Election deposit victory

Elections Canada has accepted an Alberta court ruling which struck down the $1000 deposit to become a federal candidate, since this requirement is a deterrent against poor and marginalized people.

Ontario labour

Unity and challenges on display at OFL convention

- Report on page 2 -

Venezuela's moment

People’s Voice interviewed Wilmer Omar Barrientos Fernandez, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela’s Ambassador to Canada. The country is living through a historic moment, he said, after the election of the Constituent Assembly.

Celebrating Great October

Over 100 Communist & Workers’ parties gathered in Russia last month, to celebrate the October Revolution and to chart the way towards new struggles.
PV Ontario Bureau

Hundredsof union delegates met in Toronto on November 20-24 to discuss policy resolutions and adopt a plan of work, at the biennial convention of the Ontario Federation of Labour: This was the first convention since the union’s new electoral team of Chris Buckley, Patti Coates and Ahmed Ghouse replaced Sid Ryan, Irwin Nanda and Nancy Hutchinson two years ago. This leadership project was a unit right decision in the face of the crises plaguing the OFL over the past four years. The plan included 118 items, ranging from statements on various areas of struggle, ongoing work for improved labour laws, fighting for decent green jobs, and a commitment to organize new communities and sections of the working class.

Overall, the action plan rededicates the OFL to achieving equality and diversity in the OFL’s approach to political action. In promoting peace and justice, the plan demands that workers not be exploited by white supremacy, anti-Semitism, black racism and racism in all of its forms.

The OFL had adopted a motion, advanced by the Action Caucus and submitted by a number of affiliates, declaring its support for a human right and demanding that the provincial government: immediately introduce a comprehensive social housing program and deliver it according to need; develop an emergency plan to build new, publically owned social housing; regulate real estate costs and roll backs for all renters; legislate a ban on evictions and utility cut-off due to involuntary unemployment, evictions, strikes, lockouts and layoffs.

The resolution also calls for the OFL to launch a campaign with labour councils and affiliates to mobilize workers to demand a provincial housing program.

As with many of the action plan items, it remains to be seen which priorities the executive council and executive board set over the next two years. A number of commitments made in the 2015 plan remain unfulfilled. Furthermore, the OFL leadership is hoping to leverage the Ontario Common Front, an effort to bring together labour and community allies in a structured movement, which was the main conduit for achieving many of the key elements of the action plan.

Initially, the new plan says that the success of the Ontario Common Front be expanded in building allies, and notes that “together, community and labour hold tremendous potential for creating trans-formative change.”

In the midst of this cautious and, at times, orchestrated sense of unity, the issue of the OFL’s electoral strategy and leadership to the NDP emerged as a sharply divisive flashpoint.

The key to the OFL’s new revisional amendment to the action plan focused on the goal of achieving “one million votes for the NDP.” With specific timelines and commitments, the amendment calls on all affiliates to collaborate unconditionally and unconditionally with the Ontario NDP, to train voter organizers in key ridings, and to mobilize a minimum of 150 organizers from union activists, including young workers and retirees. No other section of the action plan contains such detailed commitments for either the OFL leadership or the affiliates.

The election amendment was sponsored by unions with longstanding links to the NDP, and was opposed by unions not aligned with any political party. Its introduction was set up by speeches from Ontario NDP leader Andrea Horwath, federal NDP leader Jagmeet Singh, and from long-time NDP leader Stephen Lewis, who curiously spoke about strategic voting during his panel on human rights.

The debate on the floor revealed some of the underlying political divisions within the OFL and the labour movement as a whole. Some delegates indicated they favoured a “strategic voting” approach which allows their members to vote for that candidate best positioned to block or defeat a Tory candidate. Others argued that the NDP is the only party that supports the labour movement”. Many progressives argued that this insertion was divisive and would in the long run, weaken the unity of the OFL by making uncritical and unconditional support for the NDP a binding tactic in the upcoming provincial election. Examples were given where the NDP did not embrace the labour movement’s positions and where their campaign platforms lagged behind those of other parties.

In the end, the action plan was divided into two parts, with the election tactic voted on separately. The bulk of the plan passed unanimously, but with diminished enthusiasm. The election strategy passed with a 70-30 vote, and the feelings of division and bitterness extended to all of the plan.

The challenge to the trade union movement, in the aftermath of this convention, will be to recover the sense of unity that filled the room at the start. The best way to do this is for the OFL to engage and mobilize all affiliates around those elements of the action plan that were unanimous – including fighting racism and white supremacy, organizing the unemployed and unorganized, and pressing for strong action on the housing crisis.

With that question, for this to happen the labour movement needs a much stronger and structured Left, who can speak to the necessity of projecting a comprehensive set of independent demands for workers. Such activity would force political parties to answer to working class issues, much more effectively than by giving “carte blanche” to the NDP or any other political party.

Women journalists face harassment

Unifor is calling for immediate action following the release of a survey that found nearly half of women journalists polled around the world reported facing gender-based violence in the workplace.

“The level of harassment women journalists face for simply doing their jobs is simply unacceptable,” said Unifor National President Jerry Dias. “Media outlets in Canada need to take this threat seriously and they need to act to address the safety and security needs of their female journalists.”

The survey by the International Federation of Journalists, of which Unifor is a member, found that 48 per cent of women polled reported that they had suffered gender-based violence in their work, and 44 per cent had suffered online abuse. The results were released both in the workplace and out in the field, with 45 percent of perpetrators being people outside of the workplace – sources, politicians, readers or listeners – while 38 per cent were a boss or supervisor.

Two-thirds (66.15 per cent) did not make a formal complaint, and of those who did complain, 84.8 per cent said adequate measures were not taken. Only 12.3 per cent were satisfied with the outcome.

