal government’s June announcement of its plan to increase military spending by 70% over the next ten years. This massive militarization means the government is committing to increase its already significant role in military interventions and full-scale wars around the world, further escalating imperialism’s drive towards world war. The Trudeau government’s plan is to add 5,000 regular and reserve personnel to the Canadian Armed Forces, buy a bigger than expected fleet of 88 new fighter jets (with an estimated cost of $50 billion) and pay for 15 war ships (with an estimated cost of $60 billion), increase the size of the secret service by 600, and purchase armed drones, all this in addition to the annual expenditures by $14 billion to $32 billion a year within ten years. This is a plan which reflects the previous Harper Conservative government attempted or had planned.

The military spending plan is being sold as a move towards Canadian sovereignty and away from reliance on the United States. Foreign Minister Chrystia Freeland said that Canada is “not going to be a client state.” This is a complete lie, especially in the wake of a report which said, “to rely solely on the U.S. security umbrella would make us a client state.” This government has been lobbying for Canada to increase military spending. This ignores that Canada’s military is already totally tied into the U.S. and NATO’s military power. This is in fact an effort for the Canadian government to become an even bigger partner in the U.S. dirty war machine. The United States has waged a long series of offensive wars since the end of World War II, and for the last sixteen years has been engaged in a permanent “war on terror” that has led to the deaths of millions of people in the Middle East, Africa, and Asia. Freeland and Trudeau’s use of Canadian sovereignty in order to justify massive military expenditures actually continues to undermine the sovereignty of the peoples of Canada and blocks the path of truly independent foreign policy and disarmament. In order for this to be possible Canada must immediately withdraw from NATO.

Already under the Harper government Canada helped to lead the regime change operation in Libya, which has resulted in the destruction and ruin of that country. Canadian warships and troops are currently in the Baltic and the Middle East, enhancing US and NATO power. These operations have nothing to do with defence and any increase in military spending will mean that Canadian participation in these bloody, dangerous and often illegal wars is drastically increased. Trudeau’s election victory in 2015 was based on “sunny ways” against the Conservative government’s agenda of war and austerity. He campaigned on more “peacekeeping” and less involvement in Canada’s ongoing and full-scale wars around the world. It means more military recruitment of our precarious young people, desperate for decent work at home.

Who will pay the tens of billions in increased expenditures? The government has not made any mention of how they intend to fund their ambitious war plan. Those that can afford it won’t be the ones that pay: the corporations and the wealthy. The Liberals have ruled out corporate tax increases. The only options are increased taxes on working people, through sales taxes, user fees and other regressive taxation schemes.

The Communist Party of Canada demands that the federal government cut the existing military budget by 75% and use these funds to create good jobs across Canada; build affordable housing and infrastructure; develop a sustainable industrial strategy and expand value-added manufacturing and secondary industry to create jobs; expand and improve Medicare, including a public pharmacare program; address the housing crisis by building social housing across Canada; introduce a universal, accessible, affordable public childcare system; invest in public renewable energy to transition from fossil fuels and pay climate reparations to over-exploited countries to avoid climate catastrophe; fully fund public and post-secondary education and eliminate tuition fees and student debt; increase the minimum wage and pensions; and deliver on promises made to Indigenous peoples for urgent and long-term funding to raise living standards on and off reserve in order to implement the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

Trump’s prescription for economic recovery is war: huge profits for the arms industry and total hegemony over the land, labour and resources of the world. We need to fight for a recovery for people. An urgent part of this fight is building the anti-war movement across Canada, with the goal of stopping this drive to war.

The head of the Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of Labour (NLFL), representing thousands of union members and workers in the province, is joining the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) call to premiers to recommit to establishing a single-payer, universal prescription drug plan in Canada.

“In Newfoundland and Labrador, we are facing prescription drug costs covers less than half the cost of prescription medications,” said NLFL President Mary Shortall. “Of the 236,200 workers in this province, an estimated one in three — over 78,000 — don’t have health benefits.”

The St. John’s Telegram reports that the Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of Labour is preparing to lobby the province in July for events that ran concurrently with a meeting of premiers of Canada’s provinces and territories — the Council of the Federation.

Labour leaders used that opportunity to prompt premiers to lobby the federal government for a national pharmacare plan that would ensure all Canadians have access to life-saving medications and to bring down the costs of the increasingly “out-of-control” system.

According to the NLFL, evidence shows Canadians who rely on prescription drugs don’t have the money to cover costs, and instead are splitting pills, skipping doses to stretch prescriptions, sharing medications or going deep into debt to make ends meet.

A survey by Angus Reid, in 2015, found 26 percent of Atlantic-Canadian don’t take their medications as prescribed because they can’t afford it. This can cause serious health complications, Shortall said.

