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people's VOICE

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Convention
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Indigenous women reveal police violence



**Breaking the
racist code
of silence
and
indifference:
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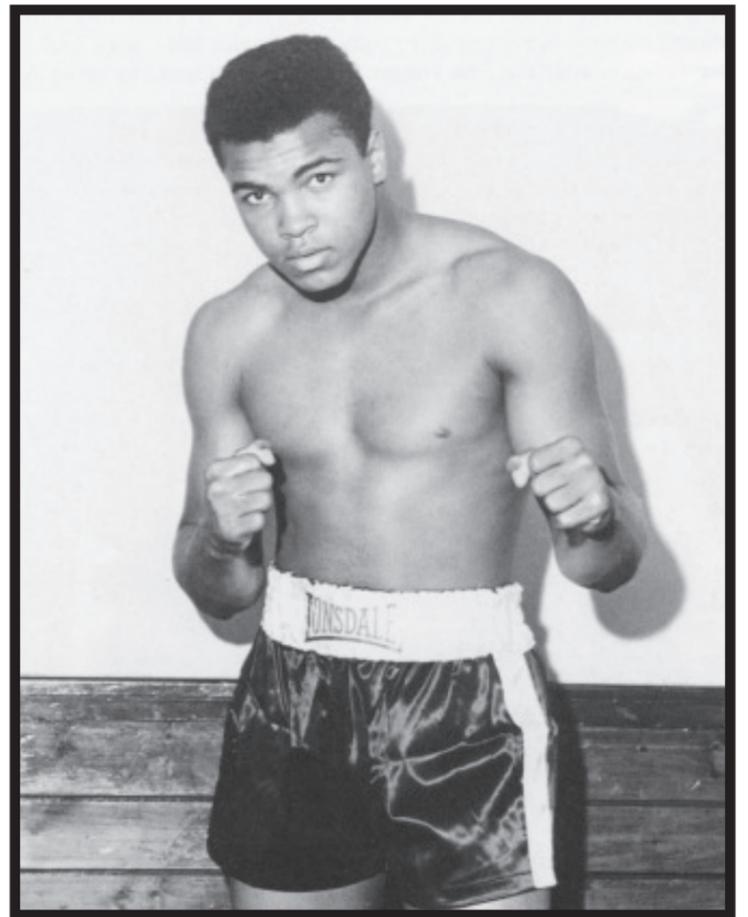
Photo: <http://www.copblock.org/153621/investigation-into-alleged-police-abuse-of-indigenous-women-in-quebec-under-way/>

The radical impact of Muhammad Ali

“Why should they ask me to put on a uniform and go 10,000 miles from home and drop bombs and bullets on Brown people in Vietnam while so-called Negro people in Louisville are treated like dogs and denied simple human rights? No I’m not going 10,000 miles from home to help murder and burn another poor nation simply to continue the domination of white slavemasters of the darker people the world over. This is the day when such evils must come to an end. I have been warned that to take such a stand would cost me millions of dollars. But I have said it once and I will say it again. The real enemy of my people is here. I will not disgrace my religion, my people or myself by becoming a tool to enslave those who are fighting for their own justice, freedom and equality.... If I thought the war was going to bring freedom and equality to 22 million of my people they wouldn’t have to draft me, I’d join tomorrow. I have nothing to lose by standing up for my beliefs. So I’ll go to jail, so what? We’ve been in jail for 400 years.”

This is not only an assertion of black power, but a statement of international solidarity: of oppressed people coming together in an act of global resistance...

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"Drawn to Change"

"Drawn To Change" is a new graphic novel that illustrates working class struggles to achieve positive change from below, from the textile mills of Quebec to the Days of Action in Ontario.

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Left win in Kerala

As political struggles sharpen across wide areas of the planet, the electoral victory in India by Kerala's Left Democratic Front is a positive sign.

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Sanders campaign

The Democratic Party's undemocratic rules may block Bernie Sanders' bid for the presidential nomination, but his campaign has raised critical issues from a left perspective.

Quebec Solidaire celebrates tenth anniversary

By Johan Boyden, Montreal

Quebec Solidaire marked its tenth anniversary with a special celebration, and a sharp debate about changing or maintaining existing party policy on the national question over its two-day party Congress, held at Montreal in late May. Successfully weaving together many strands of the Quebec left over the years, QS now holds three seats in the National Assembly while maintaining its perspective as a party not only of the parliament but also of the streets.

Party spokespeople MNA Françoise David and community activist Andrés Fontecilla were visibly overjoyed at the ten year anniversary, announcing that the greetings received from so many stars of Quebec culture symbolized the party's break from "marginality."

While it is a reflection of the national question and the two solitudes between Quebec and English-speaking Canada that many of these internationally acclaimed artists are relatively unknown in the rest of the country, the big names included author Normand Baillargeon, singer Bia, director Hugo Latulippe, and story teller Fred Pellerin and especially Cannes award-winning film director Xavier Dolan.

"Luckily, some people don't just think about the present, or the futur proche [short-term] or an immediate pay-off, but the future. Those people work for a society, not just a system or goal or dogma.

Those people feel the injustices, and imagine and plan the next steps. Not in the media, but in the future. And for me, those people are you—Quebec Solidaire," Dolan said in a video-taped message which poetically spoke to the main question of the Congress – the future of Quebec.

Greetings were also received from Canadian essayist Naomi Klein and Noam Chomsky. "It's a breath of fresh air in the grim neoliberal era which has brought such grief and despair and often unfocused anger to so many people who have been cast by the wayside as the neoliberal policies are designed to enrich and empower very narrow sectors of wealth and power," said Chomsky.

The sentiment of the gathering was strongly optimistic. Ten years ago the party had just emerged, created when the Union des forces progressistes (UFP) voted in favour of merging with the feminist Option citoyenne movement of Françoise David.

"Our challenge over the first 10 years has been to put Québec Solidaire on the map and we have succeeded. Now for the next 10 years, it is time for us to win the government, and succeed in having a majority [in the National Assembly] to implement the truly innovative proposals we have for Quebec," Andrés Fontecilla was quoted as saying in La Presse.

The debates in the annual Congress included constitutional reforms, expanding policy on the environment and climate change, LGBTQI and transgendered rights,



Françoise David and Amir Khadir, prominent QS leaders

as well as re-orienting certain economic policies. But the main discussion pivoted on the national question and reconsidering QS's long standing policy towards independence through an open Constituent Assembly process and the drafting of a new Constitution.

Not far in the background of this debate was the question of "an alliance of sovereigntist forces" including both Option Nationale, a left-nationalist splinter from the Parti Québécois (PQ), and the PQ itself. In January, bringing this long-discussed proposal from the abstract to the concrete, Pierre Karl Péladeau (leader of the PQ) proposed such a broad alliance against the Quebec Liberals.

While QS initially rejected the proposal, the leadership vacillated over several months when ruling-out any future cooperation.

In a debate that often exhibited a considerable fluidity and differing understandings of what was a short-term tactic vs. a long-

term strategy, discussion about QS-PQ unity became submerged into a debate over changing Quebec Solidaire's proposed route for independence. The experiences of recent referenda in Scotland and Catalonia were also very much in the foreground.

Since its creation, the Parti Québécois has fought for independence via a provincial referendum. In 1980, before the repatriation of the Constitution, the PQ sought a mandate to negotiate a new relationship based on "sovereignty association" with the federal government, which voters rejected by a margin of 19.12 per cent.

In 1995, voters defeated another proposal which would essentially have led to a declaration of independence, by a margin 0.58 per cent. (Voter turnout was higher than any provincial or federal election in Canada's history). Because of its Yes/No nature, the referendum strategy has sometimes been called "the lobster trap" by its detractors, after some supposedly ill-advised comment of Jacques Parizeau.

By the time of the second referendum, the PQ was largely a party of Big Business. The upsurge in anti-neoliberal and anti-globalization sentiment in the late 90s across Quebec, the growing rift by social democratic nationalist forces away from the PQ, as well as the renewed presence of the non-nationalist Parti Communiste du Québec (PCQ) in provincial politics all created the trajectory which formed Quebec Solidaire.

Rejecting the PQ's referendum strategy and narrow nationalism in general, QS asserted that independence was secondary to a broader social or class project of popular struggle such as against privatization and for expansion of public services and programmes, curbing corporate power, for ecology, feminism as well as other democratic rights and, while not

clearly for socialism at least, "beyond capitalism."

Later, it revised independence to be main goal, but avoided the national nationalist orientation on this question alone. As the PQ drifted into the islamophobic swamp of nationalist identity politics with its Charter of Values and most recently the de-facto alliance of Harper and the Bloc on a similar basis, QS has been a strong anti-racist, pro-equality voice.

Instead of a referendum, QS calls to draft a new Constitution for Quebec, echoing an historic position of the PCQ. However, within that debate, QS would advocate for secession and independence. The PCQ, on the other hand, calls for a new, equal and voluntary partnership between Quebec and English-speaking Canada (as well as Aboriginal nations and the Acadians) up to and including the right of secession.

A third option could be a proposal for status-quo federalism (such as a renewed form of autonomy which the New Democratic Party proposes with its Sherbrooke Declaration). While these three distinct paths were not placed directly before the Congress, they came forward in different and even contradictory permutations in the pre-Congress discussion.

For those who doubted that a pro-independence party would entertain a Constituent Assembly process which could result in a different outcome than independence, this Congress saw countless delegates rise to the floor and argue just that.

Sovereignty is a question not for a political party, or even the Quebec National Assembly, but the people themselves, these delegates argued. To prejudice the outcome would be to exclude vast sections of the population. If Quebec Solidaire's social project can go no further without independence, then we must face this problem at that moment. All the people will need to be won to this position.

Other delegates argued for an approach based on a passionate, eager and yearning vision of a new country. (Never mind if it requires making pacts with the political representatives of the very big corporations which are the source of the social crisis faced by the people of Quebec).

In a tight vote, and after extensive pre-convention discussion, the Congress sent a clear message against changing QS's existing position to keep the "open mandate." These debates require more consideration and analysis which will appear in future issues of People's Voice.

With submissions from eighteen riding associations and one campus group, the Congress showed that QS has come a long way in ten years but is still largely based in Montreal and has much work to do before the prospect of the Constituent Assembly becomes a reality.

"We always knew it was going to be long and hard and that we would have to be patient," MNA Amir Khadir told the *Montreal Gazette* reflecting on the past ten years. "We're not looking for short-term rewards. We just have to continue to be patient." ●

Final push for 2016 PV Drive

First, a word of apology to readers for publishing only once this month. Urgent family matters made it impossible for our staff to stick to the usual schedule of two issues in June. As always, PV will publish one issue in each summer month of July and August, before going back to twice-monthly for September.

We are now into the stretch run of our annual Press Fund Drive to raise \$50,000. Over two-thirds of our target has been achieved - \$33,548, or 67.1% - and a number of important fundraisers over the next two months will wrap up the drive. The biggest will be the PV Walk-A-Thon in early August,

which every year brings in about \$4000; watch for details in the July issue.

Four areas have already gone over their Fund Drive targets. Our Newfoundland & Labrador supporters have raised \$775, almost double their \$400 goal. Saskatchewan readers have turned in \$805, which is 34% over their \$600 provincial target, and our Quebec supporters have contributed \$558, or 12% above their \$500 goal. The latest to reach their target are our supporters in the Nova Scotia/ New Brunswick region, who have sent in their entire \$800 target.

Ontario has raised \$17,110, or 78% of their \$22,000 target.

Meanwhile, our British Columbia readers are at \$11,510, or 55%, with the annual People's Voice taking place on June 10, a few days after this issue is printed. We have now received \$1410 from Alberta, which is 40% of their \$3500 target. The Fund Drive was on hold in Manitoba during the April provincial election, but they have raised \$250 (25% of \$1000). Friends in the U.S. have contributed another \$330, in a very welcome gesture of international solidarity.

As noted in previous issues, People's Voice has established an e-transfer system with our credit union, allowing any reader with access to Interac banking to donate or renew subscriptions by email. Using your online banking, send funds to <pvoicepayment@gmail.com>, along with a personally-chosen test question. (One supporter who sent a contribution by this method asked us for Fidel's full name!) For readers who do their banking and bill payments online, this is a way to avoid using paper cheques. Remember to include your mailing address, and details regarding how much of your transfer is for renewal or donation. If you have questions, call our office at 604-255-2041, and we can walk you through the process. ●

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Send your contribution to:

People's Voice, 706 Clark Drive, Vancouver, BC, V5L 3J1

News for people, not for profits!



Have you sent a donation for our 2016 Fund Drive?

Silence and indifference: Indigenous women testify to police violence

By Marianne Breton Fontaine, <http://rebelyouth-magazine.blogspot.ca/>

On October 22, 2015, a team from Radio-Canada's show *Survey* ran a shocking report on multiple cases of rape and the sexual abuse of Indigenous women in Val-d'Or. Originally, the team of journalists was not investigating these cases but rather the disappearance of Indigenous women, and particularly that of Sindy Ruperthouse, an Algonquin whose disappearance in the of Spring 2014 demonstrated the shameful indifference of the media and Quebec authorities.

