"UNIFOR and CLC should get back to the table"

The CLC has some serious problems, but disaffiliation is not a solution.

- see page 2 -

The global rich keep getting even richer...

Eighty two percent of the wealth generated in 2017 went to the richest one percent of the global population, while the 3.7 billion people who make up the poorest half of the world saw no increase in their wealth, says a new Oxfam report.

Story on page 4

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No more austerity

With a critical provincial budget expected in early spring, working people in Ontario are demanding a decisive turn away from austerity and privatization, towards job creation and social spending.

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Elections in Latin America

The coming year will see an important series of elections across the western hemisphere: Costa Rica, Cuba, Paraguay, Colombia, México, Brazil and Venezuela.

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Left turn in New Zealand?

New Zealand’s right-wing government got the boot from voters last fall, thanks in part to the country’s proportional representation system. What’s the outlook for the Labour-led coalition government?
"UNIFOR and the CLC should get back to the table"

Statement by the Central Trade Union Commission, Constitution, Committee for Canada

The announcement on January 17 by the National Executive Board of UNIFOR, Canada’s largest national union, that it was disaffiliating from the Canadian Labour Congress, effectively expelled UNIFOR to millions of workers in Canada—over 3 million of whom are members of unions affiliated to the CLC, and 300,000 who are members of UNIFOR.

UNIFOR made this decision earlier in the late ‘90s, ostensibly over the same issues, which fractured the labour movement that decade. During that time governments and corporations drove a vicious austerity agenda that cut jobs and wages, closed plants and factories, destroyed defined pension plan benefits and benefits just like US Steel, Nortel Networks, and Sears are doing today. The labour movement was undermined, the pay gap grew wider and part-time and precarious work increased. Public and post-secondary education and healthcare were undermined, and benefits for public services and universal social programs was slashed, and the union movement itself came under sustained attack. Corporations raked in super-profits, widening inequality, manufacturing jobs disappeared, and real wages, purchasing power, and living standards fell.

This was all part of the neo-liberal agenda to expand corporate influence. But the top leadership, burdened under the weight of right-wing business unionism, was unable to recognize its role and responsibilities to unite in order to lead a militant struggle against austerity. While workers chased, in the style of the former political advocates of austerity in Ottawa and the provinces, many labour leaders embraced the Liberals and NDP, and doused militant, independent labour political action that the on-the-ground centres of labour and community struggles were able to organize and sustain.

The decision of UNIFOR’s National Executive Board will not help to resolve the real problems that exist in the CLC. Dissatisfaction with the CLC’s lack of influence and the labour movement at a very dangerous time... for workers, their families, and for the nation as a whole. The labour movement at a very dangerous time... for workers, their families, and for the nation as a whole.

Labour Councils in Hamilton, Durham and London have already refused to ask UNIFOR delegates to leave, and that is exactly what the doctor ordered for labour unity and solidarity.

Labour Councils in Hamilton, Durham and London have already refused to ask UNIFOR delegates to leave, and that is exactly what the doctor ordered for labour unity and solidarity.

It appears that the campaign to win a living wage for cleaning staff at Cap-U at Capilano University (see People’s Voice, Dec. 1-14, 2017)-motion for the employer to pay attention, but the struggle is far from over. The Capilano Courier’s Tia Kerlak Fox reports that the cleaners successfully applied to the BC Human Rights Tribunal to bring a human rights claim. The BC Human Rights Tribunal has ordered Cap U to make the employer pay attention to the case. The Capilano University Board of Trustees has so far gathered 1200 names—a 18% of total enrollment in support of the Living Wage for Families Campaign, which is moving from one site to another to gather more signatures. The Capilano University Workers’ Alliance (CWU) president Zoe Labudzski told the Courier that UNIFOR’s “assertion that he would consider making the living wage an element of the 2030 Campus Master Facilities and Urban Plan” at Cap U indicates that the on-the-ground centres of labour and community struggles are resilient and connected to the struggles of workers, their families, and for the nation as a whole.

The political bureau said it would “continue the mobilization of its members and its friends to strengthen the building of the resistance committees and establish the broadest alliance in preparation for the general political strike to topple the dictatorial regime.”

Cap U cleaners struggle continues

Unity in action: members of CUPE and UNIFOR at the OFL’s “Rally for Decent Work,” October 2016. (PV photo: Ed Bil)
Ontario working class pushing for anti-austerity budget

PV Ontario Bureau

As the Ontario government prepares to release its 2018 provincial budget, which is expected in the early spring, the Labour and progressive organizations are pressing for a decisive turn away from austerity and privatization. These groups, which have been calling for increased funding to physical and social infrastructure, highlighting the need for better funding to long-term care facilities. Hahn observed that individuals in Ontario pay 3.5 times more taxes than those in the corporations, the result of two decades of corporate tax cuts, and called for this to change.

The Ontario Health Coalition is calling for increased hospital funding, noting that real-dollar budget cuts have produced a deep crisis. Ontario’s hospitals are facing the longest strike in the number of hospital beds per capita. The Ontario Nurses Association has also called for full funding to hospitals, as well as long-term care. ONA has also noted the arbitrary removal of the Registered Nurse to population ratio in Canada, and is calling for provincial funding to reverse this trend.

Anti-poverty activists are demanding large increases to social assistance rates, as well as structural changes so that would eliminate the use of administrative tools and increase the minimum level of assistance. These groups, as well as labour organizations, are calling for funding to enforce compliance with the increased minimum wage and prevent employers from taking retaliatory action against workers, such as by reducing benefits, cutting shifts or paid breaks, or firing workers.