Unifor Media Director Howard Law said the situation in Canada is no better than what is reflected in the survey, which polled 400 women journalists in 50 countries, including Canada. It found that 39 per cent of the time, the perpetrator of the abuse remained anonymous, and that only 26 per cent of workplaces had a policy covering gender based violence and sexual harassment.

“Women journalists from 50 countries tell the same story – gender-based violence in the workplace is world of work is widespread and action to combat it is either non-existent or inadequate in virtually every case,” said Unifor President Charlie庞

The International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) represents 600,000 journalists in 187 unions and associations in 146 countries.
Chlorpyrifos: why Edmontonians should be concerned

By Sheryl McCumsey, Pesticide Free Alberta

Chlorpyrifos is a neurotoxin that inhibits proper nerve functioning. It is used to kill insects by consuming the insect’s essential muscles like those used for breathing. Of course it doesn’t just impact insects as many health studies have proven. The chemical is linked to severe birth defects, brain damage, developmental delays and behavioural problems in humans. It is also correlated with increased incidence of cancer and it has caused deaths.

Some of the largest lawsuits around any pesticide are related to chlorpyrifos. $25.5 million was awarded in 2010 to one US family in a lawsuit after their children were permanently harmed. New York State also used Dow Chemical, the company that makes the chemical, for $2 million for an investigation of chlorpyrifos was called-safe. Currently, seven US state attorneys general have charged the federal government’s Environmental Protection Agency with violating federal law by failing to issue required safety standards on chlorpyrifos. While in Canada, when Health Canada’s Pest Management Regulatory Agency was auditing in 2015, this pesticide was specifically mentioned as not being re-evaluated as required by law.

In 2015, when Edmonton uses chlorpyrifos to kill mosquito larva but the central city continues to have the highest poverty rate at 47.7%, or close to one in every two children living in poverty. First Call's Adrienne Montani, provincial coordinator of First Call. “As most of these children are from families living in poverty, this points to the continued need to make sure our poverty reduction efforts address the issues disproportionately affecting women, such as the gender wage gap and the lack of affordable quality child care.”

Other key findings in the 2017 report card:

• In 2015, the child poverty rate for children in lone-parent families (47.7%) was more than four times the rate (11.2%) for their counterparts in couple families.
• 23% of the 14,490 children living with grandparents, alone or with relatives, non-relatives or in foster care, were living in poverty. Nearly half (45%) of recent immigrant children were poor, one in three (31%) Indigenous children were poor (not counting children living on reserves) and 23% of racialized (visible minority) children were poor.
• A child living in one child working full-time for the whole year for minimum wage would have only earned $24,981, leaving them $10,111 below the poverty line. This means over half of them were even deeper in poverty.
• The 2017 Metro Vancouver homelessness count found 356 homeless children and youth under 25 years, including 201 children under the age of 19.
• For a couple with two children on welfare in 2015, their total income was $23,468, just 64% of average income $36,426, leaving them $12,958 below the poverty line.
• Approximately 85% of the poor children in BC live in the province’s 25 urban areas. However children living outside urban areas had a 23.3% poverty rate, much higher than the provincial child poverty rate of 19.8%.
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• Amidst BC’s richest 10% of families with children took home 24% of the income pie, compared to the 2% shared by the poorest 10% of families.

In addition to calling for a provincial child tax benefit for all children under 18. Additional provincial recommendations include enhanced supports for pregnant women seeking to exit government care, removing financial barriers to obtaining a post-secondary education, paying living wages and substantially increased investments in affordable housing options for families, among others.

To access the full report card, please visit www.firstcallbc.org.
A not-so-merry holiday season

The annual year-end retail madness has already started, with barrage of corporate advertising, Santa Claus parades, re-runs of “holiday favours”, and homilies about the season of good cheer. At People’s Voice, we enjoy time off with family and friends over “holiday favourites”, and homilies about the season of good cheer.

Fidel’s action and thinking confronting hurricanes today

By Arnold August, Canada, November 24, 2017

I arrive at Havana’s José Martí International Airport on Oct. 22, around 11:30 pm. Waiting to receive me is the president of the Cuban Institute of History, René Gonzalez Barrientos. He has come despite my having pleaded with him not to pick me up, given his heavy responsibilities in organizing the Oct. 24-26 Second International Symposium, The Cuban Revolution: Genesis and Historical Development. René insists that, as an invited guest, it is his responsibility to do so. Alone with a car and no driver, we haul my heavy baggage loaded with books for a presentation in Cuba’s capital. We are headed to the Communist Party of Cuba’s modest but very hospitable Hotelito.

It is my first visit to Cuba since the devastating Hurricane Irma. After inquiring about his health and that of his wife and family, I ask about the situation in Cuba since Irma. What follows is the equivalent of a two-hour interview, adapted to the conditions of driving a car through Havana late at night. René points out in a lively and descriptive manner how Cuba recovered an aftermath of Fidel’s thinking and action confronting hurricanes, as if he were present at each of the massive recovery efforts during the many hurricanes that have descended upon the archipelago since 1959. There are several aspects comprising what Fidel called confronting the “natural phenomena coups” (perhaps making reference to the Batista coup d’état, which Cuba overthrew during the Revolution).

One such feature is the Fidel-inspired strategy of maintaining reserves to confront either military or natural incursions into Cuba. It leaves no stone unturned. The outstanding historian and hostakes his avid one-person-audience through this experience both in time and space, as if he were in his country’s spély as he is driving in the elephantine difficulties conditions. From the very first hurricanes that violently shook the palm trees – and much more – after the triumph of the Revolution, Fidel elaborated his two-pronged thinking: save lives and protect the people. Thus, metaphorically speaking, Cuba’s national tree, the royal palm, still stands strong despite repeated aggressions.