“When people skip their medications or otherwise ignore the directions doctors write in their prescriptions, it can lead to avoidable hospital admissions and even premature deaths,” Shortall said.

The federation pointed out that Canada’s public per capita prescription drug spending in 2014 was second highest among countries in the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, at US$772 per person, far above the OECD average.

Canada is the only country with universal health care that does not have a universal program for prescription drug coverage, despite the stated goal of universal coverage in the 2004-14 Health Accord.

According to the CLC, NLFL backs call for pharmacare

NLFL backs call for pharmacare

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Submission to Global Affairs Canada's NAFTA Consultations, by the Communist Party of Canada

The Communist Party of Canada (CPC) believes that trade agreement negotiations should be conducted with the full understanding that they are imposed upon Canada by the interests of transnational corporations and the financial power elites of the United States. Such an understanding is as important to the CPC's analysis of the current renegotiation as it was in 1987-88, when the party led the opposition to Canada's加入 the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA).

The renegotiation of NAFTA is happening in a context of an intensifying global economic and financial crisis that has brought about a deregulated and unfettered corporate greed. The renegotiation takes place in the context of a US administration committed to slash corporate taxes by 20% (or more), to repeal the Dodd-Frank Act and consequently speed-up the neoliberal financial crisis. Regulation of Canada's financial institutions that provided some insulation from the 2008 meltdown, won't be there in the future.

They want a free hand for US corporations to invest in every sector including state owned enterprises, and in banking. They want Canada to adopt the same deregulation measures as the US, ensuring that Canada will not escape the next US triggered financial crisis. Regulation of Canada's financial institutions that provided some insulation from the 2008 meltdown, won't be there in the future.

They want Canada to adopt the same deregulation measures as the US, ensuring that Canada will not escape the next US triggered financial crisis. Regulation of Canada's financial institutions that provided some insulation from the 2008 meltdown, won't be there in the future.

They want to eliminate the NAFTA trade dispute panels contained in Chapter 19, where Canada has consistently won in cases extending fight with the US over softwood lumber. They don't like the panels' softwood rulings, and therefore propose to get rid of the panels.

In previous negotiations side deals and agreements on labour standards, environmental standards were negotiated to meet the demands of the labour and environmental movements, and to eliminate opposition to these trade deals. However it's now clear that none of the side agreements was of any use, because all of them were toothless and none of them were enforceable.

Now the US wants to include the side deals on labour and the environment to be included in the main NAFTA Agreement. But only if they continue to be toothless and useless to defend workers’ rights and protect the environment. This is another pretty obvious effort to quiet widespread concerns in Canada and Mexico about NAFTA’s devastating impact on the environment and on labour rights and standards, and on democratic and human rights.

Canada’s relationship with the US has always been that of the mouse and the elephant. When the US catches a cold, Canada catches pneumonia. This should be reasonably said that the US has pneumonia.

We don’t want to get in bed with our politically and economically sick neighbour to the south.

Out now! We say YES to a future worth having in Canada today. The alternative is to succumb to US demands and to transform Canada into the 51st US state, with all that entails.

www.communist-party.ca
Tudeh says “NO” to efforts to inflame war and conflict

Excerpts from an editorial of Narmad Marhom, Central Organization of the Tudeh Party of Iran, July 10, 2017

At a time when political developments are taking place at a rapid pace, and while imperialism and the regional reaction are hatching dangerous plans to further fragment the region’s geography, any kind of conflict and military clash around the region, as well as any pretext whatsoever, will threaten the territorial integrity and stability on the western borders of our country.

As per the reports of the official media in Iran as well as the statements of the various political organizations; the conflicts between the military forces of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Peshmerga and cadres of the political parties operating in Iraq, Kurdistan, have considerably escalated in recent weeks. All patriotic and freedom-loving forces are watching these dangerous military conflicts that could lead to the flaring up of a new war on the western borders of our county.

The announcement by Masoud Barzani, the President of the Kurdistan region of Iraq, regarding the holding of a referendum on the independence of the Kurdistan Region from the Republic of Iraq, has raised concerns over the significant and predictable political consequences of this action within the borders of nationalities and the possibility of the creation of an independent Kurdistan under the current conditions and without a doubt impacted upon the position of some of the political forces in Iraqi Kurdistan. Some forces have been orchestrated efforts by some of the states in the region, and their international supporters over the past two years, to gain the support of the political forces in the region, particularly the principal Kurdish regions in Iraq, Iran, Syria, and Turkey to launch a campaign to organize and launch a new wave of the Middle East.