Around a table, friends Sindy Ruperthouse were questioned about the police investigation by journalist Josée Dupuis. The conversation then took another turn. The women started speaking about the abusive behaviour of police officers. Police officers who abused their authority for oral sex or other sexual favours; police who threatened indigenous women; police who abandoned women drunk in the middle of the forest for a more than two hour walk to downtown to "sober up"; police who beat and brutalized women; police who paid women in drugs and money for sex; police who raped women in the woods or in the police station. These were the same officers who did nothing to find Sindy Ruperthouse and other missing Indigenous women. During the reporting, courageous women spoke out, sometimes for the first time, about the horrors they had experienced at the hands of police in Val-d'Or.

Following the revelations of the friends of Mrs. Ruperthouse, other Indigenous women wanted to break the silence. Some went to file complaints. Fourteen cases were opened that targeted eight policemen in Val-d'Or. These are eight officers out of a force of fifty. It is enormous. Worse still, they are certainly not the only ones.

Through their words, these women forced the government to respond. It was impossible for the State to ignore the horror of the actions committed by its coercive forces. After the report, police responded at a press conference by minimizing the problem. It was apparently a problem of "bad apples," as if these stories were isolated and distinct cases, and not the clear picture of what the police system actually is in reality for Indigenous people. Since then, neither the police nor the government of Quebec, has really fulfilled their responsibilities. Some funding announcements were made by the Government of Quebec and cameras will be placed in the police patrol cars of Val-d'Or, but nothing was done that could really change the situation.

In a statement, Dawn Lavell-Harvard, President of the Native Women's Association, said: "I am deeply concerned by the allegations from Val-d'Or, but not at all surprised. We know that acts of physical, sexual and institutional violence were inflicted on our women and girls at the hands of the authorities for decades. I hope that by shining light in these dark corners, we will one day arrive at justice. Violence against Abori-

ginal women and girls must end."

The Cree Nation launched a boycott against Val-d'Or in solidarity with women who denounced their attackers in the police. Grand Chief Coon Come explained that his community was taking action "to show the non-Native population of Val-d'Or that we are standing with the Native women until the Mayor can assure us that our people and our women are safe here."

For other Indigenous women, this story reopened many wounds. In Montreal, for example, a home to Indigenous women went through an internal crisis. Healing circles took place to help women in distress. Tongues were loosened across Quebec. Other women came out to denounce cases of rape and violence, like those experienced in Val-d'Or, perpetrated with impunity by other police forces. The scale of the attacks and their widespread nature again shows that

Canada is still a colonial state which exercises systemic violence against Indigenous peoples. For these women, it is both the weight of colonial and patriarchal violence that must be carried.

After being sexually assaulted and beaten by police, Kristen Wawatie challenged one of her attackers by saying she would take him to court. The officer replied: "Who do you think will they will believe? A policeman or a drunk?" Despite the threat, the young woman made a complaint, but the SQ refused to hear it on the pretext that she had no lawyer. However, this requirement is phony. Nobody needs a lawyer to file a complaint.

An Indigenous activist in Sept-Îles interviewed by Radio-Canada compared the police and the Canadian and Quebec justice system to the American KKK. The justice system is in practice a denial of justice for Indigenous people.

The police protect themselves and breed a brutal racism against Indigenous peoples. Institutionally, the police and the Ministry of Public Security treat Indigenous people like second-class citizens. It is a Quebec reality and a Canadian reality. Remember that thousands of Indigenous women have gone missing or been murdered in Canada since 1990, and that it was only after many years of struggle that a public inquiry was finally agreed to.

For the police of Val-d'Or, the SPVM (Montreal Police) will be the ones to carry out the investigation. Yet again, it is the police investigating the police.

Until there is fundamental change in the Canadian State and it is recognized that Canada was built on land theft and the denial of Indigenous sovereignty, these tragedies will continue to reproduce themselves. ●



Rally last Nov. 3 at Parliament Hill to show support for Indigenous women.

Indigenous child poverty rates

Excerpts from the report "Shameful Neglect: Indigenous Child Poverty in Canada," www.policyalternatives.ca.

...The outrageous reality is that the majority of children on First Nation reserves in Canada live in poverty and their situation is getting worse. The most recently available data show that child poverty rates for status First Nations children living on-reserve rose to a staggering 60% in 2010. By contrast, poverty rates among Indigenous children living off reserve have improved somewhat, while non-Indigenous children have seen little change to their circumstances since 2005.

(A)mong status First Nation children, 51% live in poverty, rising to 60% on reserve. A second tier encompasses other Indigenous children and disadvantaged groups. The children of immigrants in Canada suffer a child poverty rate of 32% while racialized (visible minority) children have a poverty rate of 22%. Between these are non-status First Nations children (30%), Inuit children (25%) and Métis children (23%)...

Even among status First Nation children living on reserve, poverty is not evenly distributed, with shocking rates of 76% in Manitoba and 69% in Saskatchewan. At the other end is Quebec where the poverty rate is 37%. This is largely due to the relatively low poverty rate (23%) among the children of Eeyou Itschee (James Bay Cree), who benefit from a resource revenue sharing agreement. Among cities, Winnipeg, Regina, and Saskatoon have the highest Indigenous child poverty with rates of 42%, 41%, and 39% respectively. At 19%, Toronto has the lowest Indigenous child poverty rate.

Canada's overall child poverty rate of 18% puts it in 27th place out of 34 OECD countries. That is more than three times higher than the Nordic countries, where child poverty rates average 5%. ●

Solidarity with Attawapiskat and indigenous resistance struggles!

Resolution adopted by the 38th Central Convention, Communist Party of Canada

The suicide crisis among youth in the northern Ontario community of Attawapiskat is a scathing indictment of centuries of capitalist colonialism imposed on indigenous peoples within the Canadian state, from the theft of the traditional territories of aboriginal peoples, to the residential schools and other forms of assimilation which followed. Despite the federal government's commitment to implement the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and its recent endorsement of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, there was very

little in the 2016-17 federal budget for concrete action to seriously address this genocidal legacy.

This is the backdrop for the occupations of Indigenous and Northern Affairs (INAC) offices in several cities, and for other grassroots actions to demand immediate measures to improve the lives of all Aboriginal peoples, such as (to name just a few) the protests to demand clean drinking water at Shoal Lake, the call for a full inquiry into state repression during the Gustafsen Lake standoff, and resistance against resource extraction projects being rammed through over the objections of Indigenous peoples across the country. The Communist Party of Canada sends our warmest greetings of solidarity to all those who are engaged in these important grassroots struggles.

The suicide crisis in Attawapiskat is just one reflection of the deplorable conditions in hundreds of indigenous communities – lack of clean drinking water and decent housing, high unemployment and incarceration rates, and inadequate access to good health care and education. Shamefully, the level of government financial support to address these problems in Attawapiskat and elsewhere has remained abysmally inadequate. We also condemn the cynical racist statements by some such as former

PM Jean Chretien, who arrogantly advised the people of Attawapiskat to simply move to a new location. Such racist statements deny the real history of Indigenous communities. Attawapiskat is near the open-pit Victor Diamond Mine, operated by the multinational diamond company De Beers, founded by the British imperialist and white supremacist Cecil Rhodes. The mine itself is on lands taken from Attawapiskat First Nation through an extension of Treaty 9 in 1930. In 2015, the CBC reported out that De Beers had pulled \$2.5 billion worth of diamonds from the Victor mine since opening, while paying almost nothing in royalties to the province or to Attawapiskat. Other news reports indicate that in March 2005, De Beers secretly dumped a load of sewage into Attawapiskat's pumping station, causing a sewage backup and damage to local houses, but the company denies any responsibility. Such information exposes the racist lie that indigenous peoples themselves are responsible for their impoverished situation.

This situation is not tolerable. We urge the labour and democratic movements to mobilize full support around struggles to compel the government to act immediately to fulfil its election promises of genuine nation-to-nation reconciliation with indigenous peoples. ●

Vancouver's 24th Annual

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EDITORIALS

Liberals continue militarist binge

In the debate over Canada's plans to purchase new fighter-bomber jets, the crucial point is usually missed: militarism is a deadly threat to the future of our planet. An estimated one trillion dollars is spent every year by governments to expand armed forces, rather than to educate children, provide clean drinking water to a billion people, or improve social programs. Just as shocking, armed forces are one of the biggest generators of carbon emissions which cause global warming, environmental change, famines - and armed conflicts over access to resources. In short, militarism does not solve international crises, it fuels them.

Meanwhile, Canada's military budget increased from \$14.5 billion in 2006 to \$20.1 billion in 2014-15. Annual increases for military spending will grow from 2% to 3% starting in 2017, adding almost \$12 billion over the next decade. Justin Trudeau campaigned on a popular promise to withdraw Ottawa's commitment to spend \$30 billion to purchase 63 F-35 Joint Strike fighter-bomber jets. But now, Trudeau is on the verge of buying smaller numbers of Boeing's Super Hornet fighter. Why? Supposedly because (in the words of Defense Minister Sajjan) "in the 2020s, we can foresee a growing capability gap... it's one thing that we plan to fix."

The bizarre debate over which costly death machine "suits our defense needs" is a complete distraction. Canada faces no foreseeable military threat, except in the propaganda of those who seek to revive the Cold War. Contributing fighter-bombers to various U.S.-led wars in Asia and Africa does nothing to improve Canada's security; the opposite is true. The most significant factor in the rise of fundamentalist anti-Western movements has been the sordid record of occupations and interventions by the imperialist countries including Canada.

The planet cannot afford the militarist gravy train. It's time to get off, and slash "defense spending".

Push back against TPP

Big business forces in Canada are ramping up the drive to ratify the Trans-Pacific Partnership, before the TPP becomes a hot-button issue in the US presidential campaign. It's time to push back, not time to wait for Labour Day to move into action.

This spring's round of "consultations" on the TPP was very revealing. In most cities, the federal Liberals stacked the deck, lining up corporate shills to praise this sellout to transnational capital. But as the TPP parliamentary road show went on, the Liberals were increasingly forced to allow critics to say their piece. Members of the Council of Canadians, environmental groups, Indigenous peoples, the Communist Party and others managed to present statements, shattering the lie that "everyone is in favour of the TPP."

The Liberals are clearly nervous about the potential of this issue to rally a huge range of opponents against the entire neoliberal austerity agenda. That explains why right-wing forces are thundering that the government must ratify the TPP quickly, regardless of hostile public opinion. A good example is the recent National Post column by Rob Merrifield, arrogantly ordering the PM to "insulate Canada against the protectionist threat" by ratifying the TPP before November. (Rob was one of many Tory MPs who jumped Stephen Harper's sinking ship before the 2015 federal election. After a career in Parliament where his claim to fame was "initiating the transformation of Canada Post," Merrifield is currently a lobbyist for Big Oil.)

Differences over the TPP within the ruling class are mostly tactical. After all, the federal minister of international trade is Chrystia Freeland, a strong backer of corporate globalization. The Liberals do plan to ratify the deal, when the political timing is suitable. That's why the main organizing against the TPP must go beyond parliamentary hearings and news releases, taking our case into the streets.

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Dave Arland, Ed Bil, Johan Boyden, Marianne Breton-Fontaine, Wally Brooker, Nino Pagliccia, Liz Rowley, Srecko Vojvodi, Michael Zaharuk, and our mailers in Vancouver & Toronto.

Editor: Kimball Cariou Business Manager: Hassan Azimikor

Editorial Board: Kimball Cariou, Miguel Figueroa, Naomi Rankin, Liz Rowley, Jim Sacouman

LETTERS

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The wildfire tragedies – a call for radical action against global warming

Resolution adopted by the 38th Central Convention, Communist Party of Canada

The Fort McMurray fire, which broke out May 2nd during an unprecedented spring heat wave in northern Alberta, now covers 423,000 hectares of boreal forest as of May 18th. The plight of more than 80,000 Fort McMurray residents, frantically trying to evacuate amidst fire and smoke, knowing they might not have homes to return to, has touched the hearts of Canadians. Most are still unable to return to their homes, and the fire has also had a devastating impact on First Nations and other communities in the area. The delegates at the 38th Central Convention of the Communist Party send our solidarity to all those who are victims of this terrible disaster.

But Fort McMurray is not the only wildfire in western Canada this spring... Many of these lesser known fires affect First Nations communities; an out of control fire near the Doig River First Nation in BC is over 75,400 hectares.

Such tragedies raise serious questions about the impact of human economic activity on the environment. NASA recognized in 2010 that wildfires in northern latitudes are a symptom of the Earth's warming and climate change. These fires are accelerated by the rising emissions of hydrocarbons on a world-wide scale. Scientists state that every year the

length and severity of the fire season worsens. Our earth is burning.

While the Alberta tar sands projects themselves did not directly cause the heat wave, this industry is one of the most significant contributors to carbon emissions in Canada. In this sense, the TNCs involved in the tar sands and the international oil and gas industry, including ExxonMobil, BP, Shell, Total, CNRL and Chevron, can be considered the arsonists who caused the Fort McMurray fire, and they will cause more fires if they are not stopped, and if carbon emissions are not dramatically scaled back. Despite this, the energy monopolies and pro-corporate politicians argue that action to protect the environment will damage our economy. The Communist Party of Canada rejects the false "jobs versus the environment" dichotomy.