We arrive at the Hotelito. René insists on taking the time to ensure that the guest is well received and comfortably settled, overlooking metaphorically speaking, Cuba’s national tree, the royal palm, still uprooted, overlooking metaphorically speaking, Cuba’s national tree, the royal palm still standing strong despite repeated aggressions.

I wouldn’t worry about being deported. People’s Voice magazine, 706 Clark Drive, Vancouver, BC, V5L 3J1 Tel: 604.255.2041 Email: pvoice@telus.net

Letters

Letters People’s Voice welcomes your letters. We reserve the right to edit, to abridge, and to reject to print letters which may be libellous or which contain personal attacks. Send your views to: “Letters to the Editor” at 706 Clark Drive, Vancouver, BC, V5L 3J1 or pvoice@telus.net

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As we commemorate the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women on Dec. 6 this year, we must acknowledge the weight of revelations of women’s experiences with sexual harassment and gender-based violence through the世间运动。

While we hear daily revelations from Hollywood stars, working class women are often silenced and ignored across all sectors. Working class women don’t have the advantages of their star power, nor the economic benefit of Non-Disclosure Agreements (NDA) that are offered these stars to keep quiet. Their harassers may be their co-workers, their supervisors, their partners, their “friends.” Rupe Crisis Reports tell us that they have been swamped with calls requesting support and have seen harassment and sexual assaults since the hashtag began trending.

A recent study quantified this trend even further. According to the poll, “there are almost 15 million adult women in Canada and according to our latest survey, almost 8 million of them (53%) have experienced unwanted sexual pressure. The prevalence of this experience is highest among women under 45. Women 30-44 are most likely to see this problem in the workplace: 22% say it is a common issue, and 11% say it happens in their workplace.”

In 2016, legislation in Ontario strengthened the anti-sexual harassment law. Over the last year, legislation in Ontario, BC and Manitoba made public post-secondary institutions establish a stand-alone sexual assault policy to address the rape culture that permeates university campuses.

But only so much change can be legislated. The problem of harassment and gender violence is deeply rooted in our capitalist system. Capitalism depends on the systemic oppression of women in society. Any requirement to stop this oppression is a longer-term goal that will only end exploitation and sex discrimination when the system itself is replaced with socialism.

However, harassment, sexual assault and gender violence is behaviour that can be “fixed” in the short term. By passing a new law, government legislators, but doesn’t go far enough. Women, and some men, in precarious workplaces, whether unionized or not, indigenous, immigrant, migrant, racialized, queer and poor workers are too often left to fend for themselves in most workplaces. Hotel workers are often forced into choosing positions based on their interactions with ‘guests’ in intimate surroundings. Women in the building trades face a misogynist environment in their everyday working lives. Women who work as servers, cleaners, government workers, nursing home workers, post-secondary students all face harassment in their working lives - and the list goes on and on.

Both men and women are socialized within our patriarchal society. Some may not realize how their socialization may lead them to perpetuate the disproportionate power imbalance that exists in all structures and institutions in our society. This doesn’t include nor excuse those men who are well aware of their predatory behaviour. But it does give us a starting place to begin an educational process to strengthen the numbers of activists, both men and women, who will challenge behaviour and help develop an informed culture of consent.

Survivors should not be expected to ‘solve’ the problem of gender-based violence. The individual, private and personal must be addressed with systemic solutions. We need to identify allies in this struggle and put together a central demand: that all votes are truly counted in any election, that all votes matter. This demand is rooted in the systemic barrier to democratic electoral rights. We hope that the government takes note and drops any idea of an expensive and unnecessary appeal of this ruling, and instead focuses on ways to encourage wider democratic popular participation in the election process. This would include action on PM Trudeau’s pledge to end first-past-the-post, in favour of a multi-member proportional representation system which would ensure an equitable coverage in the mass media, and a prohibition against campaign ads.

Women and social justice groups throughout the country. We have no time to waste.

Communists welcome court ruling against election deposits

The Communist Party of Canada has welcomed a court ruling which nullifies the requirement that candidates pay $1000 financial deposit to run in federal elections. The case was launched by Kieran Szuchewycz in November 2015, shortly after the most recent federal election. The Alberta Court of Queen’s Bench found that the deposit requirement violates the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

The ruling builds on the historic victory against election deposits that the Communist Party of Canada won a major court victory against the Electoral Act rules which forced small parties to nominate at least 50 candidates and put up $50,000 in deposits before spending a dollar on a campaign, in order to keep their registered status.

The judge found there are less intrusive or more proportional ways to ensure a candidate is serious and protect the integrity of the electoral system. He said, “Obviously she felt demanding the deposit is a disincentive for people with impeccable means to run for office.”

He also noted that, “If you’re wealthy, you can afford the $1,000 and still be a frivolous candidate. The focus should be on encouraging people to run for office, and if you impose this fee who can’t afford it that shouldn’t be the law.”

In 2016, legislation in Ontario strengthened the anti-sexual harassment law. Over the last year, legislation in Ontario, BC and Manitoba made public post-secondary institutions establish a stand-alone sexual assault policy to address the rape culture that permeates university campuses.

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The 19th International Meeting of Communist and Worker’s Parties (IMCWP) took place Nov, 2-3 in St. Petersburg - formerly Petrograd. In October 1917, it was Petrograd, the cradle of the Great October Socialist Revolution. It was a fitting location to mark the centenary of the first socialist revolution in history to survive and thrive over more than 70 years. “Great October” opened the way for new socialist revolutions to follow in this century, as the world continues its transition from capitalism to socialism in increasingly difficult, dangerous, and complicated circumstances.