There is also this fact that since the sudden “emergence” of ISIS (Daesh) in the region, and the declaration of the “Islamic Caliphate” in Iraq and Syria, there has been much speculation about such imperialist-backed plots to create divisions within the borders of some Middle East countries, to in effect “Balkanize” this region.

It cannot be accidental that since 2014, the US administration has, under the pretext of limiting and besieging the Daesh-controlled regions, regionally, systematically provided political, financial, and military support to some of the political forces in Iraq, Kurdistan, and Syria, particularly the “People’s Protection Units” (YPG) operating within the so-called “Islamic Democratic Party” of Syria.

The meetings and talks between the Syrian Democratic Forces and representatives of the governments of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, as well as the rumors about the future of the Syria in recent months, indicate the shaping of an international front for the separation of the Kurdish regions from Syria, along the path of “segmenting” the government in Damascus.

This situation is taking shape at a time when, because of the positions and strategies of regimes such as Saudi Arabia and the UAE in regard to their conflicts with Qatar, the Persian Gulf region is facing extensive political challenges which could have catastrophic consequences for the countries in the region, including Iran. The fact that Saudi Arabia and the UAE are waging an unprecedented active and powerful alliance in the development of the region, including the conflicts in Syria and the Kurdistan Region, reinforces the concern that the flames of the next phase of regional conflict might indeed start from sparks created in the Kurdistan Region.

Since its very foundation, the Tudeh Party of Iran has fought continually and consistently to properly address the country’s national issues that are advocating for the eradication of the national oppression within the framework of an independent and unified Iran. Now, in light of its great patriotic duty, our party is marching again along this path of reason and calls for peace and security based on Iran’s inalienable independence and sovereignty and, at the same time, the realisation of the legitimate rights of the Kurdish people and indeed all of the peoples living throughout Iran.

The fact is that the policies of the various ruling regimes in our country over the past seven decades have been the main reason that the freedom of the Kurdish people, blocked from realising their cultural and political rights, have sparked off government affairs and to promote the noble Kurdish culture, as well as obstructing any attempt or effort to eliminate national oppression.

Such failures and prohibitions have in effect continually violated the rights of the people of Kurdistan. The Kurds have been prevented from transmitting their languages and cultures in conjunction with Farsi, to study, engage in education and cultural activities, or in the addressing of everyday administrative issues and concerns to local government. This was an issue of use of Farsi (the national language), dialects and languages in speaking, communication, expression and education; the use of national culture in everyday life; and the right to elect their own representatives to govern local affairs, are amongst the primary elements of the right of everyone to freedom.

The Tudeh Party of Iran have always, without hesitation or waver, placed the defence of the rights of all peoples living in the land of Iran highly in its political agenda and continues to do so. Our party’s documented policies and statements have always been based on the Defense of the people’s right of freedom.

In the stormy political conditions of the year 1940, and in June 1979, the Central Committee of the Party declared: “The Tudeh Party of Iran (in shared with all of our partners) believes that the respect for, and the recognition of, the national rights of all the peoples of the country is a duty. Our party is making every effort to eliminate national oppression and the administrative and cultural autonomy for non-Persian peoples in Iran, in order to create the fundamental principle of the defense of national unity of Iran in the context of the country’s territorial integrity. On the other hand, in the organizational respect for the national rights to be one of the most important foundations in realizing the right of national and democratic unity of the country.”

In recent decades, based on the wide and systematic analysis of the struggles of the peoples and minority nations - who are struggling for their freedom and the same conditions as our people - could increasingly open the way for the realization of the negative aspects of division and insecurity, and the consequent colonialist and imperialist ploys... Our party believes that, in these historic moments, only the unity of national, ethnic, social and democratic forces and the deep understanding of these forces of democracy in the country and the peoples of the Iran can defeat the precise understanding of the power of imperialism and its regressive forces, attention to the complicated and grim situation of the region, and the growing process of weakening the struggle of the peoples of Iran with the general struggle of the region to defeat the imperialistic and throrcic regime of Supreme Religious Leader in Iran. What we believe is that only the struggle for democracy and justice in our multi-ethnic nation is the way to success. In this regard, it is necessary and stable conditions for peaceful coexistence of all the peoples of Iran in Iran and simultaneously to establish a governing structure that will make national unity - along with the comprehensive, democratic, and progressive self-determination of the peoples living in Iran, possible.

The Tudeh Party of Iran believes that the existence of nationalities and the eliminating the rights of the peoples, minorities, and national elements to determine their own destiny and own future, will ruin the unity of our multi-ethnic society and hence the national unity and the consolidation of national sovereignty and independence. On this basis, we condemned the national problem within the framework of a single homeland - i.e. within the framework of protecting the territorial integrity of a federal Iran.