The situation is critical, but scientists say it is not too late. Radical action must be taken to halt climate change.

The Communist Party of Canada calls on the federal and provincial governments to take the following urgent steps to halt climate change, diversify our economy, and create jobs:

* Adopt emergency legislation to slash greenhouse gas emissions, and support reparations to countries and Indigenous peoples affected by capitalist-driven climate change.

* Invest heavily to create jobs through renewable energy and

conservation programs; phase out coal-fired plants and terminate reliance on nuclear energy.

* Substantially expand urban mass transit, and eliminate bus and transit fares.

* Legislate stringent vehicle emission controls.

* Fund high-speed rail as a better alternative to highways and airlines.

* Ban "biofuels" derived from feed grains.

* Impose heavy fines and jail terms against polluters and destructive corporate practices, and ban industrial development in parks.

* Adopt a People's Energy Plan, including public ownership and democratic control of all energy and natural resource extraction, production and distribution.

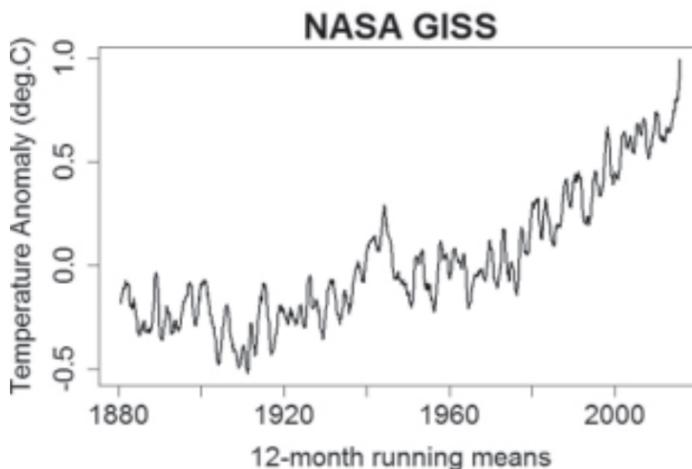
* Freeze and reduce energy exports.

* Expand shared power flows among provinces through an East-West power and energy grid.

* Block new development of the Alberta tar sands, and close these operations within five years, with jobs guaranteed for workers in more sustainable industries at equivalent wages.

* Compensate the Aboriginal peoples and communities affected by the tar sands.

* No to the Enbridge, Kinder Morgan, Keystone XL, Line 9 and Energy East pipelines, and to oil and gas exploration and shipping on the west coast.



The graph from NASA's Goddard Institute for Space Studies illustrates the trend towards rapid increases in average global temperatures. To read more, visit <https://tamino.wordpress.com/2016/05/21/record-global-warming-or-warming-slowdown/>

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CPC wraps up successful 38th Central Convention

Special to PV

The 38th Central Convention of Canada's third-oldest political party wrapped up in Toronto on May 23, after three days of intense debates, a lively Saturday night banquet, and the election of a new leadership.

Forty-three delegates were elected to the Communist Party's convention, joined by a number of alternates, members of outgoing leadership bodies, and many interested members and friends of the CPC and the Young Communist League.

Opening the convention, Party leader Liz Rowley welcomed a number of international guest speakers, including Cuban Ambassador to Canada, Julio Garmendía Peña, and the Cuban Consul in Toronto, Javier Domokos; the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela's Ambassador to Canada Wilmer Barrientos; representatives of the US-based Marxism Leninism Today, Greg Godels and Ed Grystar; and Dr. Noor Zaheer, President of the Delhi Branch of the National Federation of Indian Women and a member of the Communist Party of India. Over 55 greetings to the convention were received from Communist and Workers' parties across the world.

Other guest speakers included Natalie Mehra, Executive Director of the Ontario Health Coalition, who spoke about the fight to save and expand Medicare in Canada, and a representative of the Canadian Union of Postal Workers, who brought greetings from CUPW President Mike Palecek.

Speaking on behalf of the CPC's outgoing Central Executive, Liz Rowley presented a keynote address, focuses on recent developments in the international and Canadian political scene.

Rowley noted that "since our convention documents were issued three months ago, imperialism has launched new strikes against progressive governments in Latin

America and elsewhere. In Brazil, corrupt politicians representing both international and domestic corporate interests succeeded to impeach Workers' Party leader and Brazilian President Dilma Rousseff... The coup in Brazil is part of a larger conspiracy by US imperialism to destabilize and overthrow progressive governments in Venezuela, Bolivia, Peru, and elsewhere, by tightening the economic screws, fanning popular discontent, and financing the opposition parties and movements with funds and material support, along with promises of future riches in re-privatized public and resource sectors."

The keynote slammed ongoing imperialist interference in other regions, from Syria to Palestine, Ukraine and the Korean peninsula.

Rowley reaffirmed the Communist Party's historic policy of support and solidarity with Cuba, still battling with the US government to end the blockade. "We demand the US government lift the blockade now, repatriate the Guantanamo naval base and deep sea port, and demand the Canadian government also exert pressure on the US government to lift the blockade," said Rowley. "We also use the occasion of our convention to salute the Five Cuban heroes, finally home, and free, in Cuba."

Turning to the US elections, Rowley pointed out that "the Republican Party has a fascist as its candidate for President, and the Democrats have an establishment candidate more likely to keep voters at home than to pull the women's vote, the Black and Hispanic votes, in the numbers needed to defeat Trump."

She went on to discuss the support generated for Bernie Sanders in the Democratic Party race.

"Sanders is no socialist in the way we understand that term," said Rowley, "but he is regarded as a socialist in the US in the same way that Canadian Medicare is 'evidence' of socialism in Canada. That doesn't mean it's so. What is most important is that the Sanders campaign has pushed politics in the Democratic Party campaign in a more progressive direction, and forced the Clinton campaign to moderate its policies and shift more to the centre. This includes opposing the TPP which if ratified, will further decimate the jobs, wages and conditions of the US working class. Further, the Sanders campaign has become a pole of struggle in the US elections around which many progressives and democrats and various people's movements including Black Lives Matter, Occupy and others, have mobilized. At this crucial moment in US and world affairs, the Sanders campaign is an important and a positive development."

The CPC leader stressed that while the defeat of the Harper Conservative government was a victory, "the election of a Liberal majority was certainly no victory for the working class... Now the struggle is to force the Liberals to roll back a decade of Tory policies, as promised during the election."

While the Liberals have taken action on some of those promises, Rowley noted, last February's federal budget brought no corporate tax increases, no changes



CPC leader Liz Rowley (right) with convention guest speaker Dr. Noor Zaheer, President of the Delhi Branch of the National Federation of Indian Women.

to security state laws, no reductions in the military budget, and support for TPP and CETA.

"The Liberals have the support of the main sectors of capital today because of the need to turn down the heat and reduce the economic, social and political polarization that has developed and that is a potential threat to profits and to the capitalist system as a whole," said Rowley. "The Liberals have been tasked with defusing the situation, without interfering with profits to be made today, or profits to be had tomorrow from new trade deals like the TPP. Of course this isn't possible, and already the Liberals are finding themselves in conflict with labour over the TPP, with the environmental movement and Indigenous movements over pipelines, with youth and the unemployed over EI and minimum wage laws, etc."

Rowley went on to point out that "the NDP's policies and orientation to Big Business has cost them one election after another, including the October 2015 federal election and provincial elections in BC, Nova Scotia, Saskatchewan, Ontario, and Manitoba... In Alberta, the NDP was elected because of the split on the right and widespread public anger at both the Tories and Wild Rose parties, combined with some progressive social policies."

At the recent federal NDP Convention, she said, "the left-wing in the NDP coalesced around the Leap Manifesto... a general statement of progressive objectives, which falls short on policy specifics and which underestimates the powerful forces opposed to these objectives. It does not, for example, mention public ownership which is a central question in the resource and energy sector... The Convention vote to allow riding associations to discuss the Leap Manifesto until the next NDP convention won't hurt anybody, won't challenge the NDP's current right wing direction, and won't change much. Progressive people will appreciate the sentiment of those supporting the Manifesto, but there are no solutions here."

Her keynote discussed the struggle to block the Trans-Pacific Partnership, which must be ratified

by the governments of the twelve signing countries by early 2018 before taking effect. As she noted, the Communist Party has been very active in the campaign against the TPP, but more work is needed to bring the labour and democratic movements into the fight to stop this corporate sellout.

She went on to examine the recent growth in membership and activities of the Communist Party and the YCL in many parts of Canada. Several new party clubs have been formed since the 37th Convention three years ago, in locations from Kamloops to St. John's, and a number of delegates were in Toronto from these clubs.

The 38th Convention marked important changes in the Party's leadership, notably the retirement of Miguel Figueroa as party leader after 23 years. Rowley outlined some of the major contributions made by Figueroa, from the struggle to save the Party after a serious split in the early 1990s, to the fight against deregistration following Tory changes to the Canada Elections Act, and his cross-country speaking tours in eight federal elections. The recent growth of the party is in large part due to Figueroa's efforts, and he was re-elected to the Central Committee on the final day of the connection.

"Our growth," concluded Rowley, "is the result of changing, more favourable conditions for a revolutionary party in some respects, more dangerous conditions for the working class and the unemployed and underemployed who have become fodder for government austerity and corporate extortion, and cannon fodder in Canada's dirty wars around the world. For many people, capitalism isn't working any more, and so they are looking for real change and a genuine alternative to capitalism, that brings them to the Communist Party in greater numbers than we have seen for some time. Our new members are often involved in various struggles, and they are looking for support and help in these struggles, as well as to be part of a larger struggle for a different future—for socialism and for peace, equality and democracy." ●



Solidarity with Postal Workers - block the attack on public services

Action resolution adopted by the 38th Central Convention of the Communist Party of Canada

Just six months after the bitterly anti-labour Conservative government was driven out of office by voters, the corporate attack on the unionized public mail delivery system has not stopped. As negotiations heat up between Canada Post and the crown corporation, this convention of the Communist Party of Canada extends warm greetings of solidarity to the 50,000 members of the Canadian Union of Postal Workers.

Over the past two years, our Party has been active in the campaign across the country to save jobs and services at Canada Post, especially against the expansion of superboxes into urban areas, a move which would end urban home delivery and cost up to 8,000 union jobs. This spring and summer, CUPW is in a battle to defeat management's concession demands, and to win a strong collective agreement, including equality for rural and suburban mail carriers (RSMCs, more full-time permanent jobs, protection of sick days, and decent pensions. In the event of job action at Canada Post, which could happen by early July, the members of the Communist Party will stand in solidarity with our sisters and brothers from CUPW on the picket lines. We also affirm our support for CUPW's campaign to demand that the federal government and the Corporation expand the range of services, such as postal banking at Canada Post outlets, rather than slash more jobs.

We will also continue to help expose the lies used by Canada Post and right-wing thinktanks to justify the elimination of home postal delivery and to escalate postal rates. The Conference Board of Canada, which includes Canada Post CEO Deepak Chopra, continues to predict massive future losses, despite the fact that in 2014 Canada Post reported profits of \$62 million, followed by \$99 million in 2015.

In reality, these moves are a key element of the agenda of privatization which targets all social services, publicly owned resources, energy, Medicare, education and transportation. In order to expedite negotiation and implementation of the CETA agreement with the European Union, the former federal government made a commitment to comply with the conditions of the Lisbon Agreement (the de facto constitution of the EU) which calls for the privatization of public services. Canada has gone even further than other countries in the drive to ultimately replace Canada Post with private for-profit delivery and postal services. Since then, the new Liberal government has signed the Trans-Pacific Partnership, yet another corporate pact to expand the ability of investors to extract profits from public services.

The Communist Party of Canada urges the entire labour movement and its community allies to stand in full solidarity with CUPW's fight for a strong collective agreement, and to build a powerful mass mobilization against the entire right-wing agenda, starting with a campaign to defeat CETA, the TPP and other corporate deals which threaten public services, democracy and sovereignty. ●

Further reports on the CPC's 38th Convention will appear in the July issue of People's Voice.

Check online for the documents of the 38th Convention, at www.comunist-party.ca

'I Just Wanted to Be Free': The Radical Reverberations of Muhammad Ali

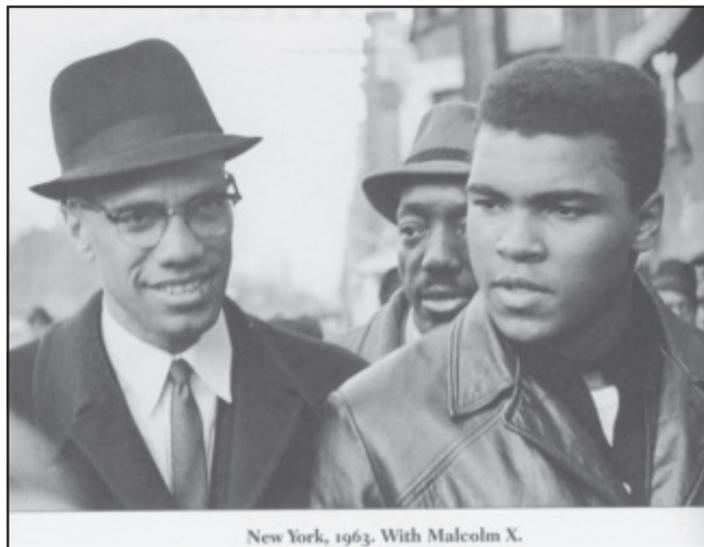
By U.S. sports columnist Dave Zirin. This commentary is from *The Nation*, June 4, 2016.