A pre-fascist period

Speaker after speaker noted the growth of far-right and fascist movements in countries around the world, and in particular in the US and Europe, and the election of fascists to parliaments, legislatures and local governments on both continents. While fascist parties were not elected to government in many countries, including France and Germany, they substantially increased their vote and grew their support base, including among sections of the white working class, using unemployed and the growing number of immigrants and refugees as the whipping boy.

In Poland, the Communist Party has been declared illegal, their leaders arrested and facing long sentences if the politically motivated charges against them are upheld in reactionary courts. In Ukraine is also the lead hand in imperialism’s new encirclement and attack on Russia through the organization of the Russian federal region. Canadian troops are stationed here, and also permanently stationed in Latvia.

All over Europe, the history, achievements and victories of socialism are being eroded while imperialism’s propaganda machines pump out the lies that socialism was a failure, that socialism and fascism are synonymous; that austerity, militarism and war are the only way forward.

In Latin America, reaction has overtaken progressive governments and parties from many countries, including the Communist Party of Cuba. While the US threatens invasion and “regime change”, so far imperialism has succeeded in its aims with political, material, and financial support for the internal opposition in these countries. Counterversion from within, where the corporatizations and the wealthy, and often the military, join hands to defeat progressive governments and re-install reactionary cliques – all with the active and material support of US imperialism.

The Trump administration is threatening war and invasion in countries around the world, with military spending that is unprecedented at $603 billion in 2017-18. At the same time Trump is amping up the attack on the US population, with massive corporate tax cuts and deregulation which his administration hopes to offset with a protectionist trade policy and xenophobic foreign and domestic policies, attacking immigrants, refugees, undocumneted workers, Indigenous and racialized peoples, women, and the LGBTQ population.

In Canada, the Trudeau government is moving to send troops to NATO hotspots around the world, to increase military spending by 75%, and to increasingly adopt US foreign policy objectives. Canada is playing a particularly vicious role in the US campaign to overthrow the Bolivarian revolution and the Maduro government in Venezuela. The Communist Party of Canada has worked hard to expose Canada’s dirty role and to force the Liberal government to end it. Similarly, we have campaigned to

see IMCWP, p. 11

By Liz Rowley, leader of the Communist Party of Canada

The overthow of Tsar Nicholas II allowed them to return home. Three hours later, we were disembarking in Leningrad (as Petrograd was renamed after his death), the city where Lenin and his comrades became the key figures in the “ten days that shook the world”.

As described above on this page, we were in Russia as delegates representing the Communist Party of Canada at the 19th annual gathering of fraternal Communist and Workers’ parties. The main work of this year’s IMCWP was an intense two-day meeting where most of the attending parties spoke about the relevance of the October Revolution, and the struggles for socialism today.

The timing was also a unique opportunity for over 200 delegates and many other unofficial foreign participants to take part in a range of other activities to mark the centenary of the October Revolution.

On the directly political side, this included a special “Forum of Left Forces” held a few days later at the Moscow hotel where delegates stayed for the second half of the trip. Many of the speakers were from international progressive movements, such as the World Peace Council, the World Federation of Trade Unions, World Federation of Democratic Youth, and the International Federation of Resistance Fighters.

Others were present on behalf of liberation movements which won victories over their co-opted and impotent masters in large part due to the fraternal assistance of the USSR and other socialist states. These included SWAPO from Namibia, the ANC from South Africa, and others. Special gala cultural events were organized by the Communist Party of the Russian Federation (CPRF), at a major downtown theater in St. Petersburg, and at the Luzhinki sports complex in Moscow.

Both events featured a wide range of stunning dance and music performances, paying tribute both to the October Revolution, and to highlights of seventy years of the successes of socialism in the USSR.

Delegates were taken on several tours to places associated with the history of the revolutionary movement in Russia, such as the Aurora Cruiser, from where the blank shot signalling the uprising against the Provisional Government was fired. We toured the Smolny, which was the headquarters of the Bolshevicks during the Revolution, and the IMCWP itself was held in the same building where meetings of the Petrograd Soviet convened during 1917.

In Moscow, delegates toured the Kremlin, joined a special ceremony to lay flowers at the tomb of the unknown soldier just outside its walls, and visited the Lenin Mausoleum.

November 7 was the 76th anniversary of the famous 1941 military parade in Red Square, from which Red Army troops marched directly to the outskirts of the city to battle the Nazi invaders. On this occasion, IMCWP delegates and other visitors witnessed a special re-creation of that parade, organized to represent the war against fascism, the defeat of Napoleon’s armies, and other notable episodes from Russian military history.

Later that afternoon, the CPRF held a street demonstration attended by thousands in downtown Moscow, using the occasion of the October Revolution centenary to recall the working class gains achieved during and after 1917, and to raise demands for progressive change in today’s capitalist Russia.

One feature of all these activities was the presence of large numbers of young people. After the overthrow of socialism in the USSR, pro-capitalist critics crowed that once the “older generation” were gone, there would be no communists left in Russia. But the CPRF reports that it has recruited 27,000 young members so far this year, and wherever one goes in Moscow or St. Petersburg, young people wearing radical t-shirts and buttons can be seen. Clearly, for them, the Great October Socialist Revolution is not just a page from Russian military history.
IMCWP Appeal sets Communist priorities

Socialism’s assistance to Vietnam

100 years ago, the Great October Socialist Revolution opened a new bright future for humanity – an epoch of socialism – a society free from exploitation, a society based on equality between all nations, nationalities and human beings, a society oriented towards progressive and human values. The foundation of the Soviet Union had changed one of the most backward country in Europe into a world economic, scientific, cultural and military superpower, turned hundreds of millions of peasants and workers living in slavery and poverty into the masters of their society free from unemployment, where all people had been enjoying free housing, education, healthcare and living in dignity.