During the rally, advocates, as well as several municipalities, have raised the issue of provincial funding for affordable housing. They have noted the dire need for both new affordable units and to repair or upgrade of existing ones. A report from the provincial Auditor General found that there were more people on social housing waiting lists than residing in affordable housing.

The Communist Party of Canada ( Ontario) provided a significant critique submission calling explicitly for an end to austerity and privatization, and demanding a budget for full employment, expanded public services, equality, and progressive tax reforms. The CPC( O) notes the devastating impact austerity policies have had on the working class - rapid and widespread growth of precarious employment, plant closures resulting in over 8000 jobs lost, lost wages and benefits, deep cuts to programs, and soaring costs for services including child care and tuition. At the same time, corporate profits have spiked, rising from $516 billion in 2008 to a projected $306 billion for 2017. The Royal Bank of Canada alone announced a profit of $11.5 billion for the third quarter of 2017.

The Communist Party submission also poses issues of inequality and oppression as budget priorities. The pre-budget consultations are taking place at a time of resurgent fascism and growing racism, widespread harassment of transgender women, as well as a deep and continuing gender wage gap.

To confront and change this situation, the Communist Party identifies key budget priorities such as a shorter work week with no loss in take-home pay, further increases to the minimum wage, expansion of public services and publicly owned industries, a ban on temporary employment agencies, enforced pay and employment equity, and significant increases to social assistance rates. The Party is also calling for expansions to public transit and public healthcare, increased funding to public services, a needs-based health care formula for public education and an end to funding to Catholic schools, a provincial housing program, a provincial system of universally accessible and quality public childcare, funding to anti-oppression and equity-seeking programs, and strong action on climate change and environmental protection.

On the financial side, the Communist Party calls for immediate progressive tax and financial reform based on ability to pay with a wealth tax on corporations and the very rich. The Party’s submission notes that “all tax cuts in Ontario over the past two decades, the overdue modernizing majority items benefiting the corporations and very rich, total $18 billion per year in lost revenue. This is the money that is needed to pay for infrastructure, expanded health care, public transit, job creation, and practically all the measures that are badly needed by the province’s working class.”

Anti-austerity measures, which were preceded by decades of neoliberal policies, the working class in Ontario needs a budget that moves in a completely different direction. As more and more movements and organizations press the government for a budget that reflects this need, it helps build the programmatic basis for a structured people’s movement that can organize and mobilize on a grassroots level, to win far-reaching economic, social and political reforms. Such a movement would strengthen the working class and its allies in the immediate struggle and, in the process, open the door for socialism and working class power.

V DLC backs Tim Hortons workers

By Peter Marcus

The first Vancouver and District Labour Council meeting of 2018 was held on January 19. The pizza educational before the meeting was focused on the Metro Vancouver Alliance, a broad organization, which the Labour Council helped set up to build relationships in order to promote the betterment of people in the region. Deborah Littman, who is retiring from the organization, led the discussion. She is being replaced by Tracy Maynard as organizer. One successful Alliance initiative was the achievement of the living wage at Vancouver City Council. On the agenda are housing and transit issues, including a rally on transit fares.

Mable Elmore, NDP MLA, was the featured speaker at the beginning of the meeting. She focused on the question of a poverty reduction plan and mentioned accomplishments of the Horgan government, such as the $100 increase in social assistance and disability rates. She also talked about its intentions to create 14,000 housing units in 10 years.

Delegates passed a motion condemning employers, such as Tim Hortons franchises, which punish workers for the increase in the minimum wage. Also passed was a resolution of solidarity with the people of Iran, who are fighting for an end to poverty and unemployment and for political freedom, trade union rights and economic justice. Missing in that resolution was counteracting interference by the United States and its allies for regime change in their favour. A third resolution was also endorsed, opposing privatization of airports, ports or other systems governed by the Canadian Transportation Act.

In February, Joey Hartman will retire as President of the Labour Council, and a new executive will be elected. The only candidate nominated for the position is VPD Stephen Von Sychowski.

Citizens in court against city of Montreal

On January 22, as this issue of People’s Voice was nearing completion, an important court case in Montreal. Scheduled to last five days, the case involves members of the boycott movement and the Communist Party of Canada (CPC), who are suing the City of Montreal for compensatory and punitive damages for the city’s actions which occurred during the 2015 federal election.

A news release from the groups says “the BERS movement and the CPC, both duly registered with Elections Canada, joined forces to denounce the pro-Israel policies of Stephen Harper and the Conservative Party during the election.” A member of the CPC was registered as a third party and the CPC is a registered party which ran four candidates for the federal election. The election posters portrayed a Palestinian child murdered on a beach in Gaza during the 2014 bombings. Their aim was to raise the awareness of Montréalers concerning the cause of the Palestinian people.

These posters, identified as “from the BDS movement and the Communist Party of Canada,” bore the message: “Stop Canadian support for Israeli apartheid,” was the text with this image used for the 2015 election posters illegally removed by the City of Montreal.

“Following complaints to the Chief Electoral Officer, the City of Montreal has admitted to violating the law. Today, although it recognizes this fact, the City refuses to acknowledge its fault in this case, forcing the continuation of the trial. The court case will be reported in an upcoming issue of PV.”