The reverberations. Not the rumbles, the reverberations. The death of Muhammad Ali will undoubtedly move people's minds to his epic boxing matches against Joe Frazier and George Foreman, or there will be retrospectives about his epic "rumbles" against racism and war. But it's the reverberations that we have to understand in order to see Muhammad Ali as what he remains: the most important athlete to ever live. It's the reverberations that are our best defence against real-time efforts to pull out his political teeth and turn him into a harmless icon suitable for mass consumption.

When Dr. Martin Luther King came out against the war in Vietnam in 1967, he was criticized by the mainstream press and his own advisors who told him to not focus on "foreign" policy. But Dr. King forged ahead and to justify his new stand, said publicly, "Like Muhammad Ali puts it, we are all—black and brown and poor—victims of the same system of oppression."

When Nelson Mandela was imprisoned on Robben Island, he said that Muhammad Ali gave him hope that the walls would some day come tumbling down.

When John Carlos and Tommie Smith raised their fists on the medal



New York, 1963. With Malcolm X.

stand in Mexico City, one of their demands was to "Restore Muhammad Ali's title." They called Ali "the warrior-saint of the Black Athlete's Revolt."

When Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) volunteers in Lowndes County, Alabama launched an independent political party in 1965, their new group was the first to use the symbol of a black panther. Beneath the jungle cat's black silhouette was a slogan straight from the champ: "WE Are the Greatest."

When Billie Jean King was aiming to win equal rights for women in sports, Muhammad Ali would say to her, "Billie Jean King! YOU ARE THE QUEEN!" She said that this made her feel brave in her own skin.

The question is why? Why was he able to create this kind of radical ripple? The short answer is that he stood up to the United States government... and emerged victorious. But it's also more complicated than that.

What Muhammad Ali did—in a culture that worships sports and violence as well as a culture that idolizes black athletes while criminalizing black skin—was redefine what it meant to be tough and collectivize the very idea of courage. Through the Champ's words on the streets and deeds in the ring, bravery was not only standing up to Sonny Liston. It was speaking truth to power, no matter the cost. He was a boxer whose very presence and persona taught a simple and dangerous

lesson: "real men" fight for peace and "real women" raise their voices and join the fray. Or as Bryant Gumbel said years ago, "Muhammad Ali refused to be afraid. And being that way, he gave other people courage."

My favourite Ali line is not him saying, "I hospitalized a rock. I beat up a brick. I'm so bad I make medicine sick" or anything of the sort. It was when he was suspended from boxing for refusing to be drafted into the Vietnam War. Ali was attending a rally for fair housing in his hometown of Louisville when he said:

"Why should they ask me to put on a uniform and go 10,000 miles from home and drop bombs and bullets on Brown people in Vietnam while so-called Negro people in Louisville are treated like dogs and denied simple human rights? No I'm not going 10,000 miles from home to help murder and burn another poor nation simply to continue the domination of white slavemasters of the darker people the world over. This is the day when such evils must come to an end. I have been warned that to take such a stand would cost me millions of dollars. But I have said it once and I will say it again. The real enemy of my people is here. I

will not disgrace my religion, my people or myself by becoming a tool to enslave those who are fighting for their own justice, freedom and equality.... If I thought the war was going to bring freedom and equality to 22 million of my people they wouldn't have to draft me, I'd join tomorrow. I have nothing to lose by standing up for my beliefs. So I'll go to jail, so what? We've been in jail for 400 years."

Damn. This is not only an assertion of black power, but a statement of international solidarity: of oppressed people coming together in an act of global resistance. It was a statement that connected wars abroad with attacks on the black, brown and poor at home, and it was said from the most hyper exalted platform our society offered at the time: the platform of being the Champ. These views did not only earn him the hatred of the mainstream press and the right wing of this country. It also made him a target of liberals in the media as well as the mainstream civil rights movement, who did not like Ali for his membership in the Nation of Islam and opposition to what was

see ALI, page 11

Why should they ask me to put on a uniform and go 10,000 miles from home and drop bombs and bullets on Brown people in Vietnam while so-called Negro people in Louisville are treated like dogs and denied simple human rights?

"Red Spring" for Left in Kerala state

By Vijay Prashad, *Morning Star*

A tough political fight in the Indian state of Kerala has resulted in the victory of the Left Democratic Front (LDF) in the Assembly elections — it won 91 seats in the 140 seat chamber to retake power in the state.

The LDF, which comprises the Communist Party of India (Marxist), the Communist Party of India and nine other allied parties, gained over 20 extra seats over the 2011 election. In several constituencies LDF candidates scored impressive victories, wiping out the opposition from entire parts of Kerala.

What were the issues that culminated in this historic victory? The parties of the LDF led important fights for wages and the living conditions of the working class and the peasantry.

Important public institutions — in charge of delivering quality education, pensions and food — have been destroyed by the Congress Party-led United Democratic Front. Corruption and cronyism of the Congress administration opened the eyes of the public. It was one thing to break popular institutions, it was wholly another to steal from the public while doing so.

Finally, the left fought hard against the fascistic Hindu right — the paramilitary National Patriotic Organisation (RSS) and ruling Indian People's Party

(BJP), which had tried every trick in the book to win support in Kerala — but no amount of money or influence by the BJP's headquarters worked.

Admittedly, it won a seat in the Kerala assembly for the first time ever. It tried to consolidate the "Hindu" vote, but in Kerala other identities — class, caste — played a formidable role in blocking the fascistic parties.

The left had a key role in pushing back against the BJP at the doors of Kerala.

After the result was announced and as the Left celebrated, the RSS attacked the rallies with brute force. These are the tactics this close ally of India's ruling party is prepared to resort to.

In West Bengal, meanwhile, the results for the left continue to disappoint. The Left Front governed the state between 1977 and 2006, winning six legislative assembly elections in a row. During this time, the Left Front government ushered in democracy to rural West Bengal. Land reforms, registry of agricultural workers and local self-government all became a reality.

But after 34 years in power the left lost in the historic election of 2011. The main cause was a botched attempt at industrialisation in Singur, near Kolkata. Massive violence against the left dented the confidence of the masses who did not pick up the red flag.

Over the past five years, the left has worked to rebuild confidence,



Artist paints Left Democratic Front banner during Kerala campaign.

which is not an easy task. Corruption and violence by the ruling Trinamool Congress Party (TMC) had dented its reputation and it seemed like the left could make gains this election.

A decision to work alongside the Congress Party, which the LDF fought against in Kerala, in order to build up some unity against the TMC, seems to have worked against it.

Despite a fresh energy among its cadres, the difficulty in winning back sections of the population that had transferred their votes to the TMC was too great. In fact, the left won even fewer seats than it did in 2011 and the leader of the Left Front, Surjya Kanta Mishra, lost his own seat, which he had held since 1991.

No-one expected the LDF to win the election outright this year

largely because the rebuilding of the party following the violence it faced from the right in the countryside could not be fully achieved. Still the breadth of the loss is a surprise. The Left Front will have to think hard about working alongside the Congress Party and much analysis is needed before a firm judgement can be made.

Mishra said: "The issues which we have been raising for the past five years — which we advanced before and during the elections — of repression of protests, of the threat to democracy, of unemployment, of farmers committing suicide are facts that are relevant irrespective of the mandate of the people and irrespective of the elections."

The Congress Party lost in both Assam and Kerala, while the BJP

— the ruling party in India today — won in Assam but could not make gains elsewhere. Regional parties and the LDF emerged as the winners.

The right opportunistically claimed victory even when they did not really win the day. Prime Minister Narendra Modi of the BJP, thanked the Indian population, saying, "The polls have made it clear that BJP's ideology is being accepted and appreciated."

Modi's henchman, Amit Shah, said that the election "results are a stamp of approval on Narendra Modi's performance over the two years."

This is the right's forte, claiming victory in defeat and giving the impression it will steamroll into power. Facts don't get in the way. It is the impression that counts. In this respect, it has learnt well from the corporate world, where the brand is more important than the commodity itself.

The left meanwhile has cause to celebrate with the Kerala victory. Much needs to be understood about the nature of the success in Kerala to see if the mood in that state can be generated elsewhere.

The left, far from being defeated as the business media suggests, is feeling the buoyancy of the Red Spring in Kerala.

(Vijay Prashad is an Indian Marxist historian and journalist, and professor of International Studies at Trinity College.) •

Obama's "new" U.S. foreign policy and Latin America

By Nino Pagliccia, May 22, 2016

When U.S. President Barack Obama promised to start a "new chapter" with Latin America at the April 2009 Summit of the Americas in Trinidad and Tobago, most of us were hoping for a more friendly and respectful U.S. foreign policy - a welcome departure from the aggressive warmongering of George W. Bush. The Norwegian Nobel Committee must have been just as hopeful when it awarded Obama with the Peace Prize in October of that same year.

Obama addressed all regional leaders with a conciliatory speech: "While the United States has done much to promote peace and prosperity in the hemisphere, we have at times been disengaged, and at times we sought to dictate our terms. But I pledge to you that we seek an equal partnership."

Then he added, "To move forward, we cannot let ourselves be prisoners of past disagreements... I believe... that we must learn from history, but we can't be trapped by it." He repeated similar words during his visit to Cuba just a few weeks ago. It is worth noticing that in the 2009 speech Obama also promised "over a trillion dollars for countries going through difficult times." That was his idea of an "equal partnership". What would he want in exchange? He didn't say.

In the last 15-20 years Latin America has seen a steady shift to more progressive policies, largely inspired by the regional leadership of Hugo Chávez and his vision of socialism for the 21st Century. Some countries drafted new constitutions to reflect that vision. Solidarity with the poor and between poor countries has been the main guiding principle of national and international policies. Calls to more independent and sovereign domestic decisions have been made, helped by the creation of institutions like CELAC (*Comunidad de Estados Latinoamericanos y Caribeños*; Community of Latin American and Caribbean States) and UNASUR (*Unión de Naciones Suramericanas*; Union of South American Nations). Ultimately, Latin America has been trying to build truly equal regional partnerships.

The success and vitality of those autonomous actions did not go unnoticed by the U.S. In fact, we are witnessing the response, as a reversal of the Latin American political programs for Latin Americans, to a more U.S. centered formulation for the region. Some countries are forced to return to the old neoliberal dependency that has consistently created inequality, poverty and class struggle.

Countries that do not submit to the will of the U.S. regime are constantly harassed, as in the case of Venezuela. The majority of Venezuelans have supported the Bolivarian Revolution of Hugo Chávez and Nicolás Maduro repeatedly in fair elections. The Venezuelan government has contributed greatly to the social and economic advances of the country by reducing poverty and illiteracy, and expanding health-care to marginal communities. [1] Yet, the level of aggressive and violent hostility of a small

fabricated "opposition", emboldened by U.S. support and encouragement, is far beyond what is acceptable in a democratic country. Their actions have manufactured "economic and political crises" that are further misrepresented and magnified to



gullible readers by a willing corporate media.

Do we still need to explain why and how the U.S. promotes regime change? The track record that includes the CIA-sponsored failed coup in Venezuela in 2002, [2] [3] and the interventionist history that Obama wants us to forget are sufficient evidence. [5] [6]

We should stop having to prove the obvious! The U.S. interventionist aspiration in Latin America is not just aspiration. It is tangible ill-conceived U.S. foreign policy. In country after country history is repeating itself with renewed and more blatant tactics. Legislative deposing and impeachments, based on alleged crimes, financial misconduct or corruption accusations, seem to be the new "tool" for regime change in Latin America.

The first coup d'état on Obama's watch, with the loud silence of approval by his former Secretary of State and current U.S. presidential aspirant Hillary Clinton, [6] was carried out in Honduras against democratically elected president Manuel Zelaya in 2009. Barely two months after Obama's speech at the Summit of the Americas, Zelaya was removed by the Honduras Supreme Court in what is recognized by many as a coup.

In June 2012, Paraguay's President Fernando Lugo was ousted from office after being impeached by the country's Congress. The wealthy banker Horacio Cartes replaced him. According to a Wikileaks cable, Cartes was the target of a U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency investigation into money laundering and drug trafficking. [7]

In December 2015, Argentina's President Cristina Fernández de Kirchner was ousted on allegations of money laundering. She was replaced by conservative Mauricio Macri. Obama visited the country after his historic trip to Cuba last March. The timing of the visit is interesting. Three months to prepare an official state visit would seem very short unless there was a "foresight" of events to come. Second, visiting Argentina at a controversial time of the 40th anniversary of the U.S. sponsored military coup and brutal dictatorship of 1976, was in bad taste to say the least. It is fair to say that in politics there are no coincidences!