In the perception of the Tudeh Party of Iran, the concept of resolution of national problems, the respect for the desires and preferences of all the people of the entire country for the self- determination is considered, i.e. the right, which as a democratic principle, demands the satisfaction of the governed people from the democratically elected regime, in all areas of political, civic, economic, and social, and cultural rights. According to this right, the people can freely determine the political management method of the country and will have a common right to the national resources of their country. It is to be noted that the national and cultural rights of the people all around the vast and multi-ethnic country of Iran can only be fulfilled by achieving economic, political and cultural development.

Linguisic map of Iran

ICAP extends invitation to October 2017 Che Brigade

The Cuban Institute of Friendship (ICAP) with the Peoples (ICAP) has invited friends from around the world to join a special brigade marking the 50th anniversary of the assassination of Comrade Ernesto Che Guevara.

The second annual “Along the paths of Che” International Brigade will be composed of delegations from around the world interested in knowing about Che’s legacy in Cuba and in reaffirming their solidarity with the Cuban Revolution.

ICAP says, “The objectives of the brigade are to contribute to a greater understanding of the Cuban reality. Voluntary work will carried out in support of agricultural development and the country’s productive sphere. Visits will be made to important centers linked to Che in the provinces of Havana, Pinar del Rio, Santa Clara and Sancti Spiritus.

“The program also includes visits to places of historical, economic, cultural and social interest in the capital as well as in the provinces. In addition, a detailed study of the significance of Che’s thought as it relates to the current reality in Cuba, as well as meetings with organizations from our society.

The brigade will be held from October 4 to 15, 2017, and will depart from Havana on October 4, 2017. The duration of the program is 14 nights, of which nine will be in the “Julio Antonio Mella” International Camp (CIJAM), located in the municipality of Caimito 45 km from the city of Havana, plus five nights in provincial hotels. The program in Cuba will cost CUC $597 and a deposit of CUC $150 is required.毫不客气
**Rallies for Lula in Brazil**

Thousands of people have been taking to the streets in Brazil as momentum builds in support of former Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, who was sentenced to nine years and six months on charges of corruption and money laundering.

Organized by the Popular Front of São Paulo, the movement is supported by a variety of parties and a host of unions and other social movements, the demonstration calls for the immediate release of the current President Michel Temer, free democratic elections, and an end to attacks on labour and pension rights.

The FFB stated that it wants “to relate the persecution of the ex-president with the agenda of repression in the labour laws and to reaffirm, against this picture of intense political and institutional criminality and the electoral campaign for the presidency of the Republic.”

According to the FFB, there is no evidence supporting the charges against Lula. Following the decision, his lawyers appealed the conviction for哪些 of the deciding factors in the case, while the Federal Public Ministry filed an appeal for an enhanced sentence.

President Vander Freitas of the Central Worker’s Union, said, “For the ‘Cidadão Grande,’ Lula represents the danger of a popular and workers’ government coming back to power. He is one of the guarantors of equality, justice and social inclusion.”

“The condemnation of Lula by Judge Sergio Moro is a further blow to the already weakened Brazilian democracy because when justice takes sides, condemnations without evidence, acts only for profit. For democracy to become accusatory, there is something serious happening,” said Guilherme Boulos, the national coordinator of the Landless Workers’ Movement.

The FFB notes that the demonstrations are still supporting Lula as the top choice for voters in the country.

**More killings in Colombia**

The president of a local branch of Colombia’s National Union of Agricultural Workers (SINTRAINOAGRO) was fatally shot by gunmen on a motorcycle on July 1 while watching his son play soccer.

Alberto Román Acosta González led the Guacari SINTRAINOAGRO branch in Cauca, in the Valle del Cauca. The Guacari branch, along with other branches that represent sugar growers and workers, have been engaged in a 10-year coordinated effort to formalize workers’ jobs and stop the privatization of sugar workers and their unions have faced extreme violence in response to their demands to end informal employment, which deprives workers of any social benefits.

SINTRAINOAGRO is an affiliate of the global food, farm and hotel union, IUF, which has written Colombian President Juan Manuel Santos to “demand a full and transparent investigation into this latest assassination and adequate measures to protect union leaders and members.” In 2013, Juan Carlos Pérez Muñoz, a union member in Colombia, was gunned down on his way to board a bus to the Cauca River Valley, where he worked in the sugarcane fields. The Colombia Sugarcane Workers’ Federation work for up to 14 hours a day and make as little as $194 a month.

On June 6, a group of armed and masked men forcibly abducted and murdered Mauricio Fernando Pérez Vega, a national vice president of the Union of Workers of Public Universities (SINTRALNAIN) and professor at Valle University, from his family’s farm in Buenos Aires, Cauca.