Ho Chi Minh brought the light of the October Revolution and Marxism-Leninism to Vietnam, founded the Communist Party of Vietnam and guided the Party to lead the Vietnamese people to the socialist era; August Revolution, ending colonialism and feudalism in Vietnam, establishing the first people democratic republic in Southeast Asia. The struggle of the Vietnamese people under the leadership of Ho Chi Minh and the Communist Party of Vietnam for national liberation against the colonialism and by the soldiers who were languishing in the world war trenches. They pierced the darkness of capitalist slavery. They gave hope to millions of people. They could all...
Qatar building workers deal

Workers’ rights took a step forward for exploited construction workers in Qatar following a landmark agreement signed between the Building and Wood Workers’ International (BWI) federation and the Qatari developer (QDVC), and French construction giant Vinci.

The agreement commits the parties to eliminate recruitment fees for migrant workers and also to let them keep their passports — two areas that left workers open to extortion by middlemen and control by employers. While not benefiting all workers in Qatar, the agreement obligates QDVC, a developer of major commercial and infrastructure schemes, to meet international standards in worker welfare and treatment.

BWI says it is the first of its kind in Qatar between a union federation and a Qatari company, and adherence to it will be monitored by BWI. Workers must also now be informed in writing of their employment rights in their language, including rights to safe and healthy working conditions, and will be protected from reprimals when they complain about conditions.

Qatar has faced severe criticism for turning a blind eye to the abuse of its migrant workforce, many of whom come from south Asia, who are building out infrastructure, both for the 2022 World Cup. A report last April found that despite promises made by the Qatari government, many workers were still being exploited by recruitment agencies, punished for complaining, and turned fugitive by the illegal retention of passports under Qatar’s repressive “sponsorship” system.

The environment of persistent abuse and control has led to many deaths, on construction sites and in the labour camps. Labour bodies have warned that up to 7,000 workers could die by the time the ball is kicked off in the World Cup unless there is total reform.

For applying to all workers employed by QDVC in Qatar, the agreement also covers due diligence with sub-contractors, and prescribes an extensive system of reporting, inspection and auditing under the authority of a new group composed of representatives of the three parties. The agreement was signed in Geneva, at the headquarters of the International Labour Organisation, following three years of discussions. Headquartered in Geneva, BWI groups together around 334 trade and labour federations, union offices and union centers in 180 countries, and the company employs around 40 million members in 130 countries.

Deaths after Freepot cuts health coverage

After workers went on strike at Freepot’s Grasberg mine in Papua, Indonesia last May, the company fired 4,200 of them and

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Venezuela is a multi-destination country with internationally recognized tourist attractions. Canadian tourists keep a positive image of their tourism experiences in Venezuela, despite the recurrent warnings to travelers issued by the Canadian government. Canadians, both on business and tourist trips, can give their testimony to the fact that they have received during their stay in Venezuela.

Any other comments you would like to make to our readers?

I ask Canada to respect our democratic institutions and the principles of international law such as non-interventionism in other States' internal affairs and the free determination of people. Indeed, imposing unilateral and counter-claiming international standards, are aimed at breaking the spirit of a people that mostly supports the revolutionary process.

Such circumstances lead us to reflect about Canada’s double standard in the defence of human rights. This year, Venezuela experienced a period of violence that resulted in 121 deaths, including 23 who were burned alive. Canada never condemned the Venezuelan government for such brutal and inhumane acts.

Based on these facts, these people were not worth for Canada to defend their human rights. Instead, Canada has advocated for human rights, which we have respected, of politicians imprisoned for violating Venezuelan laws.

Wilmer Omar Barrientos Fernandez, Ambassador to Canada of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

Morning Star Editorial, www.morningstaronline.co.uk

Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko led a ceremony in Kiev’s Independence Square on Nov. 21, laying flowers and lighting candles to the memory of the “Heavenly Hundred” killed during anti-government protests that began in 2013.

Poroshenko, Prime Minister Volodymyr Hroysman and parliamentary speaker Andriy Parubiy perempture the myth that all the dead perished at the hands of security forces, portraying the Euromaidan events of four years ago as a simple case of good versus evil.

Good was represented by demonstrators who filled the square to protest against then president Viktor Yanukovych’s decision to postpone plans to sign an Association Agreement with the European Union and to seek closer economic ties with Russia.

Evil was personified by Yanukovych, his Ukraine of the Regions party, the Communist Party of Ukraine (KPU) and, above all, by Moscow. Yanukovych favoured Ukraine joining the EU, but believed it possible to maintain ties with Russia, in light of trade links that eastern Ukrainian mining and heavy industry enjoyed with its eastern neighbour.

He learned quickly that Brussels wouldn’t compromise over the extent of its influence as initially peaceful Maidan protesters were joined, without discussion with the Kiev government, in the square by EU foreign policy chief Catherine Ashton and US Senator John McCain and encouraged in their actions.

Matters swiftly took a violent turn when snipers on roofs fired at both protesters and police officers, while detachments of far-right paramilitary groups spearheaded attacks on city streets.

Yanukovych subsequently fled the country to Russia, fascist groups were integrated into the armed forces and second world war criminals, notably Stepan Bandera, who slaughtered Jews and Hindus, were honoured with monuments as historic memorials to Ukraine’s liberation by the Red Army were vandalised.

Anti-fascist forces in the Donbass upset people’s republics in Donetsk and Lugansk provinces while the overwhelmingly Russian-speaking population of Crimea, home to Russia’s Black Sea Fleet, voted to return to Russia.

Even though the Communist Party never backed secession from Ukraine, Poroshenko’s regime sought to ban the KPU and remains set on doing so.