Barely two months later, we

learned the real urgency of the visit: Macri "signed an agreement on military cooperation with the United States, which entails the establishment of a U.S. military base in Ushuaia, the southernmost tip of the South American nation". "Another military base in the

border with Paraguay and Brazil" is to follow. [8] These fresh new additions to the close to 900 U.S. bases in the world, further increase the U.S. presence and domination in the region. [9] If Obama intends to stop "dictating terms" to Latin America this is certainly the wrong way to show it.

In May 2016, Brazil's progressive President Dilma Rousseff, who was elected by an overwhelming 50 million Brazilians, is impeached by the Senate and suspended under allegations of financial misconduct. This was widely recognized as a "soft" coup. Right-wing Michel Temer, himself under investigation for more serious corruption charges, becomes interim president. Inexplicably, a few days later military troops cordon off Rousseff's residence, putting it under a virtual siege. [10]

It is distressing that while Latin America attempts to carry on its own independent and much needed

struggle to fight poverty and imperialism, and to strengthen Latin American unity and institutions, the U.S. makes sure that a rollback of popular social policies takes place by triggering or supporting entrenched pro-U.S. neoliberal market oriented governments.

We can be grateful that we are not experiencing the establishment of the ruthless Augusto Pinochet dictatorship following the violent overthrow of Salvador Allende in Chile in 1973, or the brutal dictatorship of Jorge Rafael Videla in Argentina in 1976, or the devastating civil war in El Salvador in the 1980s. But that is of little consolation to the new generations of Latin Americans today who rightly aspire to a more peaceful, prosperous and stable region without foreign interventions.

In fairness we can only blame the U.S. government to a certain extent. For undemocratic regime changes to succeed, a great deal of

treasonous participation from unscrupulous Latin American bureaucrats is required. They are what I call the "WWW leaders"; White, Wealthy and Wicked. This is certainly the case in Brazil where the coup government is composed of all white rich men with ill intentions. At the time of this writing the "interim" government of Temer, without an electoral mandate, is forcing neoliberal austerity measures on Brazilians and privatization of state assets, [11] [12] which will affect the poor and working class in general. This highlights the ideological issue of regime change and also the colonial, gender, class and race issues.

Together with the "new" U.S. foreign policy in Latin America, it is important to acknowledge that endogenous accomplices are ultimately responsible. This will indicate the path of resistance. History teaches us that for Latin America only two words suggest the necessary path of people's resistance: unity and revolution. ●

[1] <http://venezuelanalysis.com/news/7983>

[2] <http://www.globalresearch.ca/venezuela-coup-and-counter-coup-revolution/18618>

[3] <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2002/apr/21/usa.venezuela>

[4] William Blum. *Killing Hope: U.S. Military and CIA Interventions since World War II*, 1995.

[5] <http://www.globalresearch.ca/a-timeline-of-cia-atrocities/5348804>. List of interventions from William Blum's book.

[6] <http://america.aljazeera.com/opinions/2014/9/hillary-clinton-honduraslatinamericaforeignpolicy.html>

[7] <http://www.aljazeera.com/programmes/peopleandpower/2013/12/paraguay-forgotten-coup-2013122585659847327.html>

[8] <http://www.globalresearch.ca/president-macri-gives-go-ahead-to-us-military-installations-in-argentina/5526170>

[9] <http://www.coha.org/u-s-military-presence-in-latin-america-increasing/>

[10] <http://www.telesurtv.net/english/news/Temer-Orders-Military-to-Surround-Residence-of-Dilma-Rousseff-20160519-0056.html>

[11] <http://buenosairesherald.com/article/214303/temer-claims-support-for-austerity-in-brazil->

[12] <http://www.afr.com/news/politics/world/brazils-acting-president-temer-eyes-privatisations-to-fix-budget-20160519-goyvnl>

No to the Coup – Restore Democracy in Brazil

Resolution adopted by the 38th Central Convention, Communist Party of Canada

The 38th Convention of the Communist Party of Canada condemns the imperialist-backed coup in Brazil and expresses its solidarity with the workers' and peoples' organizations that are resisting this attack on democracy and progress in Brazil.

The coup was achieved through impeachment votes against democratically elected President Dilma Rousseff, based on exaggerated and selectively-applied charges of

corruption. The impeachment, and the anti-government demonstrations that preceded it, were orchestrated by oligarchs within Brazil who were supported by the United States government and its imperialist allies. These forces were unable to defeat the progressive coalition government through four successive national elections, and have used impeachment as a way to retroactively overturn Rousseff's 2014 election victory.

Immediately after the impeachment, the right-wing, anti-people agenda of the coup plotters became apparent. The illegitimate government of Michel Temer has launched a multi-front attack on Brazil's most progressive social and political achievements. They have installed an all-white, all-male cabinet that is closely linked with US corporate interests and is openly hostile to the social movements who represent the vast majority of Brazilians. The coup leaders are expressly opposed to the elected government's policies of labour rights, social inclusion, investment in education and health, and redistribution of wealth. Additionally, the US government wants to use the coup as a way to

weaken and reverse the general pattern of progressive and democratic change that is moving throughout Latin America, and to reassert its control over the region.

Imposing "regime change" in Brazil is also a concrete part of imperialism's effort to weaken the BRICS group of countries (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa), which have emerged as an economic and, in some cases, political challenge to the might of Western imperialism. Reorienting Brazil, Latin America's largest economy, strongly toward the U.S. would have an enormous effect regionally and globally.

The Communist Party of Canada demands that the Canadian government: refuse to recognize the illegitimate government of Michel Temer; and reject and oppose all foreign interference in Brazil's sovereign affairs.

We encourage all labour and progressive forces in Canada to oppose the coup and to express active solidarity with the working class and people of Brazil and their democratically elected government.

Não ao golpe, sim ao povo! No to the coup, yes to the people! ●





GLOBAL CLASS STRUGGLE

Workers falling further behind

Multinational companies are putting the brakes on global growth with a business model built on low wages, according to the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) at the recent OECD Forum in Paris, the annual meeting of high income developed economies.

Sharan Burrow, General Secretary, ITUC said 45 percent of working families can't participate in the economy – nearly half the population in nine of the world's largest economies have no money to spend.

One in ten of people their families are falling through the cracks, without enough money to cover their basic needs: housing, food and electricity.

"GDP has trebled over three decades but corporate greed has captured the wealth of workers' contribution through a model of global trade that relies on low wages, insecure and unsafe work. This is destroying the lives of working families and ironically undermining global corporations themselves as they face shrinking markets," said Burrow.

In Argentina, an overwhelming 63% of the population say they do not have enough money for basics (14%) or that once they had covered their basic needs they had nothing left over (49%). Large percentages of the populations of France (56%) and Germany (52%) say the same. In South Korea, 22% say they do not have enough money for basics like housing, food and electricity.

March for labour rights in Chile

Chilean workers held a strike and massive march in Santiago on May 31 to demand the right to collective bargaining and an end to Pinochet-era labour laws.

The CUT Worker Congress held a spirited, peaceful march to reject right-wing attacks on labour rights. Demonstrators demanded increased rights and an end to anti-labour restrictions and working conditions rooted in the dictatorship era.

The workers are protesting what they see as a watered-down version of the labour reform promised by Chilean President Michelle Bachelet. The president's proposal continues to safeguard the ban on

collective bargaining, sacking of striking workers, and other anti-union measures. Employers and right-wing parties sharply oppose any progressive changes to Chilean labor laws.

In recent months, Chile has seen a sharp upswing in student and labour militancy in their demands for increased rights and social protections.



Oil workers strike against high prices

Argentina's government ordered the industrial sector to suspend gas consumption on June 1 as a strike in the country's southernmost province and a weather-related delay in unloading LNG cargoes curtailed supplies.

A strike by oil workers in Tierra del Fuego province decreased supply to the national pipeline grid, the energy ministry said. The gas regulator Enargas called on the manufacturing sector to progressively cut gas use and for thermal power plants to decrease their use of natural gas.

Argentina has imported 1,000MW of power, largely from Brazil, to deal with the short-term gas shortage. The country also imports some power from northern Chile. Newly agreed pipeline gas imports from Chile are also helping to alleviate the crisis.

The union in Tierra del Fuego called on workers to leave their jobs for a protest against a recent increase in gas prices. Residents of Patagonian provinces have been among the most vocal opponents of higher gas tariffs, saying they disproportionately affect those who rely on the fuel for heating during the cold winter months.

The increase in gas tariffs is part of a broad set of rate hikes for public services ushered in by the

right-wing government of President Mauricio Macri, who took office in December 2015.

Bengal tea workers protest

The Darjeeling Terai Doors Plantation Labour Union (DTDPLU) has called on Indian PM Narendra Modi for government intervention in rejuvenating the tea industry. Their demands include the scrapping of the system which requires 50 per cent of the total tea produced to be sold through auctions.

Gobinda Pradhan, chief coordinator of DTDPLU, said the current situation can't be resolved without measures to rejuvenate the industry, which is the largest employer in the region, employing over 300,000 workers. The opposition trade unions are also demanding that the government fix a minimum selling price for tea, and extend its irrigation and agricultural schemes to tea gardens.

This year, India's tea industry is expected to lose 30 to 35 per cent of its prime first flush and second flush production, which generally fetch better prices. Second flush accounts for 20 per cent of the total production of premium variety. According to the Tea Association of India, Terai and Western Doors witnessed especially scanty rainfall in April and early May. Leaf intake has been affected badly and pest attacks have increased, leading to an escalation in irrigation costs. At the same time, average prices for the product have declined this year, leading to a grim outlook for the rest of 2016.

Pay rip-off at Australia 7-Elevens

UNITE, the union for fast food and retail workers in Australia's Victoria state, is holding protests against 7-Eleven and their plans to scrap the independent wage panel.

In recent months 7-Eleven's "half pay scam" has been exposed in the media. Under pressure the company was forced to establish an independent wage panel, which has so far recovered about \$16 million in unpaid wages. But with an estimated \$100 million still to be paid out, 7-Eleven has scrapped the panel and is now proposing to apply a much higher standard of proof to the remaining claims.

UNITE secretary Anthony Main said "This is a blatant attempt to avoid responsibility and to skimp out on paying the workers what they are owed. It should not be accepted. 7-Eleven has been ripping off vulnerable workers for far too long. They need to be held to account."

UNITE is demanding that the independent wage panel be reinstated and all workers compensated in full, and that the company pay its workers a proper living wage. The union first uncovered the "half pay scam" in 2008 and helped recover the first amounts of back pay for 7-Eleven workers. The campaign has

continued since then to stamp out 7-Eleven's dodgy practices and to build a union presence in the stores.

Brussels protest hits cutbacks

Thousands of demonstrators from Belgium's public sector, including the Confédération des Syndicats Chrétiens de l'Enseignement (CSC-Enseignement), affiliated to Education International, rallied on May 31 in Brussels in support of quality public services.

The demonstration was organised by the CSC-Enseignement, the Fédération Générale du Travail de Belgique (FGTB), and the Centrale générale des syndicats libéraux de Belgique as a joint action against cuts in public services, including education, and against the attitude of the federal government which is not listening to their demands.

"Enough" was the main slogan carried by the demonstrators, as well as "Fighting for our Rights", "Less pension? More wages".

"We are sick and tired of the constant attacks by the government and employers going after the money and workers' rights!" said the CSC-Education General Secretary Eugene Ernst. "We want a different policy, a fair and equitable policy. An honest and balanced policy."

He stressed that alternatives to the government's anti-social policies are based on a fair social model, with fair taxation, quality public services, strong social protection, and respect for social dialogue and freedom of negotiation.

"Poverty is on the rise in Belgium," said the Brussels Secretary of the CSC Public Services, Benoît Lambotte. "A growing number of people are not entitled to unemployment benefits.... Social workers are overwhelmed and acting as 'social cash dispenser' rather than guiding

people back into employment."

Egyptian workers jailed for sit-in

Thirteen employees of the Alexandria Shipyard Company in Egypt were jailed on May 25 on accusations of protesting and inciting their colleagues to protest and hinder their work. Four days later, local military official extended their detention. Another thirteen workers also received arrest warrants but were not arrested so far.

On May 22-23, 26 Alexandria Shipyard workers arranged an open sit-in hoping that the company would respond to certain demands which they had previously raised without success. The following day, these workers were banned from entering the worksite and military units were deployed.

The sit-in had been organized to protest against unpaid wages over the past four years, the abolition of national minimum wages just six months after its activation, and to call for annual pre-Ramadan bonuses.

The head of the company dispatched a senior navy general to discuss the issue with the workers. The military official spoke strictly and warned the workers to end the sit-in.

Lawyers for the workers say they did not violate the law by holding an open sit-in to garner attention for their demands, since they did not abstain from work or force their colleagues to join them.

About 500 protests have taken place across Egypt from January to April 2016, according to a report by Democracy Index, a tracing tool of the International Development Research Centre (IDRC). The majority of labour protests were directed against the Civil Service Law, and demanded more economic and organisational rights.