Up until the few past years, Colombia was the deadliest country for union leaders and members, with several thousand murdered over decades. The majority of those cases remain unsolved. Colombia remains one of the worst violators of trade union rights with a horrendous record of impunity regarding the murder of trade unionists.

**BBC equal pay struggle**

Top female personalities at the BBC have written an open letter to director general Tony Hall calling on him to act immediately to tackle the gender pay divide. High-profile names including Clare Balding, women at the BBC are being paid less than men for the same work.

Compared to many women and men, we were very well compensated and fortunate. However, this is an age of equality and the BBC is an organisation that prides itself on its values. You have said that you ‘won't’ the gender pay gap by 2020, but I am still very much aware about the pay disparity for years. We all want to go on the record to call you to act now.

The letter adds: ‘Beyond the list, there are so many other areas including pay raises to help workers in the midst of an economic crisis.’

The Collective of Syndicates of the Public Administration asked members from all ministries “to close ranks” and demand payhikes to help workers in the midst of an economic crisis.

Civil service leaders in the Democratic Republic of Congo called for a strike on July 21, demanding pay raises to help workers in the midst of an economic crisis.

The government of Spain declared a state of emergency in the affected areas, effectively freezing constitutional rights such as freedom of association, privacy, security, free travel and assembly for a duration of 30 days.

Under the decree, the armed forces and police have been empowered to enter public order into hot spots and detentions without a court order are now permitted in the province of San Roman, in the Puno region, and in the Cusco, Wanchaq, San Sachu, Machu Picchu and Ollantaytambo municipalities in the Cusco area.

The government has decided following an attempt to take over the airport of Juliaca, in the San Roman province, and after the teachers protested blocked transportation to the ruins of Machu Picchu, a major tourist attraction.

Peru’s teachers are striking to demand better working conditions and salaries, as well as fight the government education reforms with unions saying that dialogue with the Ministry of Education has stalled.

Over 5,000 striking miners in Lima were also met with tear gas and police in riot gear on July 20. The miners began to strike on July 19 in an attempt to put a halt to proposed labour reforms that will slash rights and safety regulations in one of the most dangerous occupations.

**Port strike in Bangladesh**

Lighter vessel workers in the Bangladesh seaport of Chittagong started an indefinite strike from midnight on Sunday, July 22. Two associations of the workers - Nour Paribahan Shramik Federation and Bangladesh Port Workers Union - took the decision about enforcing the strike at their recent meeting to press for a 21-point charter of demands.

The workers discharge cargoes from the lighter vessels at different stations across the country, and a part of the cargoes are destined for different production units.

The seaport has been suffering from severe congestion of vessels due to diversified cargoes for the last few days due to heavy rain. The cargoes were being discharged at a slow pace from the jetties at the port and outer anchorage in the deep sea.

The union demands include issuance of appointment letter, ID cards, service book, release of 16 workers detained in Bangladesh and India, payment of outstanding wages and benefits as per the government education reforms-declared minimum wages.

**The Communist Party of Canada**

The Communist Party of Canada, formed in 1921, has a proud history of fighting for jobs, equality, peace, Canadian independence, and socialism.

The CPC does much more than run candidates in elections. We think the fight against big business and its parties is a year-round job, so our members are active across the country, to build our party and to help strengthen people’s movements on a wide range of issues. All our policies and leadership are set democratically by our members. To find out more about Canada’s party of socialism, contact the next CPC office.

**Central Committee CPC**

290A Danforth Avenue, Toronto, ON, M4K 1N6
416-469-2446 | info@cpc-pcc.ca | www.cpc-pcc.ca

Parti Communiste du Canada (section du Parti Socialiste Canadien)
1539 Ave De Parc, Suite “C”
Montreal, QC, H3G 1N9
Email: gpp@isp.org | Tel: 450-335-8999

Re: enquiries:
706 Clark Drive, Vancouver, BC, V5L 3L1
450-256-6666 | enquiries@pcc-cpc.ca

Eduardo CPC
910 Granville Street P.O.
Edmonton, AB, T6C 4H6
Tel: 780-425-7593

Edmonton CPC
3313 - 106 Avenue
Edmonton, AB, T6E 6J9
Tel: 780-425-7593

Calgary CPC
1001 - 3535 8th Street SW
Calgary, AB, T2S 0C7
Tel: 403-287-0246

Saskatchewan CPC
409 - 1500 Basswood Blvd.
Regina, SK, S4S 6X3
Tel: 306-544-8222

Ottawa CPC
150-3157 Chaudière Ave
Ottawa, ON, K1C 3L6
Tel: 613-242-8800

Manitoba Committee CPC
265 Melvin Ave., Apt. 815
Hamilton, ON, L8H 2K3
Tel: 416-469-2446