KPU general secretary Petro Symonenko’s devastating critique of the post-Maidan government’s plan to divest the country to Russia’s 500 public corporations at fire-sale prices to foreign speculators explains this determination. The justification for this treasurable action is that these enterprises lose money, are a financial burden and would be better run under private management.

Similar statements were heard when the federal republic of Germany annexed the German Democratic Republic, axing its industries as outdated and plunging eastern German workers into penury.

History suggests that new owners will slash workforce numbers in quest of profits or simply close these firms, dumping tens of thousands more Ukrainian workers on to the streets. As Symonenko points out, the capitalist paradise promised for Ukraine’s workers has proved to be a capitalist hell run by thieves.

Poroshenko and his allies are so determined to remake Ukraine in the EU and NATO that they undermine the national independence they otherwise urge. It beggars belief that a country that suffered so greatly under nazi occupation and that bred the assassins of Stepan Bandera while dropping its backing for Russia’s annual UN general assembly human rights committee resolution on combating the glorification of evil, should be so quick to entertain the US in voting against the proposal, which moves on now to the 193-member general assembly next month.

Kiev’s subservience to Brussels and Washington is perilous for the future of Ukraine’s working people.

Distortions of the truth in Ukraine

People’s Voice recently interviewed Wilmer Omar Barrientos Fernandez, Ambassador to Canada of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. Here are his replies to our questions.

Currently, what is the general, economic and social situation in Venezuela?

Venezuela is living a transversal historic moment. This is a decisive historic stage for the continuity of a progressive, free, independent and sovereign government with no ties to neoliberal ideas. Venezuela lives a true and vigorous democracy, whose centre is the human being.

For almost 20 years, the Venezuelan people have resisted firmly internal and external attempts to destabilize the country. The election and implementation of the National Constituent Assembly is the most recent example of the degree of political consciousness that Commander Hugo Chavez thought us. Unfortunately, with the beginning of the National Constituent Assembly’s work, the imperial threats have increased—especially military ones, and unilateral and illegal economic sanctions have been imposed, trying to establish a diplomatic-financial against Venezuela.

This imperial strategy has the support of transnational media corporations, which have spread an image of Venezuela as a country in bankruptcy and with an uncontrollable economic crisis throughout the world. With the imposition of unilateral and illegal sanctions the international financial war has deepened. These actions, together with the breakdown of the oil profitable model and the internal economic war, have destabilized the Venezuelan economy, sharpening the shortage of basic products and hitting the most vulnerable people. Among other measures, the Bolivarian Government has promoted a plan to diversify the economy. The results will be seen in the medium and long term.

What should Canadians know about the National Constituent Assembly?

The National Constituent Assembly is already a political-juridical fact and is a faithful reflection of the sovereign will and the firm dignity of a people with a clear political conscience.

Since its election, Venezuela has returned to normalcy. Violent demonstrations have ended, and people can now live in a climate of peace and tranquility. The National Constituent Assembly is an instrument of peace and dialogue. Its call by President Nicolas Maduro was attached to the Constitution, our legal framework.

Anyone who has taken the time to read our constitution will note that the National Constituent Assembly is clearly defined. Its call was answered by all, by Moscow. Yanukovych who slaughtered Jews and Hindus, were honoured with monuments as historic memorials to Ukraine’s liberation by the Red Army were vandalised.

For the mainstream Canadian media, impose sanctions on the Venezuelan government. These imperial strategies have the purpose of internationally recognizing, it is clearly defined. Its call was answered by all, by Moscow. Yanukovych who slaughtered Jews and Hindus, were honoured with monuments as historic memorials to Ukraine’s liberation by the Red Army were vandalised.

Venezuela lives is an emerging market with immense economic potential and a privileged geographic location. It is no secret that Venezuela is a country with huge mining resources and hydrocarbons. We offer comparative and competitive advantages for those who have companies or policies established by big television companies. By contrast, the US media interviews you about the Bolivarian Revolution under the unconditional, and sometimes executioner, standard-bearer of the United States interventionist policies against Venezuela. It is obvious that the Sanctions imposed on Venezuela has affected all areas of international, especially our economic-commercial exchange. Is it safe for Canadians to travel for tourism and business in Venezuela?

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What is the status of diplomatic and economic relations between Canada and Venezuela?

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Soviet director Sergei Eisenstein who had tried to introduce into "revolutionary" movement FEKS, come to film from the but its style was like nothing seen form was closest to documentary, industrial dispute in Tsarist Russia,stein, consumed with revolutionary intellectuals found the consequent turmoil confusing and disagreeing.

Some, like Maxim Gorki, bourgeois government in the October Revolution, many middle class intellectuals found the post-revolutionary era to be unappealing.

The arts were seen as a potent tool in this nation-wide endeavor, especially such projects as the mass literacy campaign.

By Rob Gowland, in The People's Voice.

By Rob Gowland, in The People's Voice.

Scene from Eisenstein’s classic "October", also available in North America as "Ten Days That Shook The World," the title of the John Reed's famous book. The film pays considerable attention to the pivotal role of women workers in the revolutionary struggle.

By Rob Gowland, in The People's Voice.

Documentary-recreation of the 1917 Russian Revolution.

The film took longer to edit than planned, and only scraped to the screen by 1928. The finished film, however, is splendidly photographed, but it is the editing which gives it its power. Not only the juxtaposition of shots, but even the silent film inter-titles contribute, with documentary-like recreation of events.

In the sequence showing the arrest of the Provisional Government, the ministers are informed that they're under arrest by the Bolshevik Antonov. When the February Revolution broke out, Antonov was in exile – in Australia. On hearing the news, he left Australia and made his way by any means possible until he eventually got back to Petrograd to play a dramatic role in the Revolution.