MAY DAY 2018

GREETING ADS

PV will print greetings from a wide range of labour and people’s organizations in our May 1-3 issue, which will be distributed at events across Canada. The deadline for camera-ready ads will be April 21; if PV is preparing the content, send greetings to People’s Voice at: Send greetings to People’s Voice at:

GREETING ADS

Ad rates (based on 5 column page):

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Send greetings to People’s Voice at: 706 Clark Drive, Vancouver, V5L 3J1

E-mail: pvoice@telus.net

*Stop Canadian support for Israel apartheid,* was the text with this image used for the 2015 election posters illegally removed by the City of Montreal

CESSEZ L’APPEL CANADIEN A L’APARTHEID ISRAELIEN

*"Stop Canadian support for Israel apartheid," was the text with this image used for the 2015 election posters illegally removed by the City of Montreal"*
The Vancouver summit flasco

If the “Vanouver Group” summit hadn’t ended with more of the same imperialism that led to the Second World War, the exercise could have been written off as just another waste of taxpayer dollars. The event’s concluding message from US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson and Canada’s Foreign Minister Chrystia Freeland that “there is no substitute for American leadership and more engagement” against the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK). This strategy was considered a “reasonable alternative” to Donald Trump’s threats to “level the playing field” of the two Koreas. But weeks in advance, it was already clear that the two Koreas are seeking diplomatic solutions to the tensions dividing the peninsula. North Korean athletes will compete at the Winter Olympics in PyeongChang, and the governments of North and South are cooperating to increase economic and family contacts. These positive developments have been ignored or dismissed by both the US and Canadian governments.

Any genuine search for solutions would necessarily bring other major regional powers to the table, particularly Russia and China, which were excluded from Vancouver while reliable US allies like Greece, Denmark and Colombia were invited. The U.S. administration even described the summit as the start of a new “coalition of the willing”, recycling the Bush administration’s ominous term for the countries which backed the US illegal invasion of Iraq in 2003. No wonder that Russia called the Vancouver meeting “destructive” and a “relapse of the Cold War mentality.”

Fortunately, women’s peace movements from sixteen countries also came to Vancouver. They urged sensible proposals, to bring all parties to the table, withdrawal the massive US military presence from the region, and reach a deal to finish and the Korean War. This is not “in the sky” stuff—it’s the only way to defuse a dangerous confrontation.

A double-double and higher wages

The fight for higher wages for the lowest-paid sections of workers is always tough, and every victory is challenged by greedy employers. Now in provinces where campaigns to achieve a $15 minimum wage force governments to commit to increases, the resistance from bosses is strong. The new government of British Columbia announced one of the lowest minimum wages in the country up to $15/hour by 2020, but then under corporate pressure set up a committee to hear submissions about the timing of such an increase. Even if that date is finally legislated, the high cost of living in BC will undermine the new rate and the struggle will continue.

The latest front in this battle is Ontario, where employers are pushing back. When Ontario’s minimum wage rose to $14 in January, a number of Tim Hortons franchises eliminated paid breaks, reduced access to basic drug and dental benefits, cut uniform and drink allowances, and even reduced hours of work.

First to speak out were workers at a Cogburn store, owned by the son and daughter-in-law of the chain’s co-founder, followed by employees from other stores.

It’s true that not even Timmy’s franchise owner is wealthy, but the financial statement shows that the average annual income of owners tops $200,000. During 2016 the chain generated US$3 billion in revenue for its parent company Restaurant Brands International. RBI’s CEO David Danielson pocketed $6.9 million in salary, stock options and perks, and shareholders received US$350 million in profits.

In other words, this company can easily afford to pay a higher minimum wage. We extend solidarity in this crucial fight against exploitation, to all hard-working Tim Hortons employees, and to every low-wage worker in Canada.
Omnitrax: profiteer takes Canada to court

Excerpt from "Canada's Track Record Under NAFTA II," a report from the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, www.policyalternatives.ca

...In response to Trump’s aggressive posturing, the Canadian government has highlighted its intent to make NAFTA more ‘progressive’, proposing a new investor-state dispute settlement (ISDS) process that gives foreign corporations the extraordinary right to sue Canadian governments for compensation when public policy—including non-disruptive environmental, public health or resource management decisions—disrupts their investment expectations.

The latest investor-state claim against Canada, from U.S. rail company Omnihart, is among the most extreme and complicated of NAFTA’s ISDS processes, and the company would equally grasp the opportunity to eliminate the NAFTA investment chapter.

Omnitrax is the U.S. owner of the Churchill port terminal and the rail line to it. The railway is the only one available to transport Hudson’s Bay on northern Manitoba’s clean coal to the port’s 900-person town as well as Indigenous communities in neighbouring Nunavut. The company currently manages and helped to keep the line in good working order as a condition of the $18.8 million in subsidies it received from Ontario for upgrading and maintenance.

Yet Omnitrax has refused to repair the rail line since it was seriously damaged by flooding in the fall of 2017. After months of inaction on the repairs and increasing hardship in Churchill, the federal government declared the company in default of its contribution agreements and took control of the rail line. Omnitrax filed its NAFTA claim shortly afterward. Omnitrax is putting the company’s proposals to transport oil by rail from the northern port. Omnitrax is demanding $150 million in compensation. This government action has already harmed the company.

In its notice of intent to submit a claim to NAFTA arbitration, Omnitrax argues that the Harper government’s dismantling of the Canadian Wheat Board (CWB) in 2012 and sabotaged the company’s main line of business (transporting Western grain for export) and sabotaged the company’s new line of business (transporting Canadian coal for export). Ironically, Omnitrax Canada’s current president, Gary Twigg, was a Conservative backbencher and one-time chair of the parliamentary transportation committee who voted for the 2011 legislation abolishing the CWB single desk.

Omnitrax’s NAFTA claim attacks the Manitoba government for blocking the company’s proposals to transport oil by rail from the northern port. Omnitrax is demanding $150 million in compensation. This government action has already harmed the company.

The sale of the protests and the range of other organisations joining in—from the Islamist-leaning National Umma Party to parties representing minority groups and women’s rights—has been orchestrated by the Iranian government, with the aim of portraying the protests as a legitimate expression of people’s demands and of fooling the international community. The Iranian Revolutionary Guards have been involved in violence and repression, and the protests have been met with a brutal crackdown, with scores of protesters arrested and beaten.