Chile's Workers' United Center (CUT) President Barbara Figueroa raises her fist during a march in Santiago, May 31, 2016.

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 nearest CPC office.

Central Committee CPC

290A Danforth Ave, Toronto, ON, M4K 1N6

416-469-2446 <info@cpc-pcc.ca> www.comunist-party.ca

Parti Communiste du Québec (section du Parti communiste du Canada)
5359 Ave Du Parc, Suite "C"
Montreal, QC, H2V 4G9
Email: pcqccc@gmail.com Tél: 438-338-8890

B.C. Committee CPC
706 Clark Drive, Vancouver, BC, V5L 3J1
604-254-9836 <cpcinfo.bc@gmail.com>

Edmonton CPC
Box 68112, 70 Bonnie Doon PO
Edmonton, AB, T6C 4N6
Tel: 780-934-7893

Calgary CPC
5421 - 8th Ave. SE
Calgary, AB, T2A 4L7 Tel: 403-248-6489

Saskatchewan CPC
Email: <mail@communist-party-sk.ca>

Ottawa CPC
Tel: 613-232-7108

Manitoba Committee CPC
387 Selkirk Ave., Winnipeg, MB, R2W 2M3
Tel/fax: 204-586-7824

Ontario Ctee. CPC
290A Danforth Ave., Toronto, M4K 1N6
Tel: 416-469-2446

Hamilton Ctee. CPC
265 Melvin Ave., Apt. 815
Hamilton, ON, L8H 2K3
Tel: 905-548-9586

Atlantic Region CPC
Box 70, Grand Pré, NS, B0P 1M0
Tel/fax: 902-542-7981

The Bernie Sanders effect

By Rob Gowland, from the *Guardian*, weekly paper of the Communist Party of Australia

Speaking to thousands at a rally in Eugene, Oregon, US presidential hopeful Bernie Sanders said, "The Democratic Party has to reach a fundamental conclusion: Are we on the side of working people or big money interests? Do we stand with the elderly, the children, and the sick and the poor, or do we stand with Wall Street speculators and the drug companies and the insurance companies?"

Former Massachusetts State Representative Tom Gallagher, writing as part of the Sanders campaign to win the Democratic Party nomination for President of the USA, noted at the end of April that, unlike his main rival Hilary Clinton, Sanders was also campaigning "to change the nation by ending the corporate stranglehold on Washington". Marxist-Leninists can say with certainty (and without being at all cynical) good luck with attempting to achieve that while retaining capitalism!

Sanders' supporters are well aware that what they are advocating would require a revolution. Their weakness is that they think they can achieve that revolution through bourgeois democracy, within the capitalist system. Oh, they would make a lot of changes to capitalism as it operates in the US, but essentially they would retain the system itself.

Of course, "ending the corporate stranglehold on Washington" is a goal devoutly to be wished, one all sensible people can presumably get behind. It is just illogical, however, to expect corporate control to be diminished (let alone done away with) under a social system dominated by corporations!

Historically, social democracy has always sought to reform the system, by removing the harsher parts of capitalism, to render it softer, gentler, more humane. That the system is based on exploitation, on unfairness, on profiting from the misery of others and that the labour of the many invariably goes to enrich a ruling minority is a fundamental flaw in this approach. But it retains its appeal, especially for those who don't examine class society too closely, for social democracy appears to promise a better life without necessitating violent upheaval. By knocking off capitalism's rough edges and taking a more humane approach it is thought that we could somehow slip into a form of capitalism that everybody could be happy with.

Unfortunately, however, not only is exploitation fundamental to capitalism, so is its most extreme expression, war. Regime change, to replace governments capitalist powers are not happy with, is as likely to be effected today through an actual war as through a military coup or a bogus "colour revolution". Capitalism thrives on war. Its corporations can (and do) make huge profits from war. And profit is what they seek above all else.

The political system that usually suits capitalism the most is bourgeois democracy. It gives the mass of the people the illusion that they control their political destiny while not disturbing the system. Sometimes, however, it does not work as it is intended.

The leadership of the Democratic Party in the US, and their corporate backers, had anointed Hillary

Clinton to be their nominee for President. The Clintons were well known for putting through reactionary policies while professing to be progressive. Bill Clinton, while President, had initiated a "get tough on crime" regime that saw thousands of black youths unjustly incarcerated.

As Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton presided over the destruction of Libya, the most productive country in Africa, because NATO wanted to seize its energy resources and silence its pro-independence voice. When NATO's goons murdered Libyan Leader Muammar Gaddafi, Hillary Clinton quipped "We came, we saw, he died." Her nomination was expected to be a shoo-in at the nominating convention. But something went wrong.

That something was an obscure, aging, independent senator from Vermont named Bernie Sanders. A social democrat, with all the policy weaknesses that that implies, Sanders nonetheless has become identified with opposition to the role of "big money" in American politics and with support for workers and the poor. His campaign has been strongly endorsed by a range of US trade unions. Sanders realised that the way to galvanise support would be to make a high-profile run for the highest office in the land, but to stand for President of the USA as an independent or even on behalf of the Green party (an option that was urged on him) would have meant a fatal news blackout on his campaign by the capitalist mass media. Instead, Sanders gave up being independent and joined the Democratic Party, in order to seek nomination as its candidate for President of the USA.

His campaign to win the nomination was expected by the party machine to quickly sink without trace. It didn't. Instead, Clinton found herself in a real fight. In fact, only the existence of a block of delegates (the so-called "super delegates") who are appointed not elected could guarantee her nomination.

As a Common Dreams reader using the name Emphyrio commented on Sanders' campaign: "Hillary Clinton [is] surely the biggest, best-funded corporate-backed candidate the Democratic leadership has run since Walter Mondale lost to Ronald Reagan in 1984 over three decades ago, [nevertheless] the once obscure independent Vermont senator has battled Clinton to almost a draw, down by only some 319 delegates with nearly 900 to go (not counting the corrupt "super delegates" chosen for their fealty to party leaders, not by primary or caucus voting.)"

As Tom Gallagher observes, "one point that no one argues is that Sanders has electrified the youth vote: Pennsylvania exit polls, for instance, showed him winning 83 percent of under-30 primary voters. ... Whether he's advocating the \$15 minimum wage; tuition-free public higher education; the need for a single-payer, Medicare-for-all health care system; the legalisation of marijuana; the abolition of the death penalty; or his denunciation of the Iraq War as the country's greatest foreign policy disaster of the last forty years, when Sanders finishes talking you know clearly where he stands, something that is often not the case with the opposition.

"One of the reasons for this clarity gap is also itself quite clear. By the time most politicians reach the point of seriously contending for the

presidency, they likely face an ongoing conflict between what they or their constituents might think is best and what the big money people, whom they rely on for campaign funding, will let them get away with. But when you actually run a campaign against the politics of the big money interests, as Sanders has, and people support it with unprecedented amounts of small campaign contributions, you simply don't have to go through those contortions."

Hillary Clinton on the other hand is definitely beholden to corporate America. She and her husband received over \$25 million in little more than a year from business interests, deftly camouflaged as speaking fees. Clinton, for example, received \$675,000 for giving speeches to investment bankers at Goldman Sachs. When the media asked her why she charged such a

huge fee she disingenuously replied, "That's what they offered."

Tom Gallagher sees the Democrats having to choose between "a candidate pledged to driving big money out of politics or one who has become wealthy through involvement in politics; a candidate who is a critic of regime change-driven foreign policy, or one who professes admiration for [notorious war monger] Henry Kissinger." He's right, but thanks to the "super delegates" weighting the vote at the Democratic Party Convention, Americans hoping for another New Deal presidency are unlikely to get it this time around.

The political arrangement that best serves bourgeois democracy is the so-called "two party system". Just as, in Australia, Labour and the Libs play "I'm in, you're out" with one another at election time, so in the USA, the Democrats and the

Republicans do the same. One poses as "progressive", the other as "conservative".

"Sanders has exposed not just his opponent, Hillary Clinton, but the entire Democratic Party leadership and most of its elected officials as nothing but hired corporate tools posing as progressive advocates of the people," said Common Dreams.

To combat Sanders' influence, Hillary Clinton has been obliged to adopt – or appear to have adopted – a range of more progressive positions than she would otherwise be associated with. This has prompted her campaign team to complain that she has been "forced to the left" (!) but there is little evidence of this in her speeches, filled as they are with largely meaningless platitudes. Her speeches are carefully structured to sound "progressive", but they fail miserably when contrasted to Sanders' down to earth plain speaking.

Clinton's negative rating with voters has grown with each opinion poll. A very large majority of voters do not want her. Even registered Democrats don't like her or trust her. If she does become the Democrats' candidate, only fear of what Republican front-runner Donald Trump as President might mean for the country (and the world) will bring her victory.

Meanwhile, the long term effect on US voters of Bernie Sanders' campaign is unclear, but increased dissatisfaction with the policies pursued by the two big bourgeois parties would at least seem likely.

And that would have to be a good thing. ●



Rich eating well in Venezuela, Basque executive shows

Telesur English

Agustin Otxotorena, a Basque executive living in Caracas, grew tired of constant calls from friends and relatives in Spain telling him that there was no food in Venezuela, so on May 20 he began publishing photos on Facebook of supermarkets in upscale sectors of Caracas filled with goods.

In addition to showing evidence of an abundance of food stuffs, Otxotorena also analyzed the situation. He concluded that there are two countries in Venezuela—one where "there are many people having a hard time, who don't have the money to live," and another where there is "an upper class that has a living standard higher than Europe."

"If you have money there is champagne... vodka, Belgian chocolates... lobster, brand-name clothes, exclusive restaurants... nightclubs, beaches... yachts, golf clubs—a whole country within a country where there are no poor, women and children are blond, go to exclusive schools, exclusive universities, and vacation, where Blacks or poor are the waiters ...," he posted on his Facebook page.

In his analysis he stated that the phenomenon stems from corruption in import processes, subsidies by the government, and the existence of buying, re-selling

and smuggling of subsidized essential goods by "bachaqueros", linked to Colombian paramilitary groups.

He explained that large retail chains such as Makro, Excelsior Gama or Plaza's have their own import mechanisms, "They import directly and work with the strongest private importers."

These chains are then able to set their own prices to the value of the dollar, they are not regulated by the government.

All other shops must turn to wholesalers and small importers, which are regulated and distributed by the Bolivarian government and sold at subsidized prices. The basic basket products are regulated in bolivars at very low prices and are accessible to the working class.

Otxotorena explained, "While oil prices held, the Venezuelan government brought food in and everything, and gave dollars to importers, who basically defrauded the government by putting premiums in dollars and a thousand ways and means, corrupting officials to certify, for example, that they had brought in three containers of auto parts ... when they had only brought one in and passed it through customs three times."

When the Venezuelan government closed the border with Colombia in 2015, the "bachaqueros" began to buy subsidized commodities to re-sell to

Venezuelans and to take out of the country.

He adds that these bachaqueros, are directed and controlled by Colombian mafia organizations, with the complicity of the Venezuelan opposition, and have made a career of standing in lines to buy, hoard, re-sell and smuggle goods out of the country.

This is what has led to the lack of foodstuffs in working class and poor neighbourhoods of the country. It is estimated that 40 percent of these products, are taken out of the country.

Colombian paramilitaries earn more money from these Venezuelan goods than from the production and marketing of cocaine, Otxotorena added.

Otxotorena's conclusion is that indeed there is a war against the Venezuelan people, whose criminal and coup character is encouraged by some international media "that would not bear or endure a 10th of these behaviours if they occurred in their countries.

"Everything goes toward the overthrow of Chavismo. However, whatever, whenever ... The only thing that matters to the opposition, even if the country is destroyed, is to get the Blacks, the poor, the Indigenous, the 'ugly people' or 'peasants' out of power. Unfortunately, they are very racist and classist ..." ●

Drawn To Change:

Graphic Histories of Working-Class Struggle

Drawn To Change, published in Toronto by Between the Lines, 2016. Graphic novel review by Michael Zaharuk

"Changes and progress very rarely are gifts from above. They come out of struggles from below."

- Noam Chomsky

"*Drawn To Change*" is a new Canadian graphic novel that illustrates just this. The book is a collection of stories that focus on the historic struggle of Canadian workers.

The book is edited by The Graphic History Collective and co-edited by Paul Buhle. Both have an extensive list of fascinating titles under their belts.