October was made for a Russian audience, to whom the events and the key participants were well known. Thus, when General Kornilov, head of the "Savage Division", tries to stage a counter-revolutionary coup, it is not necessary for Eisenstein to explain what is going on. His audience knew it already.

Longer explanatory titles would disrupt the pace and the impact of the film which I am sure you will agree certainly deserves its place as one of the most powerful classics of the silent screen.

By Rob Gowland, in The People's Voice.

By Rob Gowland, in The People's Voice.
continued from page 6
get Canada out of NATO, NORAD and NAFTA – agreements that are bad for Canada, and bad for the world’s peoples.

Human rights used as instrument of fascination

As the Belgian Communists succinctly pointed out at the IMCWP 20th anniversary in 1992, fascism period, where imperialism is on a global offensive, using human rights as an instrument of fascination

This includes the struggle against imperialism’s doctrine of “responsibility to protect”, and the idea that free speech, assembly, and other democratic rights are the justification to allow fascists to organize and propagate hatred. But hate crimes and incitement of hatred have nothing in common with civil and democratic rights; this is criminal activity wherever it appears, and must be opposed and exposed as fascist ideology.

 Likewise the “2020 doctrine” is an attempt to promote illegal wars and invasions for which there is no legal or other justification. This is the case is Afghanistan, Syria, and Venezuela, among others.

Socialism is the alternative

A sharp struggle, uniting the broadest social forces, is called for now to defeat the forces of fascism, reaction and war. But it must also be linked by the Communists, to the struggle for an alternative to the social, economic and political order that created the conditions for these menaces to be tolerated, even embraced by some working people. As Rosa Luxemburg said 100 years ago, the choice is socialism or barbarism. Communists must therefore focus much more on socialism as the only alternative to decaying capitalism and imperialism, without making this demand a condition of unity in the struggle.

Simultaneously, much more theoretical work needs to be done on the problems of socialist construction and the socialist economy, as well as on 74 years of Soviet power in the USSR. 21st century revolutionaries will need the benefits of this theory and experience to carry through the socialist revolutions still ahead.

While US imperialism’s dominace is waning on a global scale, and its economy is in serious trouble, China and Vietnam have both experienced significant economic growth, with China a major player in the world’s economy and politics. Five socialist states now govern 20% of the world’s population, which is why imperialism is so keen on destroying the remaining socialist countries and the ideals and example of socialism that they represent.

Resistance growing

While imperialism’s offensive is on the retreat, this does not mean the world is growing. Some parties have had to temporarily retreat in face of imperialism’s offensive, but they too are working to build the alliances and tactics that can move the struggle forward and put the working class and its allies in the offensive position, which is decisive and urgent everywhere.

New problems, such as coming mass unemployment due to automation in the capital countries, and the peak environmental crisis and climate change that is forcing fundamental changes onto the agenda. Capitalism has no answers here, though these issues are not new. The question of peace is also a critical issue, as the existence of the world’s peoples is threatened by a nuclear or environmental catastrophe.

In this regard, the crisis on the Korean Peninsula, in which the US, South Korean and Japanese surround the DPRK and continuously undertake simuated invasions, is the cause of the crisis. The ICWP reaffirmed the position of the congress that the solution is political, and involves immediate withdrawal of all foreign troops, and reunification of the Korean Peninsula, free of external pressure. Universal nuclear disarmament is the only way to prevent nuclear war, whether by deliberate action or by accident.

The national question has also become a major factor in Europe, with the referendums by the Spanish government against the Catalan people following the October 1st demonstrations for national self-determination, and the subsequent independence vote. The parties at the IMCWP in St. Petersburg were urging a “yes” in the mail-in referendum, to be held in late 2018. The party supports a mixed-member proportional representation system option; more details will be released before New Year’s.

Speaking at the IMCWP in St. Petersburg: Vera Polycarpov, Central Committee member of the Communist Party of Russia (Working People of Cyprus), which wins 25-30% of votes in that country’s elections.

What’s left

IMCWP in St. Petersburg....

Brampton, ON


UK

Season’s greetings to all our readers!
The PV office will be closed Dec. 22 - Jan. 1.

Fair Vote Canada-BC launches online guide to referendum consultation

In response to the electoral reform referendum consultation process launched by the BC government, Fair Vote Canada BC (FVC-BC) says that a guiding additional context to the questionnaire is now available online, at www.fairvote.ca.

“We congratulate the BC Government for prioritizing their commitment to give citizens another opportunity to address the question of electoral reform. The questionnaire is now available online, at www.fairvote.ca.”

Send submissions to PV Editorial Office, 706 Clark Drive, Vancouver, V5L 3J1 <pvoice@telus.net>

On the eve of the 100th anniversary of the October Revolution, the IMCWP reiterated their support for the peoples’ struggle for national self-determination, and their condemnation of the Spanish government’s actions before and after the vote, without expressing a view on the issue of independence. Both Spanish and Catalan governments are advocates of austerity, and neither is a friend of the working class in either nation.

Internationalism and solidarity

The parties passed resolutions supporting the peoples’ struggles for peace and against imperialist interference, in many countries. This included solidarity with the peoples of Latin American and Caribbean, Turkey, Cyprus, the peoples of the Middle East, North Africa, the Eastern Mediterranean, and the Balkans; and solidarity with the Catalan people against the Spanish government’s repressions.

A final statement was also adopted unanimously by the gathering, committing the parties to continue the struggle against US imperialism in May 2017, to mark the bicentennial of Karl Marx’s birth with new theoretical work, theoretical, propaganda, and massive campaigns to popularize socialism.

The statement is available on the website of the IMCWP, solidnet.org.