Matziika Committee CPC
387 Selkirk Ave.
Winnipeg, MB, R2W 2M3
Tel: 204-756-7624

Email: mail@communist-party-sk.ca

Ontario CTEE CPC
135 Front Street East
Toronto, ON, M5E 1B4
Tel: 416-469-2446

Quebec CPC
5359 Ave Du Parc, Suite “C”
Montreal, QC, H3G 1N9
Email: gpp@isp.org | Tel: 450-335-8999

Re: enquiries:
706 Clark Drive, Vancouver, BC, V5L 3L1
450-256-6666 | enquiries@pcc-cpc.ca

Eduardo CPC
910 Granville Street P.O.
Edmonton, AB, T6C 4H6
Tel: 780-425-7593

Calgary CPC
1001 - 3535 8th Street SW
Calgary, AB, T2S 0C7
Tel: 403-287-0246

Saskatchewan CPC
409 - 1500 Basswood Blvd.
Regina, SK, S4S 6X3
Tel: 306-544-8222

Ottawa CPC
150-3157 Chaudière Ave
Ottawa, ON, K1C 3L6
Tel: 613-242-8800

Matziika Committee CPC
387 Selkirk Ave.
Winnipeg, MB, R2W 2M3
Tel: 204-756-7624

Email: mail@communist-party-sk.ca
DIRTY FASHION: how H&M, Zara and Marks & Spencer are buying viscose from highly polluting factories in Asia

By NatashaHurley, New Internationalist

Some of the world's biggest fashion brands, whose production can be highly dangerous and polluting, no longer seem to be doing enough to clean up their acts. A new report reveals that fashion brands including H&M, Zara and Marks & Spencer, are buying viscose from highly polluting factories in Asia to use in their clothes. Although viscose (also known as Rayon) is often touted as an “eco-fibre” or a green choice for consumers, its production uses a cocktail of dangerous chemicals that can harm people and ecosystems if released into the environment.

It is generally made from wood pulp and other plant-based cellulose. The investigation by ChangeMatters uncovered evidence that factories are doing just that: dumping untreated wastewater in local waterways, which is having a devastating impact on local communities. Villagers have reported seeing fish die, ground water and in some cases they can no longer swim or fish in local freshwater lakes. This was a common theme in all countries visited for the investigation, which included plants in India, Thailand, Malaysia, China and Indonesia.

Other villagers reported seeing dark black water with streaks of red and an intense smell of rotting radishes coming from the Grasim plant, indicating the presence of carbon disulphide, an endocrine-disrupting chemical linked to disease and chronic skin conditions. Industrial waste from the Grasim site in Nagda was also identified as the main source of pollution in the Chambal River, a tributary of the Ganges, by the National Mission to Clean Ganga (Ganges). Without tackling pollution in the Ganges' tributaries, cleaning up this great river will be an impossible task.

The viscose industry is also polluting rivers in Indonesia. Two of Indonesia's largest viscose factories are located in West Java, at the banks of the Citarum River, which has been called the most polluted river in the world. Villagers were found washing intermediary viscose products in the river on behalf of manufacturers, directly exposing themselves to toxic chemicals contained in the fibre and adding to the waterway's already considerable pollution load. These two factories are selling to a range of brands, including H&M, Eileen Fisher and M&S.

These are unsurvivable findings, but, as the report highlights, an alternative is to focus on manufacturing. Innovative approaches to viscose production using fewer chemicals in a closed loop system which captures and recycles chemicals used, eliminating deadly pollution. Technology already exists to enable manufacturers to produce viscose with a reduced amount of toxic chemicals, and in a “closed loop” system which recycles chemicals used, eliminating deadly pollution. Manufacturers need to act now and should use their considerable influence to work with producers to develop this kind of fibre.

In 2011, I travelled to Cuba as a part of a study abroad program on the history of Cuban socialism in the context of economic reforms that were taking place in the country. The financial changes were certainly discernible on the streets of the largest and most prominent private art market set in the shadow of La Cabaña, the old Spanish colonial fort. The Cuban revolution had led to profound change in the way people lived and worked. The economy was nationalized, the government took over businesses and industries, and the market was controlled by the state. The Cuban Communist Party was the dominant force in the country, and its influence was felt in all aspects of society, from politics to culture to education.