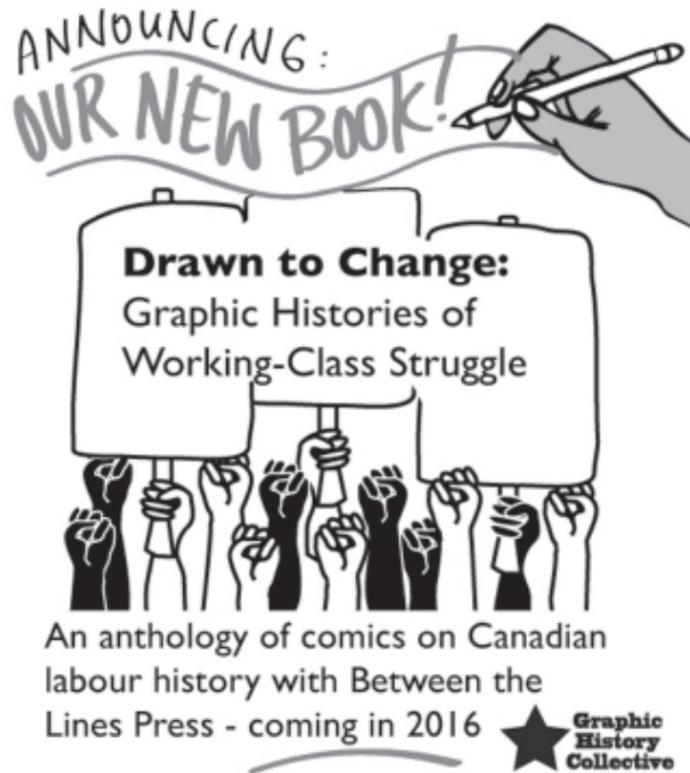
Spanning from the 1800s to the present, "*Drawn To Change*" is a collection of firsthand, personal illustrated narratives. Tales of working class Canadians, Aboriginals, the poor, the struggle of women in the work place, domestic workers and immigrants are all featured in the book.

The book is visually wonderful. The styles of artwork within vary greatly.

With each new story comes a different illustrative approach, at times whimsical, at others stark and heavy. Sometimes an artist will utilize an almost naive drawing style and at other times employ a more dark or serious tone. This variety adds to the visual interest and impact of the book.

The first chapter deals with the Canadian branch of "The Knights of Labour," established in 1869 in Philadelphia. Many Canadians flocked to the KOL as it strived to improve living conditions for the working class. Eventually the KOL's success in the community and in political organizing posed a threat to the establishment. By 1886, Prime Minister John A. Macdonald included the KOL alongside Louis Riel and Home Rule in a list of "Rocks Ahead" that threatened the Tory "ship."

One well-known KOL organizer was Lucy Parsons, who went



on to be a founding member of the IWW. She once stated, "never be deceived that the rich will permit you to vote away their wealth."

Another chapter deals with the Spanish Civil War and the fascinating life of Bill Williamson: a Canadian, a Communist, Wobbly and photographer who travelled to Spain to fight on the side of the republic against Fascism.

Another chapter tells the story of Corbin, a small British Columbia coalmining town in the 1930s. The residents endured deplorable living conditions and were forced to shop in grotesquely overpriced "company stores." By 1935 the workers had had enough and undertook a grueling strike. After police moved in, 60 strikers were injured, 28 hospitalized and 18 workers were sent to prison.

The suppression and violence was so bad that it brings to mind Marx's writings on the contradictions of capitalism. The organizing of productive forces into owners and workers/employers and employees, two

separate groups with vastly opposing interests, is an inherently unstable system with conflict embedded directly into it.

Other chapters tell equally intriguing stories of working class heroism and struggle, from indigenous histories and labour organizing in British Columbia, to the women's movement in the textile industries of Quebec, to temporary foreign workers struggling to become permanent residents of Canada. It takes us right up to the 1990s and the lessons learned from the "The Days of Action" in Ontario.

Overall "*Drawn To Change*" is an extremely well crafted and informative graphic novel. It serves not only as a valuable historical record but provides us with a unique perspective: a history of Canadians, perhaps not that well known, who struggled to create positive change from below.

(Michael Zaharuk is a Toronto based artist/illustrator and instructor at OCAD U and George Brown College.) ●

Exploitation in supply chain for Walmart, Gap, H&M

Workers in countries like India and Bangladesh employed in supplier factories for global retail giants face "intensive labour exploitation and abuse" including non-payment of wages, sexual harassment and unsafe work environments.

The Asia Floor Wage Alliance has released a series of reports by trade unions and advocacy groups on the working conditions across the supplier factories for Walmart, H&M and Gap in India, Bangladesh, Indonesia and Cambodia. The Alliance includes over 70 organisations representing garment industry trade unions, NGOs, consumer groups and research institutes.

The report 'Precarious Work in the Walmart Global Value Chain' said that across the 24 Walmart producing factories surveyed in India, workers reported violations of international labour standards

including a "range of wage practices, including payment of wages below their skill level, denial of legally stipulated overtime rates, illegal deductions, late payments and non-payment of wages".

Some workers in India were also made to work on Sundays and national holidays "in sweltering heat, without adequate supply of clean drinking water or any breaks".

Information for the report was collected through interviews and focus group discussions with 344 workers engaged in Walmart supply chains in Bangladesh, Cambodia and India; and a case study of working conditions in an Indonesian Walmart supplier employing 3,800 Indonesian contract workers.

The report said that workers in Walmart supplier factories face a "range of coercive practices that

make them particularly vulnerable to forced labour", including "threats of termination levied against temporary and contract workers for refusing to work overtime hours or for exercising their right to freedom of association".

In all four countries, contingent workers are required to work excessive hours with the threat of losing their jobs if they refuse.

The report said use of contract labour is most pervasive in Delhi-NCR with an estimated 60-80 per cent of the garment workforce employed as contract workers. Casual and contract workers lack job security, social security benefits and freedom of association.

"This facilitates the sidestepping of statutory obligations by employers and creates a constant state of insecurity for workers," it said. ●



MUSIC NOTES

By Wally Brooker

Brazil's musicians' protest coup

Brazil's musicians' union has come out strongly against the congressional coup which has suspended the country's elected president, Dilma Rousseff. In a manifesto issued on April 11th, and signed by President Joao Bani and Vice-President De borah Cheyne, the Sindicato dos Músicos (SindMusi) declared that the country's constitution has been "demeaned by politicians whose acts are based exclusively on corporate interests and are moved by malicious intent." The statement recalls the role of Brazil's musicians in the struggle against the military dictatorship which ruled the country from 1964-1985. Musicians were arrested and killed in those days because they used their art to fight for democracy. The SindMusi manifesto indicts Dilma's accusers, declaring that "impeachment without a crime is a crime". Today, Brazil's democratically-elected president faces an "impeachment" process "without an actual crime that can be attributed to her management". Esteemed Brazilian singer-songwriter and poet Chico Buarque, who was imprisoned and exiled because of his protest music during the period of the dictatorship, spoke at a massive demonstration in Rio de Janeiro on the 52nd anniversary of the coup. "It is clear," he said, "that we are here united in our robust defense of democracy."

The Occupation of the American Mind

Rock superstar and Palestinian rights activist, Roger Waters, has joined forces with documentary filmmaker, Sut Jhally, founder of the Media Education Foundation (www.mediaed.org), to produce an important new film about the decades-long Israeli PR campaign to influence U.S. public opinion. The Occupation of the American Mind, narrated by Waters and produced by Jhally, demonstrates how, after its good-guy image was damaged by media coverage of its brutal invasion of Lebanon in 1982, Israel stepped up its propaganda campaign in America. U.S. advertising executives were hired to sell the idea that Israeli-Palestinian violence is not caused by the Zionist state's illegal occupation of Palestinian land, but rather by an essential "hatred" that Palestinians have for Israel. The Occupation of the American Mind explores how the Israeli government, the U.S. government, and the pro-Israel lobby have joined forces in the past 30 years to shape American media coverage of the conflict in Israel's favor. Watch Paul Jay's interview with Sut Jhally and Roger Waters on the "Reality Asserts Itself" series at www.therealnews.com. The Occupation of the American Mind can be purchased (or streamed for \$5) at www.occupationmovie.com/.

Russian orchestra performs in Palmyra

Conductor Valery Gergiev led Russia's Mariinsky Theatre Orchestra in a concert at the amphitheatre of Syria's ancient city, Palmyra, on April 5th. Russian soldiers made up a large part of the audience, many of whom had been removing mines at the UNESCO World Heritage site. Syrian government troops, with Russian air support, drove out Islamic State forces from the city on March 27th. The concert, which included J.S. Bach's Chaconne for Solo Violin and Sergei Prokofiev's First Symphony, was, said Gergiev, "a protest against the barbarians who destroyed monuments of world culture." (Islamic State forces had dynamited ancient Roman temples when they seized the city last year). Russian President Vladimir Putin, addressing the audience in a video link-up, described the concert "as a sign of gratitude, remembrance and hope — of gratitude to those who fight terrorism without sparing one's own life; of remembrance for all victims of terror, regardless of the place and time of crimes against humanity; and hope, not just for the revival of Palmyra as a cultural asset for all humanity, but for the deliverance of modern civilization from this terrible ill, from international terrorism."

Valentina Lisitsa interviewed in Donetsk

Not long after her triumphant April 10th concert at Toronto's Koerner Hall, Ukrainian-American pianist Valentina Lisitsa was interviewed for the Donetsk-based Russian-language daily Komsomolskaya Pravda. The outspoken critic of the post-Maidan regime in Kiev has taken a lot of flak in some quarters, but in the predominantly Russian-speaking lands of Eastern Ukraine, where people are fighting for their language and culture, her courageous defense of their rights is much appreciated. Since the Kiev regime's attacks on the Donbass began in 2014, she has given several sold-out concerts there. Asked about what motivates her solidarity, she replied: "When I played here in Donetsk for the first time, I realized that the music is not just for pleasure, not some nice, elitist thing for people who have everything. No, people need music like oxygen. In Donetsk, I play Prokofiev, he was born here. Here are our roots, our civilization to which the people, who are listening to me here, belong. I feel how the people need music; I do not think about the danger here or how the West will look at me." Asked about death threats, she replied: "I'm not afraid of threats, even though I have been threatened many times. It's not worth the tears of a child." Read the full interview, translated into English, at www.slavyangrad.org.

Newfoundland and Labrador: Reject Austerity, Fight for a People's Alternative!

Excerpts from a statement by the Communist Party of Canada - Sally and Chuck Davis Club, St. John's

Newfoundland and Labrador is facing a deep economic crisis. But this crisis was not created by the people, and we should not have to pay for it. The austerity measures taken by the Ball Liberal government have justly incurred public anger and resistance. The Communist Party of Canada actively supports this growing protest movement and we enthusiastically declare our solidarity with those thousands of people who have already taken to the streets. Organized, united and powerful public opposition is the only way to stop this austerity attack. The Ball-Bennett Liberal budget must be rescinded immediately, and a new election called.

After years of federal and provincial Tory rule, Newfoundland and Labrador has already seen public services and infrastructure slashed-back and privatized, while large corporations have made billions in profits, paying little in taxes and royalties.

Historically, big business and their governments have encouraged dependency on resource extraction in our province. This is because leaving working people's livelihoods at the mercy of fluctuating global markets has been more profitable than diverse economic development.

Today, with the crash in oil prices and the growing bill from the hydroelectric mega-project at Muskrat Falls in Labrador, the government faces a \$2 billion per year deficit.

Upset with the Tories, in October voters across Newfoundland and Labrador threw out the federal Conservatives in favor of Trudeau Liberals, who promised limited infrastructure spending. In November, voters again tossed the Tories provincially and elected Dwight Ball's Liberals, thinking they were getting a similar agenda. But the Ball Liberals immediately used the deficit as a pretext to impose harsh austerity measures. Their April 14th budget includes: hiking the regressive HST to 15%; doubling the gas tax of 16.5 cents per litre; a regressive "deficit reduction levy" between \$300 and \$900; income tax raised 1-3% depending on income bracket; additional fees or taxes on licenses, permits, vehicle registration, insurance premiums, and a host of other items; hundreds of public sector jobs lost and services cut back; closing several public schools; delaying the west coast's new Corner Brook hospital and closing several medical units in rural areas; shutting 54 public libraries; reducing funding for road construction and maintenance.

Such austerity measures (by governments around the world, have proved disastrous for working people, Indigenous communities, women, students, seniors, the unemployed, the poor, and also rural communities -- while helping the corporations make even bigger profits and the rich to get even richer.

For example, the budget guarantees mega-profits for big business at Muskrat Falls, while working people are left paying the bill and nature is destroyed. The

government is proceeding with the project in a racist and colonial rejection of the rights to sovereignty and self-determination of the Innu and Inuit, whose lands it will clearly harm, and in callous disregard for all Labradorians who oppose expanding the dam.

... The Ball Liberals are giving even more loans and subsidies to their big corporate friends. Corporate tax, raised by just 1%, remains extremely low. The Ball government's hypocrisy is further revealed by the millions being set aside for Nalcor executives. Nalcor is the crown corporation responsible for ... overseeing the project at Muskrat Falls. Former CEO Ed Martin is getting a severance of \$1.4 million plus a \$4.7 million pension, announced at the same time the Ball government is trying to justify closing libraries to save a buck. Martin's replacement, Stan Marshall, is himself a wealthy man having been the CEO of Fortis for many years and will be paid Martin's regular salary of \$685,000. If the Ball government were truly concerned about saving a million here and there, they might have started with slashing high salaries for men who are already wealthy.