The protests have been led by ordinary people, with many expressing frustration with the regime’s corruption, economic policies, and human rights abuses. The protests have also been driven by issues such as unemployment, poverty, and lack of freedom of speech.

The Iranian government has responded to the protests with a crackdown, with security forces using lethal force against protesters and arresting thousands. The regime has also used the protests as an opportunity to advance its political agenda, with Ayatollah Khamenei and the entire regime, including the government, facing increasing challenges.

The United States, Israel, and their allied reactionary regimes in the Middle East, in particular Saudi Arabia, are taking advantage of the protests to advance their own interests and agenda to totally dominate the region and silence any dissenting voices.

According to a Member of Parliament in Iran, more than 3,000 people have been arrested during and after the recent protests. It has also been reported that at least 24 people were killed and, so far, at least 22 people have died. Meanwhile, in a report by the Revolutionary Guards, the Islamic Republic of Iran in dealing with the protests and demonstrating the regime’s resolve to maintain order, 119 people were transferred to prison, 12 people were dead and those arrested were exposed to all sort of mistreatment in the jails, including window panes.

A woman raised the demand of the following:

- The rights of the Iranian people to peacefully protest must be respected. It is the undeniable right of the people in the world to protest in a safe and secure environment.

- The grievances of the Iranian people to be heard and acted upon.

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Macron: shiny teeth don’t mask a vicious bite

By Sean O Deorain, Socialist Voice (UK)

It’s almost eight months since Emmanuel Macron took up residence in the Élysée Palace after a sweeping victory over Marine Le Pen’s Front National. This “victory” was accompanied by a historic vote for Le Pen, dwarfing that of her father’s in 2002 against Chirac. Macron did not have the support of even a quarter of those who turned out in the first round.

But what does it mean under France’s new president from claiming an irrevocable mandate to push through his deeply reactionary, anti-worker agenda. The new force of French politics was a triumph of “codes” including stunning visuals, great acting, and a powerful musical score.

The Fifth Republic’s constitution was born out of a state of emergency adopted after the terror attacks of 1939. Macron’s tenure has thus far been marked by an increasingly authoritarian turn by France’s ruling class.

The “victory” was accompanied by the French state to its Spanish clutches. Yet what has been most conspicuous of all is the complicit media, particularly foreign correspondents, trumpeting the gains of France’s premier. Any reader familiar with the Irish Times will immediately be struck by the fawning coverage of Macron by the besotted Lara Marlowe. He is a “fragmatist” and yet a visionary, still on a “winning streak”—just a few of her latest plaudits. His tried to escape to return to her Comanche home, finally starving herself to death in 1871. By this time, the Comanches had been reduced from about 45,000 people down to less than 3,000.

An apology for imperialism in a colourful package

By Kimball Cariou

We all know that Hollywood movies are fictional, right? Even the most die-hard action film fan. But at some level, if a fictional film references actual history and includes scenes of torture, then it is clear that the story being presented is not entirely fictional.

Hostiles is a fictional story set in 1892, structured to present a diverse group of settlers, soldiers and Cheyenne Indians, compelled by circumstances to face adversity — including Gambling Comanche warriors — as they journey from New Mexico to Montana. Everyone is forced to learn from each other, to share their common humanity. It’s a common Hollywood theme, but one that is often more questions than it answers.

It’s not hard to find solid historical information about the Comanches. For the beginner, “Empire of the Summer Moon” by S.C. Gwynne presents thoughtful and deeply researched account of the life and times of Quanah Parker. Our story begins when the Comanche leaders, Quanah Parker’s father, died in his 20s as a wealthy rancher but still a defender of his people’s rights.

Quanah Parker’s Fort, and on many other reservations. In New Mexico? The truth is that Comanche home, finally starving herself to death in 1871. By this time, the Comanches had been reduced from about 45,000 people down to less than 3,000.

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For some, this perspective is the “end of a colonial project.” But it is also, as Ruth Milkman so aptly puts it, an example of the deep state’s domination of an organised working class that could strike back.
**Stalingrad: the turning point of WW2**

By Russian military journalist and RIA Novosti contributor Andrei Stanavov

February 2 marks the 75th anniversary of the defeat of German troops at Stalingrad - the main turning point in the European Theater of World War Two. Nazi Germany’s first major defeat following the air-based Battle of Britain, Stalingrad forced the Red Army to area fighting, after their defeat in the massive tank battles at Kursk, and the Allied invasion of France, the Soviet total and unconditional capitulation became only a matter of time.

Stalingrad was the first nail in that coffin.

Between late 1942 and early 1943, along the snow-covered steppes off the banks of the Volga River, the Nazi war machine suffered the most devastating defeat in its history – one from which it would never fully recover.

The Soviet counteroffensive around Stalingrad, known as the Operation Uranus (Operation Uranus) started on November 19, and continued until February 2, 1943. The daring operation, planned by Supreme Commander and executed by Generals Georgy Zhukov, Konstantin Rokossovsky, Alexander Vasilevsky and Nikolai Vatutin, culminated in the encirclement and liquidation of a 300,000-Wehrmacht army group led by Field Marshal Friedrich Paulus and units from Germany’s Axis partners.

### ‘Hell on Earth’

The battle was preceded by the Nazi offensive into southern Russia and the Caucasus in the summer of 1942, during which Nazi Germany reached the zenith of its territorial gains following its invasion of the USSR. Among the goals of the operation was the destruction of the strategic industrial city on the Volga with the additional, symbolic importance of demonstrating that even a ‘beast of a man’ like Stalin, the commander in chief of the Red Army. For over two months, Nazi mechanized units, artillery and aviation advanced on Stalingrad, pressing the Soviet 62nd and 64th Armies and methodically razing the city itself to the ground.