The Cuban Communist Party was a central force in the revolution, and its influence extended to all areas of society. The party was not just a political organization, but also a cultural and social one. In addition to running the government, it played a role in education, health care, and the arts. The party was committed to creating a society in which all people could prosper, no matter who they were. This was the goal of socialism.
Rebel music from Canadian Reds

Canadian communists are producing some vital music these days, with concomites in Nova Scotia and B.C. notifying People’s Voice of recording projects by Ryan Barlow, a member of the CPC’s Halifax Club, who stood as a candidate in last year’s federal election, having released an album “Eliza and the Grievous Song EP of revolutionary hip-hop with lyrics composed and performed by Barlow, over beats created by his cousin Thagzdombie. The two will release an album “The Right To Fight,” in the fall. Meanwhile, the EP is available on Bandcamp for $7. Comrade Ryan will match the proceeds with a donation to the CPC. Meanwhile, Kamloops rocket and CPC member Peter Kerck, a “cultural representative” in a provincial election, has released an album with his band Better Red Than Dead. “Shills n Dopes” explores “the gross relationship between endless consumerism, corporate deception, political corruption and the violation of indigenous rights and lands”. It was inspired by the struggle against the Ajax Mine development in Kamloops. Dan Hansen and Ed Jordan are other members of this hard-rock outfit. Better Red Than Dead is set to make a full-length release later this year. “Shills n Dopes” is available for 99 cents at iTunes.

Stirring messages from DeMent & Gilksy

Singers Iris DeMent and Eliza Gilksy, both outstanding contemporary folk artists, have released new works with powerful political messages. Iris DeMent is a folk, country, and gospel artist whose music has nixed a radical left agenda. She is known for her powerful, moving, soulful voices in American music. In her 25-year career she’s released just six albums, but they’re all worth hearing. DeMent’s latest work, “We Don’t Keep Quiet,” is a 10-song EP that was released on March 2 as a video on YouTube, and dedicated to the members of the Iowa City community who sang with her in the video, as well as to art lovers who participated in the historic January 21 Women’s March on Washington. “We Won’t Keep Quiet” is a singing anthem that needs to be heard. Eliza Gilksy and The Great Correction is a poignant video newly created to accompany the song of the same name previously released on her 2008 album Beautiful World. It’s clear from the images and quotations in this thoughtful video that the “Great Correction” is a poignant reflection of a new nature against a rapacious capitalist system, but a people’s revolution. Gilksy resides in Austin, Texas, where she’s a well-known social justice activist.

Greece pays tribute to Theodorakis

The irony of being feted as “the musical conscience of Greece” by a parliament, most of whose members have acquired to the austerity demands of foreign capital, must not have been lost on composer Mikis Theodorakis, as he took in the gigantic tribute to his life and work on June 19 in Athens. 50,000 people attended the concert at Panathinaic Stadium, which featured 1,000 choral singers from 30 cities, a full orchestra, and dozens of other performers. Theodorakis, 91, is universally recognized as the country’s greatest living artist, so Greece’s rulers were compelled to join in the tribute, despite the artist’s criticisms of their capitulation to E.U. austerity and U.S. imperialism. Theodorakis has written more than 1,000 songs, and many acclaimed orchestral works, but he’s best known in North America as a composer of film scores like Zorba the Greek (1964), and Sorpico (1973). During World War II, Theodorakis fought in the anti-fascist resistance. During the military dictatorship of 1967-74, his music was banned and forced to live in exile. At the June 19 tribute, Theodorakis conducted two of his popular songs, after which he rose from his wheelchair and tearfully accepted a prolonged ovation.

American singer-songwriter and storyteller Rosalie Sorrels died on June 11 in Reno, Nevada. Sorrels was born and raised in Boise, Idaho. Her first album (for Folkways in 1959) was a collection of folk songs from her home state. In the mid-sixties, Rosalie split up with her husband, and became a long-time supporter of peace, antiwar, and U.S. imperialism. Rosalie’s most famous song, “The Winter of Our Discontent” was released on her 1978 album American Singer-Songwriter. The song received much attention in the United States, and was later covered by many other artists. The album also featured other songs, such as “The Winter of Our Discontent” and “The Laughing Girl.” In 1980, Rosalie released her first solo album, “Sorrel’s Store.” Her most recent album, “The Long Road,” was released in 2000. Rosalie was well-known for her powerful, emotional performances and her dedication to social justice causes. She was a member of the American Society for Folklore and was a终生致力于民权和社会正义的活动人士。
**Class divide threatens children, says UNICEF**

By W. T. Whitney, Jr.


This UNICEF survey ranks the performance of 41 countries belonging to the European Union, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, or both. Report Card 14 documents the disadvantage weighing on children of working-class and marginalized families living in capitalist societies.

The report’s author, Chrisrazier, utilized nine of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) elaborated by the United Nations in 2015, particularly those with “most direct relevance to the well-being of children in high-income settings” and to income, health and educational opportunities.