Build the fightback

... Now that the budget is passed, we need to keep up the fight. Working people in Newfoundland and Labrador cannot afford to wait four more years, nor will the change we need come from the balance of forces in the current House. We need to build a strong alliance of progressive forces that will advance the interests of working people through every avenue of struggle which brings more people into the fightback.

Dwight Ball has no mandate for this budget as it runs counter to the platform his party was elected on. A new election must be called immediately.

Importantly, labour unions, social justice groups, students, women's organizations and many other concerned individuals and groups have rallied thousands of people at demonstrations denouncing the budget. This resistance is inspiring and must continue to grow. The formation of the Common Front NL and their We Are NL campaign is welcome development which deserves full support. The widespread disgust with the two traditional governing parties has also left many Newfoundlanders and Labradorians understandably seeking alternatives to the big business parties.

The provincial New Democratic Party has been strongly critical of the Liberal budget, which

is welcome. Unfortunately, the party offers few real alternatives to the big business agenda that would curb corporate power.... Labour and people's movements in Newfoundland are not well-served by "contracting-out" their struggle to the NDP.

People's needs not corporate greed!

The Communist Party calls for a broad People's Coalition fighting for immediate and far-reaching demands, starting by rescinding the Liberal budget: raise the minimum wage to \$20 per hour; a Jobs First strategy, making the creation of full-time, good union jobs a priority; build thousands of green homes through quality low-cost and social housing; expand value-added manufacturing and secondary industry like ship-building; repeal corporate tax cuts and double the corporate tax rate; raise royalties on natural resources to at least average world rates; introduce wealth and inheritance taxes on incomes over \$750,000; and much more.

A People's Coalition, with labour at the core, should be based on the streets and workplaces, as well as run in elections to form a genuine people's government, dedicated to comprehensive measures to democratize society; to bring natural resources, energy, communication, and transportation under public ownership and democratic control; to diversify the economy through the public sector; and to limit the power of big business.

The struggle against the Ball Liberals must continue as we prepare for more harsh cuts in the fall session of the Provincial Legislature. The fightback against the anti-people, sexist, racist and pro-corporate Liberal Ball budget has set the stage for more united action and is already part of the broader struggle for social progress, ecological sustainability, and fundamental social change.

The renewed movement of popular resistance against the budget raises the question of "the 1% and the 99%," the anti-democratic nature of the capitalist system and the need for an alternative - socialism, based on working class power. The Communist Party has always been part of that struggle, fighting for fundamental change and a socialist future. If you agree with this perspective, get involved, help build the struggle, and join us!

Down with austerity! Down with Dwight Ball and the Liberal Party! Stand up, fight back to win a People's Alternative! ●

The Radical Reverberations of Muhammad Ali...

continued from page 6

President Lyndon Johnson's war.

But for an emerging movement that was demanding an end to racism by any means necessary and a very young, emerging anti-war struggle, he was a transformative figure. In the mid-1960s, the anti-war and anti-racist movements were on parallel tracks. Then you had the heavyweight champ with one foot in each. Or as poet Sonia Sanchez put it with aching beauty, "It's hard

now to relay the emotion of that time. This was still a time when hardly any well-known people were resisting the draft. It was a war that was disproportionately killing young Black brothers and here was this beautiful, funny poetical young man standing up and saying no! Imagine it for a moment! The heavyweight champion, a magical man, taking his fight out of the ring and into the arena of politics and standing firm. The message was sent." We are still attempting to

What's Left

Toronto, ON

People's Voice BBQ fundraiser, 2-6 pm, Saturday, July 9 (Rain or shine), 58 Albany Ave, Toronto (one street east of Bathurst, north of Bloor). Both meat and vegetarian dishes available! Tickets: \$20 (\$10 for students, low and unwaged, children under 12 free). To help us prepare better, please let us know if you are coming, at omarlatif52@mail.com. Sponsored by the Davenport Club, Communist Party of Canada

Vancouver, BC

24th Annual People's Voice Banquet, doors open 6 pm, Friday, June 10, ph. 604-254-9836 for tickets (\$20, \$12 students/unwaged) and info.

Anti-TPP table at Car-Free Day, volunteer or visit the People's Voice display, 900 block of Commercial Drive, 12 noon, Sunday, June 19. For details, call 604-255-2041.

Left Film Night, Sunday, June 26, 7 pm, at the CSE, 706 Clark Drive. For info, 604-255-2041. Free, donations welcome.

Moncada Day celebration, 2 pm, Sunday, July 24, 2128 Grant Street. Food, music and a speaker, admission \$20, BYOB. Organized by CCFA-Vancouver.



People's Voice deadlines

July 1-31 issue: Thursday, June 23

August 1-31 issue: Thursday, July 21

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

The Immortal Regiment Marches

By Srecko Vojvodi, Toronto

This year Russian-speaking communities all across Canada, and the world (but mostly in ex-Soviet lands) celebrated the Victory Day, on May 8, in remembrance of the triumphant end of the Great Patriotic War of the Soviet people, in 1945.

The main events of the celebrations were Immortal Regiment Marches, named after fallen Red Army soldiers whose portraits their grateful descendants carry in processions along main avenues of the cities they live in. Laminated images, of a standard size (30 cm x 45 cm), are fondly and proudly produced in these communities.

Ten days before the March, we noticed the event's Facebook page for Toronto, and asked organizers whether they accept guests, like the CPC/YCL? They promptly replied in a most cordial manner and five of us, including two YCLers, went there with our flags and People's Voice for distribution. We took along like 60 copies, thinking we might give away like six, but all 60 copies were taken in a couple of minutes.

Several marchers who took our paper asked us, with penetrating look and warm smile: "So, you guys exist here, in Canada?!" To which I replied: "Join us!" Overall, we figured out that could have taken six hundred PVs instead - and they would be almost grabbed from us!

Last year (2015), the Immortal Regiment in Toronto had about 1000 marchers; this year we were over 4000. The organizers wholeheartedly tried to make a conceptual mishmash of the event, relating somehow the Great Victory of the Soviet people with the "centuries-long glory of Russian arms" and promoted Vlasov/Yeltsin tricolour flags of the current Russian Federation, but in the March along Bathurst Street, whose end could not be seen from its head, USSR flags were conspicuously more numerous than those tricolours. For next year, we plan our considerably larger presence. ●

hear the full message that Muhammad Ali was attempting to relay: a message about the need to fight for peace.

Full articles can and should be written about his complexities: his fallout with Malcolm X, his depoliticization in the 1970s, the ways that warmongers attempted to use him like a prop as he suffered in failing health. But the most important part of his legacy is that time in the 1960s when he refused to be afraid. As he said years later,

"Some people thought I was a hero. Some people said that what I did was wrong. But everything I did was according to my conscience. I wasn't trying to be a leader. I just wanted to be free." Not the fight, the reverberations. They are still being felt by a new generation of people. They ensure that the Champ's name will outlive us all.

Bill Russell said it best in 1967. "I'm not worried about Muhammad Ali. I'm worried about the rest of us." That is more true than ever. ●

Fear and loathing in the empire

By Finian Cunningham,
Information Clearing House

America is exceptional alright. It is the most frightened nation on Earth, subjected to hysterical propaganda over decades warning about foreign enemies and ideologies. No wonder its supposed democratic freedom is in so appallingly bad shape, when the preponderant population is imprisoned by their rulers in a virtual cage of fear.

Paradoxically, though, the dissonance of supposed freedom could not be more abysmal. At a press conference at the recent Cannes film festival, screen actor George Clooney digressed from his latest movie ("Money Monster") to talk about Republican presidential contender Donald Trump. Clooney, who is well known for his liberal brand of US politics and a big supporter of Democrat candidate Hillary Clinton, predicted that rightwing business tycoon Trump would not win the forthcoming November presidential contest.

Clooney dismissed Trump as a demagogue sowing fear and divisive tensions along racial and xenophobic lines. Which is fair enough. Of interest here is not so much the actor's views on Trump's chances of political success. Rather, it is Clooney's premise that Americans would not succumb to reactionary fear peddling.

Seated at the press conference alongside his co-star Julia Roberts and director Jody Foster, Clooney told his Cannes audience: "Fear is not going to drive our country ... we're not afraid of anything".

Well, sorry George, but you are dead wrong on that score. Fear is the paramount emotional driver in American politics since at least the Second World War, and probably decades before that too.

Contrary to Clooney's bravado, Americans are very, very afraid.

The biggest bogeyman for the US public was the Soviet Union, whose spectre dominated American politics for nearly 50 years. This spectre has been

conjured up again through casting Russia and its President Vladimir Putin as intent on "resurrecting the Soviet Union".

It was Hillary Clinton – Clooney's political champion – who made the ridiculous and historically illiterate charge that Putin is the "new Hitler". Many other senior US political figures and Western news media have since stampeded like a herd in likewise demonising the Russian leader.

The unquestioned consensus in Washington, from President Barack Obama to his foreign secretary John Kerry, and from senior Congressional figures to the Pentagon chiefs, is that Russia is an existential threat to global security.

America's new NATO military chief General Curtis Scaparrotti has warned that the US-led alliance must be prepared to go to war against Russia at any moment due to alleged Russian aggression towards Eastern Europe and the Baltic states.

The Cold War has thus been rehabilitated a quarter of a century since the Soviet Union dissolved. As in former times, fear is once again fuelling American politics. Consistently, there is negligible

claims don't stand up to scrutiny. But that's hardly the point. The point is that the false narrative – propaganda – of alleged Russian malevolence is amplified and repeated over and over again in Western "independent" media, not unlike the Big Lie technique of Nazi spinmeister Josef Goebbels.

US and Western allies, with the help of pliable news media, in effect are able to construct their own false "reality". It is not objective reality. It is a subjective, delusional "reality" one in which Western nations are portrayed to be under threat from a stalking, salivating enemy in the form of Russia.

Fear is a powerful lever for control over populations, as English author George Orwell keenly perceived. Get the public to fear for their lives from an external enemy, and they will be easily manipulated into accepting authority, no matter how draconian and illegitimate that authority is. Fear is the key to surrendering democratic rights and submitting to a cage.

From the end of the Second World War in 1945, the West immediately needed the Cold War with the Soviet Union as a bulwark against more progressive, democratic development within their own countries. American writer David Talbot in his book, *The Devil's Chessboard*, clearly depicts how Wall Street, the Pentagon and ideologically inclined politicians were able to construct the monstrous military-industrial complex and its gargantuan consumption of economic resources for the enrichment of an elite ruling class – based on Cold War angst and trepidation about the "evil Soviet Union".

When a minority of sceptical, more independently intelligent politicians, authors or artists questioned the Cold War assertions they were peremptorily ostracized as "Reds", "traitors" or indeed assassinated by the military-industrial complex, as David Talbot convincingly argues



in the case of President Kennedy.

This perverse distortion and waste of US economic resources – a US\$600 billion military budget year after year overshadowing all other social needs – is engineered precisely through fear. American military might must be supreme and sacrosanct in order to "defend" or "protect" US vital interests and those of its allies from "existential threats". Russia, and to a lesser extent China, continues to be designated in the role of global threat.

To this end, Americans have been subjected to a relentless psychological program – euphemistically referred to as "news" – for the past seven decades. Europeans too. Perhaps in the whole of Europe the British media is the most toxic and reactionary when it comes to demonising Russia.

The claims against Russia are preposterous, but the manipulation, to a degree, succeeds.

However, the domination through fear is not as omnipotent as it once was. During the former Cold War, the Western public were far more susceptible to the depiction of "evil" Soviet menace.

This is no longer the case. Western media have long been discredited over fabricating lies, such as the pretext for the Bush-Blair war on Iraq and other criminal US-led regime-change operations, including Libya, Syria and Ukraine.

Today, Western citizens have more access to alternative information sources, including Russian mass media and critical internet news outlets within their own countries. The Big Lie technique, while still potent, is not quite as

effective as it was in former times.

This new historical development in public awareness is reflected in the growing, popular discontent across Europe towards governments that are seen to be slavishly toeing Washington's policy of aggression against Russia.

Citizens are angrily questioning why they are made to accept economic austerity while US-led sanctions against Russia are hitting their jobs, businesses and export revenues.

Citizens are rightly furious that they are told there are no financial resources for public services and infrastructure, while billions of dollars are pumped into NATO forces to recklessly provoke tensions with Russia.

Of course, the anomalies in Western government priorities with regard to meeting public needs are ludicrous, unjustifiable and unsustainable. And the only way that Western rulers can get away with such absurd denial of democratic realities is to play the fear factor.

Nowhere has the fear factor been played more than in the US – ironically, the nation which proclaims from the rooftops to be exceptional, free and democratic.

George Clooney would do better to stick to the silver screen where his heroics and valour shine larger than life – in fiction. "The American people are not afraid of anything", he claimed in real life.

George, with respect, your people are the most scared on the planet; and the brainwashing system is so good, that you and they don't even know that. Indeed, haven't even an inkling of the gross manipulation. ●



objective basis for this mass phenomenon. Russia today is not a threat to the US or its NATO allies, just as the Soviet Union was not a threat.

Bombastic claims about Russian "annexation" and "invasion" of Ukraine are factually tenuous, spurious or devoid. The

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