BC Report-back from the World Festival of Youth & Students in Sochi, social evening organized by Young Communist League-Vancouver, Sat., Dec. 9, starting 6 pm, at the CSE, 706 Clark Drive. Sponsored by Vancouver East Club CPC, ph. 604-255-2041

Toronto, ON

Anniversary March Cultural Evening, Sat., Jan. 27, 2018. 4:30 to 7:30 pm, at Friends of the Historical Museum (N. of St. George Subway Station, use Bedford exit). Sponsored by YCL, with speaker Kimball Worthington, with speaker Kimball Worthington, with speaker Kimball Worthington, with speaker Kimball Worthington, with speaker Kimball Worthington.

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What’s left

“An escalation of aggression”

From the contribution of the Communist Party of Australia to the IMCWP in Russia.

Unfortunately, the political and social backdrop for the centenary of 1917 is not encouraging. The political right is on the march in many parts of the world. Political forces previously considered too extreme and with so much racist and nationalist sentiment, are taking up political office or dramatically influencing the policy agenda of country after country. Workers and other exploited people are resisting but the intensification of decades of ideological and material pressures on workers, and ever more direct attack on the rights of workers and other exploited people have left us vulnerable.

The geopolitical situation of the world has deteriorated since our parties last met in Vietnam. The economic crisis facing the US, papered over for the time being, has deepened. Rivals to its economic hegemony are getting stronger relative to the US and this is causing much more direct attack on the rights of workers and other exploited people have left us vulnerable.

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"An event of the future, not of the past"

Grenfell fire council "fails to tackle housing crisis"

The Morning Star, the UK's socialist daily newspaper, reports that a housing crisis is deepening in the Kensington and Chelsea neighbourhood of London, where there were join the struggle in a particular way. This led to the creation of the Young Workers' League, the predecessor of the Young Communist League of Canada, a key component of the continuous renewal of the life forces of the communist movement.

Revolution, however, didn't only bring revolutionary and social changes to the newly created Soviet Republic. It also inspired demands for democratic rights such as the right to vote and to form political parties. These struggles were met with Canada's government applying the War Measures Act. Opposition councillor Linda McPhail, leader of the labour-party, has been capped at 2,500... the housing waiting list, which has been capped at 2,500... Everything we predicted would happen has happened. The local authority is playing ostrich. This is management by remote control.

SACP welcomes President Robert Mugabe's resignation

The South African Communist Party welcomes the resignation of Zimbabwe President Robert Mugabe, tendered on November 21. The underlying problems facing the people of Zimbabwe are systemic economic problems and their consequent politics. There are structural forces both in Zimbabwe and internationally, including the (former) colonial power, Britain, and imperialist exploiters, that actively dominated Zimbabwe and supported the measures that underdeveloped the country.

The anti-democratic role played by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank in mining the economy of Zimbabwe through an imposed neoliberal policy regime must not be ignored. As Wendy Stace observes, "Many of those on low incomes rely on this type of housing. But we've never seen this type of housing before. It's not just about the cost of living, it's about the quality of life.

Every issue of PEOPLE'S VOICE gives you the latest on the fightback from coast to coast. Whether it's the fightback against neoliberalism and austerity, solidarity with Cuba or workers' struggles around the world, we've got your back. The corporate media won't.

And we do more than that—our reporters cover stories, events and activities around a revolutionary perspective, helping to build the movements for justice and equality, and eventually for a socialist society. Read our paper, fights for working people on every page—in every issue!

This speech was delivered on October 13th by Adrien Welsh, General Secretary of the YCL-LJC Canada, at an event organized by 36 Communist youth organisations to celebrate the 100th Anniversary of the October Socialist Revolution, within the framework of the 9th World Festival of Youth and Students in Sochi, Russia.

Adrien Welsh

The Great October Socialist Revolution was an event that changed the world. It demonstrated to the world that the working class and popular masses could take power, overthrow capitalism and build a new world free of wars and exploitation.

For the first time, this idea that existed only in theory was put into practice. Revolutionary measures implemented by the Bolsheviks included nationalizing the banks, key sectors of the economy and monopolies, redistributing the land, developing women's rights in order to put an end to their oppression, and bestowing the right to self-determination to the national minorities that were, in tsarist Russia, enclosed in a "prisonhouse of nations". These measures taken by the revolutionary Soviet state inspired the working class and popular masses throughout the world. For the first time, they were able to appreciate the difference between their capitalist state, and the new state built by the working class and popular masses throughout the world.

The impact of the October Socialist Revolution on the working class movement was almost immediate. The Spartakist League in Germany and the attempt to build a Hungarian Soviet Republic were perhaps the two main examples of the influence of the October Revolution on the peoples of the world.

This influence was enough to challenge the bourgeoisie's hegemony, provoking ferocious reactions from the ruling class. They repressed all attempts of the working class to organize. It also led to the invasion of the Soviet Republic by 15 countries, including Canada.

In Canada, this invasion was never supported by the workers and popular masses, who saw in the Revolution a beacon of hope in their emancipation. In fact, several solidarity motions with the Russian Revolution were passed in labour meetings, conferences and conventions. For example, in February 1919, the Alberta Federation of Labour expressed its "full accord and sympathy" with the Russian and German Revolutions and gave full powers to the Executive Council to call for a general strike to support the USSR, Germany or any other "Soviet country".

Money was even raised to send necessary goods and commodities to the newly created Soviet Republic.

The October Revolution, however, didn't only bring sympathy from Canada's working class. It also inspired demands for democratic rights such as the right to vote and to form political parties. These struggles were met with Canada's government applying the War Measures Act. Opposition councillor Linda McPhail, leader of the labour-party, has been capped at 2,500... the housing waiting list, which has been capped at 2,500... Everything we predicted would happen has happened. The local authority is playing ostrich. This is management by remote control.

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