### Stunned & confused

By mid-November, the Germans had been halted along the entire front and forced to switch to defense and entrenchment. In total, over 1,000 German tanks, 1,400 aircraft, 2,000 guns and mortars were lost, and 700,000 Wehrmacht soldiers and officers died or were wounded. Quickly assessing the situation, Soviet High Command decided not to give the enemy any time to rest, deciding instead on beginning a crushing counterblow.

One German intelligence officer later recalled the impending disaster about to befall the Red Army forces in the South-Western and Stalingrad fronts would come. Soviet command chose the Serafimovich and Kutelkaya areas as the bridgeheads for the assaults, as well as the Sarpinzy Lake area, located to the south of the city.

### Stunned in hell on earth

Wehrmacht: “Stunned and confused, we did not take our eyes off the maps...Thick red lines and arrows indicated the directions of the multiple enemy attacks, flanking maneuvers, and areas where they had broken through, with all our foreboding, we could not even imagine the possibility of such a tremendous catastrophe!”

On November 19, troops from the South-Western Front under the command of Colonel-General Vatutin and part of the Don Front started their offensive. Striking the Axis grouping in its left flank from the north in a lightening advance, the Red Army broke through the Romanian 3rd Army’s defenses, driving enemy forces back 35 km. A day later, rifle divisions from the Stalingrad Front commanded by Colonel-General Andrei Yeremenko struck from the southwest, smashing the 4th Army and advancing 30 km, softening up enemy entrenchments with 80 minutes of concentrated artillery fire. Consolidating its advances, the Red Army then began moving the breakthrough groups toward one another. On November 22, the Soviet 26th Tank Corps seized the bridge across the Don and took the town of Kalach – directly behind the German 6th Army and elements of the Romanian 4th Army. In the space of a few days, the Red Army proceeded to create an iron ring trapping 22 German divisions and over 160,000 troops, including 2,500 officers and 2,194,000 men and 15,000 guns and mortars.

For many years after the battle, Western historians accused the USSR of deliberately mistreating Axis prisoners of war.

Russian historians have gone on to counter the claims, pointing out that most of the enemy troops were taken into captivity after having been seriously weakened by the fighting and the ensuing three months of starvation while encircled.

In the first three months after their capture, the prisoner death rate at the specially organized Camp #08 outside Stalingrad’s working settlement at Beketovka was extremely high, with around 27,000 POWs having reportedly died on the way to the camp or shortly after arriving. About 35,100 others underwent treatment at hospitals set up at the camp; another 28,100 were sent to hospitals at other locations. Only about 20,000 of the prisoners were deemed capable of labour, and were sent to construction work.

Following the terrible spike in mortality in the first three months, mortality rates for the troops captured at Stalingrad stabilized, and between July 1943 and January 1944, a total of 1,777 prisoners were liberated. With the exception of those troops and officers convicted of war crimes, the last POWs from WWII were released to Germany in 1949.

This famous photo shows German Field Marshal von Paulus arriving to submit his formal surrender at the Red Army military HQ in Stalingrad.

At the Victory Parade held at Moscow’s Red Square on June 24, 1945, Red Army troops deposited the captured banners of Hitler’s defeated military.
Lockout ends at Fiji airport

A Fiji judge has ordered an end to a month-long lockout of workers at the country’s main international airport, after more than half of the maintenance workers have been suspended without pay since December, when they attended a meeting to discuss grievances with their employer, ATS.

The judge also ordered that all pay and entitlements from the 16th of December be restored. “The issue of the signing of the letter when retreating back to work applies to all that has been abolished,” said Finau. “That’s not going to take place. Everyone’s just going to wait back to work without penalty or any condition whatsoever. So all ranks are on hold. All the departments in the company are retreating back to work on Monday (Jan. 22).”

Caspel work not entry to jobs

Caspel workers in the UK are five times more likely to drop out of the labour market than those on permanent contracts, a new study finds. Research for the Trades Union Congress also showed that casual work was “rarely” a stepping stone to finding a better job. Workers without regular hours were also not to be reassured with their jobs and suffer greater levels of anxiety. Work by the University of Sheffield and Sheffield Greenwhit revealed that young, black or ethnic minority people were more likely to be in casual work. The TUC said the findings backed the union’s 2016 report which showed that mixed race workers were three-times more likely to be in mixed work.

Sao Paulo strike hits transitelloff

After a hectic Jan. 18 morning rush hour in Sao Paulo city, due to the partial strike by metro employees, a city court granted an injunction suspending the bidding and privatization auction two metro lines. The privatization, scheduled for January 19th, was the reason for the 24-hour work walkout.

“Basically, it can be said that this is a privatization funded with public resources. Irony to those fundamental economists who defend the privatization of Brazilian state-owned enterprises as one of the main topics of economic-fiscal policy of The Times – and of Los Angeles itself, but we do not believe of what we’ve just accomplished. In the weeks ahead, you’ll be hearing more from us in our run for leadership positions to represent yourself and your colleagues as we prepare for our contract negotiations. We need leaders who are willing to fight tooth and nail for every department. We encourage everyone to get involved, even if you are a part of the union election campaign. The union we’ve created belongs to everyone. It’s a better time to get involved.”

IG Metall strike continues

Thousands more German industrial workers took part in strike on Jan. 17, continuing a series of walkouts in support of trade union IG Metall’s demands for a 20% pay rise and a right to the first new cut in weekly working hours since the 1990s. Over 300,000 workers are expected on that morning, including over 8,000 staff at factories of German car maker Audi, IG Metall said in a statement.