He indicated, its design and indicators “represent an ambitious effort to set a global agenda for development that is both equitable and sustainable, in social, economic and environmental terms.” They bring attention to “the consequences of wealth accumulation by the richest.”

SDGs are one set of tools used in UNICEF’s Report Card for assessing whether or not wealthy societies are realising the rights of children. The other is a conglomeration of dozens of “indicators” of a group of studies measuring particular SDGs. The indicators utilize data from 2014 and 2015.

The SDGs and indicators appearing here are those selected specifically for pointing to outcomes for children that vary according to their social class. In fact, Report Card 14 presents information covering a wide range of childhood experience, not all of it having to do with class differences. As a result, many of the SDGs and indicators found in the Report Card aren’t mentioned here.

One method for presenting the survey’s results was to evaluate the progress of individual countries in terms of specific SDGs, through an assigned rating reflecting the relative performances of relevant indicators. Those results are displayed in a listing that extends both above and below the average country performance for the indicator.

Some commendable and not so commendable results are presented here. They apply to these SDGs: “End poverty.” “End hunger and food insecurity.” “Ensure healthy lives, promote well-being,” countries ranked according to single indicators: “One indicator relating to “End poverty” is “Relative [family] income.” It’s the percentage of people’s income that is less than half the median income. The average for all countries is 21 percent. Denmark is tops at 9.2 percent. The United States ranks in 35th place with a percentage of 29.4 percent.

Another indicator such as “Percentage of children under 15 years old or younger living in households with incomes less than 60 percent of their median income. The average for all countries is 21 percent. Denmark is tops at 9.2 percent. The United States ranks in 35th place with a percentage of 29.4 percent.

The indicator designated “Neonatal Mortality” relates to the SDG “Ensure healthy lives.” The neonatal mortality rate is the country average number of deaths of children who die in their first 28 days. The country average is 2.8 deaths. Norway’s rate is the most favorable to kidscount.org. 0.9 deaths at 0.9 deaths. The United States lags in 32nd place (of 36) with 4.0 deaths.

One indicator for the “Reduction Inequality” SDG is the ratio of income share of the top 10 percent and bottom 40 percent of the population in income distribution. The country average is 5.1.2. Iceland is the least favorable. The United States exceeds all at 34.2 percent. The United States places 35th with 58.9 percent.

One of the indicators for the SDG “Ensure education” is revealing in the description: “percentage of children under 15 years of age achieving basic learning proficiency. The country average performance is only 66.8 percent. Estonia is in first place with 101 percent, while the United States ranks in 26th place (out of 38) with 66.4 percent. The United States has a “mortality rate” (age 0-19), associated with the SDG “Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, strengthen the rights of women and girls” as follows. A country is considered to be a child injury. The United States is 101 percent. The United States places 26th in race (out of 38) with 66.4 percent. The United States places 35th with 58.9 percent.

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By Nino Pagliccia

July 5 marked the 206th anniversary of Venezuela’s independence, a historic event that commemorates the day when the death of Francisco de Miranda, a hero of the independence struggle, brought the independence movement in Venezuela to a climax. The date is celebrated as a national holiday, and it marks the start of the Venezuelan independence movement.

The origins of the movement that culminated in the 1811 declaration of independence and started the First Republic rest on the actions of Francisco de Miranda. On that date a local governing board (Junta Suprema) was established to govern Venezuela, which was still under Spanish colonial rule.

This was a transitional government, not independent but still subject to the authority of the Spanish Crown. However, this board carried out internal reforms; abolished the slave trade, tried to unify the provinces and strengthen the autonomy, and made efforts abroad to obtain the solidarity of other colonies and the recognition and help of foreign nations.

The character of this government did not allow it to go beyond the autonomy that had been proclaimed on April 19. For this reason, the governing board resolved to convene elections and set up a General Congress, before which it would declare its powers as the de facto government of Venezuela.

The call for elections ensured the transformation of the de facto government into an independent constitutional government. This early example of enacting power to a constituent assembly gives this date, April 19, 1810, a prominent place in the Venezuelan calendar.

Follow-up elections, the first session of the newly created Venezuelan Congress took place on March 2, 1811. On July 5, lively debates started among the deputies around the issue of full independence. Among those in favour was Simón Bolívar, who pronounced the famous question: “Three hundred years of calm, is it not enough?” in reference to the Spanish domination.

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On that date a local governing board (Junta Suprema) was established to govern Venezuela, which was still under Spanish colonial rule. However, this board carried out internal reforms; abolished the slave trade, tried to unify the provinces and strengthen the autonomy, and made efforts abroad to obtain the solidarity of other colonies and the recognition and help of foreign nations.

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