“It’s a strong signal for pay talks and for PSA in France,” IG Metall chief Joerg Hoffmann said of the strike at Opel’s main site in Ruesselsheim.

Peugeot brand owner Groupe PSA acquired Opel-Vauxhall last year and announced plans to restructure a restructuring plan to return it to profitability.

The Jan. 17 strikes mean around 468,000 industrial workers had taken part in actions over a week, the union said, with further walkouts planned. IG Metall, Germany’s biggest trade union, said the move was a test after the current round of wage talks, whether to escalate the dispute into 24-hour strikes.

US union density still at record low

The share of American workers belonging to labour unions held steady in 2017, matching the historic low of 10.7 percent set in the previous year, according to a Labour Department report. The membership rate for wage and salary workers rose by 1.8 million last year, according to separate government figures looking further back.

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The union says management continues to link payment of a 20% pay rise to conditions which pilots find unacceptable. The airline insists on maintaining a system of 87 individual Employee Representative Councils, which has been rejected by pilots in favour of union representation.

SEPLA calls on Ryanair to apply the 20% increase to all their pilots operating in Spain from January 1st 2018.

Join 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 CPC office.

Central Committee CPC

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SEPLA calls on Ryanair to apply the 20% increase to all their pilots operating in Spain from January 1st 2018.

Read the working class press online:
www.peoplesvoice.ca

September 1st last without making it any easier for workers to make the legal workers representation recognized in their legislation”.

Shorter work week a priority issue

The UK Guardian newspaper reports that the University of Colorado Medical center researchers recently used activity trackers to enable 5,000 workers over the age of 45. The average period of inactivity during each waking day was 12.3 hours. Employees who were sedentary for more than 13 hours a day were twice as likely to die prematurely as those who were inactive for 11.5 hours. The authors concluded that sitting in an office for longer periods should be avoided to smoking and ought to come with a health warning.

Many workers in the UK feel that bus companies put most of their effort into trying to get to work and again during the afternoon rush hour. To try to ease the problem, officials sliced the city-wide vehicle restrictions of cars with license plates ending in the number seven or eight, which are prohibited from traffic during morning and afternoon rush hours on Thursday. Officials also ruled that bus companies put most of their fleet out to accommodate those unable to use the metro lines.

For the first time since the Los Angeles Times printed its own edition in 1881, its journalists have voted to form a union. The vote was 248 to 44, or 85% “yes”.

“Joining the LA Times Guild means we have a voice to speak for our readers. Finally, we can be a proud voice for ourselves. Anyone familiar with the history of The Times – and of Los Angeles itself, but we do not believe of what we’ve just accomplished. In the weeks ahead, you’ll be hearing more from us in our run for leadership positions to represent yourself and your colleagues as we prepare for our contract negotiations. We need leaders who are willing to fight tooth and nail for every department. We encourage everyone to get involved, even if you are a part of the union election campaign. The union we’ve created belongs to everyone. It’s a better time to get involved.”

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Expectations for a 2018 election year in Latin America

By Nino Pagliccia

In 2018 twelve Latin American countries will hold elections at different levels, presidential, legislative and municipal. The results of these elections are not only important for their respective presidents in Costa Rica, Cuba, Paraguay, Colombia, Mexico, Brazil, Argentina, Ecuador, and Venezuela.

What are the expectations? Four of those countries might hold a clear election next year and they are: Costa Rica, Cuba, Colombia, and Venezuela. Because in these four countries, the right-wing politics in the region.

America, causing a resurgence of independently developed social municipalities. Seven elections are for countries from Mexico to Peru will hold elections at different points, and in the region; and Venezuela and Cuba, because they operate on distinct social premises, based on special circumstances (Venezuela), or on an independently developed social model (Cuba).

In the last few years, there has been a reversal of the progressive movement underway in Latin America, causing a resurgence of right-wing politics in the region. That makes the round of new elections in 2018 particularly important to watch.

In the beginning of 2018, 86 per cent of Impact workers who voted supported the merger; 76 per cent of SIPTU voted for it; and 70 per cent of PSEU members who voted supported the merger. It is to support a backing of a majority of voting members.

The merger will represent workers throughout the civil service and public service, commercial and non-commercial state-sponsored bodies, community and voluntary organisations, and private companies in aviation, telecommunications, and elsewhere. It will be the second-largest public-sector trade union in Ireland (after SIPTU) and, according to Impact, will be "the strongest and most influential trade union voice in the public service and semi-state (state-sponsored) sector.

Impact, the second-largest union component, argued for this merger on the usual grounds: that it will have the additional financial resources and therefore be stronger, with 85 million in assets, including a 50 million investment fund.

Unions usually merge less for political and industrial reasons than to secure additional resources for survival. Research in Britain suggests that the main reasons for mergers are to save money, including stagnating membership and struggling to organise in new areas. The pecuniary, not the political, savings and efficiencies will release funds for new organising initiatives.

Again looking at Britain, this has largely failed; and while unions have secured themselves financially in the short term and have carried out significant internal restructuring (often with loss of jobs for union staff), no major inroads have been made in organising.

Other research also suggests that mergers do nothing for improving the attitude and activism of the membership within the new structure. Rather than inspiring and building membership, it has been said that the merger did nothing for improving the attitude and activism of the membership within the new structure.

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The promise is that cost stagnating membership and financial restructuring will be "the strongest and most influential trade union voice in the public service and semi-state (state-sponsored) sector."

However, in a different scenario, Colombians, especially who have normally abstained from voting, may be alerted and may come back to the polls in the year that the Santos government was recognized for its achievement of peace for the first time in 170 years and 170 leaders were murdered in the country.

Contrary to mainstream media propaganda, Venezuela has proven to have transparent and fair elections. If the two elections in Venezuela in 2017 for governors and city mayors are any indication, Nicolás Maduro will be re-elected as president in November 2018 if not earlier.

Despite the serious U.S. threats of military intervention, severe sanctions and virtual financial blockade affecting Venezuela’s oil industry, Maduro’s main political platform is based on social programs, together with fighting corruption and strengthening the economy that is now seriously critical. The Maduro government can maintain tangible commitment to the well-being of the population and has consistently called to peace and dialogue with the opposition despite the street violence of 2017.

When in 2015 the governing Partido Socialista Unido de Venezuela (PSUV - United Socialist Party of Venezuela) lost its majority in the National Assembly, the right-wing botched its opportunity to push their political agenda, by attempting to swear in deputies fraudulently, for which it was declared in contempt.

The accusations of electoral fraud from some elements of a divided Venezuelan opposition are postulated. However, at the time of writing, union to come into being.

Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador (AMLO) fears electoral fraud in Mexico.

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How U.S. corporations backed Hitler fascism


In 1938, George Dimitrov, the Bulgarian Communist leader, gave the following definition of fascism: “the open terrorist dictatorship of the most reactionary, counter-revolutionary and imperialist elements of finance capital.” He added, “Fascism is the financial arm of finance capital itself. It is the organization of the terrorist vengeance against the working class...”

In Big Business and Hitler, Jacques Pauwels does more than validate Dimitrov’s proposition. He provides a jaw-dropping account of the collaboration between big capital and Hitler, a collaboration that involved American capital as well as German capital, and one that extended beyond Germany to other European countries, and a collaboration which continued just before World War II but also during and after World War II. If you thought you knew much about capitalism and Hitler, Pauwels’s book, will likely show you that you did not know half the story.

Pauwels, a Canadian with a PhD in history from York University, has written two previous books — The Great Class War 1914-1918 and The Great Class War 1938-1945. He makes the case that challenge some accepted understandings of World War I and World War II.

In this work, Pauwels also challenges some myths. He argues that the largest industrial and finance capitalists in Germany and in the United States played a major role in the rise of Hitler, and supplying Hitler’s government from the beginning until the end. They did so because their profits and their control over German industry increased their profits and attacked their enemies, namely the Communist Party, the trade unions and the Soviet Union. The first half of the book deals with German big business and how it collaborated half with American big business and Nazi Germany. Fluent in English, French and German, Pauwels bases his argument on leading scholarship in these languages as well as sources in Italian, Dutch and Spanish. Concise and readable, the book masterfully explores existing research.

Though the idea that big business supported fascism will come as no surprise, Pauwels rich variety of sources, his statistics, and other telling details, will immediately impress even those familiar with the story. It is astounding to learn, for example, that in 1933, there were only 224 German, a collaboration that involved American capital as well as German capital, and one that extended beyond Germany to other European countries, and a collaboration which continued just before World War II but also during and after World War II. If you thought you knew much about capitalism and Hitler, Pauwels’s book, will likely show you that you did not know half the story.

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MSNBC ignores US-backed war in Yemen

Excerpts from an article by Benjamin A. Freedman and Accuracy in Reporting (FAIR), Jan. 8, 2018

The US cable news network MSNBC, the largest humanitarian catastrophe in the world, apparently not worth much attention—no matter how the US government has played a key role in creating and maintaining that unparalleled crisis.

An analysis by FAIR has found that the leading liberal cable network did not run a single segment devoted specifically to Yemen in the second half of 2017. As a result, in the last few months of the year, MSNBC ran nearly 5,000 more segments on topics such as the Russian election but no segments that mentioned Yemen.

In all of 2017, MSNBC only aired one broadcast on the US-backed Saudi air strikes that have killed thousands of Yemeni civilians. And it never mentioned that Saudi Arabia and the US have funded and conducted a cholera epidemic, which infected more than 1 million Yemenis in the largest outbreak in recorded history.

All of this is despite the fact that the US government has played a leading role in the 33-month war that has devastated Yemen, selling billions of dollars of weapons to Saudi Arabia, refueling Saudi warplanes as they relentlessly bomb civilian areas and providing intelligence and military assistance to the Saudi air force.

The network did not run a single broadcast in the last few months of the year that was devoted specifically to coverage from MSBNC or elsewhere, the US—under both presidents Barack Obama and Donald Trump—has staunchly supported Saudi Arabia as it increasingly subjugates and punishes civilians. As punishment as it has plunged millions of Yemenis into mass hunger and pushed the poorest country in the Middle East on the brink of famine.

FAIR conducted a thorough analysis of MSNBC’s broadcasts and found that the network was rated on the Nexis database. The figures in this report are derived from Nexis.

In 2017, the network ran 1,385 broadcasts that mentioned Yemen or “Yemen” in the entire year.

Moreover, throughout the year, 82 of the 825 MSNBC broadcasts that mentioned Yemen did so only once and in passing, often simply as one nation in a longer list of nations targeted by President Trump’s travel ban.

Of those 82 broadcasts in 2017, only a single MSNBC news program devoted more than a minute to the US-backed Saudi war in Yemen and aired a broadcast on April 2, 2017. A segment on Ari Melber’s The Point (7/2/17) entitled “Saudi arms deal could worsen Yemen crisis.” The three-minute broadcast covered many of the important reports about US support for the catastrophic Saudi war in Yemen.

A search of MSNBC broadcasts also reveals that the network would sometimes within the same broadcast mention both Yemen and Saudi Arabia. It did not—side from Ari Melber’s lone segment—acknowledge the existence of US/Saudi coalition air strikes in Yemen.

MSNBC only noticed air strikes in Yemen when they were aimed at Al Qaeda. The closest the network otherwise came was in a March 31, 2017, segment on the Last Word With Lawrence O’Donnell, in which Joy Reid said, “And as the New York Times reports, the United States launched more air strikes in Yemen this month than during all of last year.” But Reid was referencing a New York Times report (3/29/17) on US air strikes on Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (which numbered in the dozens), not US/Saudi coalition air strikes on Houthi-controlled territory in Yemen (which numbered in the thousands).

While ignoring the US/Saudi coalition air strikes and the thousands of civilians they killed, however, MSNBC did report on Houthi attacks on Saudi warships on the coast of Yemen. In his show MTP Daily (2/1/17), Chuck Todd covered favorably the anti-posturing of Trump and National Security advisor Michael Flynn. He misleadingly reported that the Houthis as Iranian proxies and gave former US diplomat Nicholas Burns a platform to claim, “Iran is a violent troublemaker in the Middle East.” On February 1 and 2, Chris Hayes also reported on the Houthi attack.

MSNBC was eager to highlight attacks by US official enemies, yet the tens of thousands of air strikes Saudi Arabia has launched in Yemen has killed hundreds of thousands of people and broken all previous records. MSNBC did not once acknowledge this catastrophe either, according to a search on Nexis and MSNBC’s website. The network did not report on a single air strike by the US/Saudi coalition.

US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson publicly ruled out any US military intervention in the Yemeni civil war, even as the Saudi-led coalition has killed thousands of civilians and civilians and destroyed much of the Yemeni infrastructure.

But after this raid left the news cycle, so too did Yemen. A search of the ‘Yemen’ tag on the MSBNC website shows that, excluding Ari Melber’s lone July segment, the latest segment MSNBC devoted to Yemen in 2017 was the Rachel Maddow Show’s March 6 report on the Saudi-led air strikes.

The message conveyed is clear: to the leading liberal US cable news network, Yemen is relevant when it is Americans who die—not when thousands of Yemenis are killed; bombed daily by Saudi Arabia, with US weapons, fuel and intelligence; and not when millions of Yemenis are on the verge of starving to death while the US/Saudi coalition has caused a widespread famine.

In a June 29 interview on All In, Palestinianexercise burn Linda Sarsour additionally spoke out on behalf of “Yemeni refugees who are victims of a proxy war that we’re funding.” She added, “Who are starving to death, because we’re essentially funding the Saudis to hold them under siege.” This was the rare moment in which MSBNC acknowledged the US role in Yemen’s war, but, again, no mention was made of the US-backed Saudi air strikes that have killed thousands of Yemenis.

...What is striking is that MSBNC is clearly extremely critical of Donald Trump, yet it has passed on one of the best opportunities to condemn his policies. Instead of covering some of Trump’s worst, most violent and illegal actions, the network has left many thousands of civilians dead, has increased the agony and has joked about Trump’s Yemeni victims.

Perhaps this is because it was a Democratic president—Barack Obama—who was responsible for the most casual andسرائيل Trump’s Yemeni victims.

Hitler's US backers...

continued from p. 10

General Motors, the historians Simon Reichenbach and Henry Ashby Gates, the Clinton administration...Billionaire John C. Paulson invested, or for governments to expect to be compensated for risks that they have seemingly flimsy cases before.

viability of the Hudson’s Bay Railway, it also damaged other railways. It is even possible, given the growing prevalence of third-party financing, that the company’s legal costs could be covered by outside investors in return for a share of any potential winnings.

Whatsoever the outcome, the NAFTA Tribunal’s decision to impose a large fine against Canada, enhances Omnitrax’s arguments in legal proceedings. The case underscores how ISDS in NAFTA and deals like it shifts the power dynamic in favour of foreign investors to the detriment of the Canadian taxpayer and the public interest.

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New Zealand’s Labour-led government turned 100 days old in power and was facing a growing upsurging of the neoliberal National Party government after nine years in power. The Labour government is besieged on all sides. The bottom 10 per cent of New Zealanders is losing hope, with the gap between the haves and have-nots expanding. The economy should be doing better, but it isn’t. The unions are delighted, and the government’s refusal to recognise the housing crisis and insistence (at least until the campaign started) that child poverty in the too-hard basket eventually backfired, and in late October Ardern formed a coalition with the two minor parties.

The parties in the new coalition gained 50.5 per cent of the vote, with a further 2.3 per cent for parties that backed change but failed to make it into Parliament. National and its tiny, rabidly right-wing supporter ACT finished on 45 per cent. So far, the government has upped the minimum wage by 7.5 cents an hour (66 cents Cdn.), extended paid parent leave from 18 to 22 weeks (with a further extension to 26 weeks promised), cancelled National’s proposed tax cuts that would have benefited the rich, and increased the line of credit through loans and allowances by $50 ($45 Cdn.) per week. It aims to reverse the harsh sanctions scheme imposed on beneficiaries and expand and increase the Working For Families tax credits. That increase is part of a $5.5 billion ($5bn Cdn.) package which Labour and the Greens (initially) will push through. New Zealand’s child poverty statistics in four years, with initiatives such as the giving parents of newborns $65 ($59 Cdn.) extra a week for a year (three for those on the lowest incomes) and pensioners and beneficiaries getting extra to help pay for heating over the winter. The inclusion of the Greens in the new government has given them the crucial climate change and conservation portfolio, plus they are part of the transport and women’s ministries. The Greens come as a left slant to the Labour on issues such as poverty, equality and housing, so will provide a counterweight to Bill English if the Labour government eventually backfired, and in late

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