Prosecute SNC Lavalin for bribery and corruption

Why does Canada back the push for a coup in Venezuela? ...see page 6

Falling short in BC
18 months after taking office, BC’s NDP government presented its second budget. Despite some welcome gains, “Budget 2019” falls short, since tax breaks for the rich are untouched.

Page 2

Nationalize GM
Despite the high productivity of its workforce, General Motors is moving ahead to shut down its auto plant in Oshawa, Ontario. The time has come to nationalize GM operations in Canada.

Page 3

Maduro to Americans
The elected president of Venezuela appeals “to the good soul of American society, victim of its own leaders, to join our call for peace, let us be all one people against warmongering and war”.

Page 9

Ukraine & NATO
The eastward expansion of NATO continues. On February 7, Ukraine’s parliament voted to include in the country’s constitution a pledge to enter both NATO and the European Union.

Page 12

Repeal the Deferred Prosecution Agreements hidden in 2018 Budget Bill
Save jobs, curb corporate power
Read page 7

MINING INJUSTICE IS CANADA’S FOREIGN POLICY

photo from rabble.ca
The BC NDP-Green government refuses to consider reversing the $3 billion-plus in Liberal tax cuts to the rich and corporations.
Nationalize General Motors in Canada!

Central Committee, Communist Party of Canada, February 2019

The Communist Party of Canada calls on the federal government to nationalize General Motors operations in Canada under democratic control.

Under依法追究national ownership, General Motors operations in Canada would be transformed to what the corporation that is taking GM plans and are misguided, and retraining for other jobs in the automobile industry. Meanwhile it was shifting its production of the Chevy Impala and the large XC70 to plants in Mexico where owners earn $4 an hour under collective agreements with compliant unions linked to the PRI political party which was just defeated in the 2018 Mexican presidential and legislative election. In January, General Motors rejected seven proposals from Unifor, the union representing GM workers in Oshawa, that would have kept the plant open with different vehicles being produced. General Motors has never shown any urgency in the fitment of its workers throughout its history. The company told the Ontario government that it had decided of its decision to shutter the plant before it informed Unifor. Nor has it shown any gratitude to the taxpayers on Ontario and Canada who loaned it $14 billion dollars to avoid the 2008-9 Global Recession. This US transnational corporation pulled the plug because it can. Despite Unifor’s and the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) and the Communist Party’s call to look beyond the current agreements allow GM and any other automobile company to shift its production wherever it can. Neither the federal or provincial government has lifted a finger to save the jobs of the affected workers. Ontario Premier Doug Ford said that “the ship has already left the dock”. All the Trudeau government has offered is extra eligibility for EI benefits and retraining for other jobs in the area. Unifor’s call for boycotts of Mexican-made car will not change GM’s mind.

From Canadian Association of Labour Media

What’s happening in B.C. is criminal. The BCGEU (British Columbia Government and Service Employees Union) wants to know exactly how criminal. They want a public inquiry to find out. The union recently added their voice to a growing demand that the government set up a public inquiry to examine the Ottawa criminal activity is damaging everyday life in B.C. It is too much money to be at the root of it all. Drug trafficking and organized money laundering create massive profits. Buying property is the best way to hide and “clean” those profits. But, all that money in play drives the price of property higher and higher. Affordable housing disappears. Homelessness increases. Public service workers get pushed close to the edge. A one bedroom apartment in Vancouver, Burnaby, Victoria and Kelowna costs between $1,300 and $2,200 on average. A growing number of full-time workers can no longer afford to live in the city where they work.

Equally damaging are the criminal activities of the political parties. The BCGEU notes that workers from librarians to correction officers have been forced to act as responders in the opioid crisis. None of this should be surprising. According to the “Dirty Money” report issued last year by the “Dirty Money” report issued last year by the police that was leaked to the press, researchers found that organized crime laundered $1 billion through the property market. Of 1,200 purchases of houses between $3 million and $35 million, 10 percent were financed by criminal funds. When asked, “Ozark, about laundering drug money?” an anonymous expert pointed out that if that those characters came up to Vancouver, they could launder all those money. The authorities pointed out that they would have probably uncovered even more money laundering if they had reviewed property transactions between $1 million and $3 million. However, they didn’t have the resources to do so. This is just one of the many things that a full public inquiry could accomplish.

The police report revealed that members of one of the strongest criminal networks included industrialists, gangsters, infrastructure contractors, politicians from China. In addition to drug trafficking, they generated money from prostitution, casino money laundered, and financial crimes. Supporters of an inquiry who would public service employees to the government Anti-Corruption Commission in Quebec as a model. The report noted that the government of the post-secondary education sector contracts.

According to the “Dirty Money” report last year by the RCMP investigator Peter German, Richmond’s River Rock casino accepted $13.5 million in $20 bills in a single week during 2016. The issue spans the BC Liberal government’s 16 years in office. Under the Liberals, casinos operated by the BC Lottery Commission were repeatedly caught failing to identify suspicious transactions, redrafting such transactions to avoid reporting them and not collecting information on potential criminals.

To support the BCGEU’s campaign for a public inquiry into organized crime, opioids, and money laundering in B.C., sign the union’s petition at https://www.publicinquirynow.ca.
EDITORIALS

Liberal Indigenous policies in shambles

As fallout from the SNC-Lavalin scandal spreads across the landscape, the record of Justin Trudeau’s election pledges to Indigenous peoples against former Prime Minister Stephen Harper is under renewed scrutiny. Back in 2015, voter turnout on reserves across Canada jumped to 62%, up from 47% in 2011. One reason was anger among Indigenous people against the Harper government’s Bill C-45, which removed federal protections for forests and waterways, sparking the emergence of the Idle No More movement. Trudeau’s Liberals took advantage, promising to implement a “new nation-to-nation relationship.” It has been estimated that higher Indigenous voting may have helped swing up to 22 ridings to the Liberals. But the promise of a new era has dimmed. More than four years later, many of the promises have been replaced by bitterness. For Indigenous peoples, Jody Wilson-Raybould’s resignation from government is almost universally understood within the overarching framework of racist and colonialist repression. Even when a so-called feminist and enlightened Liberal progressive promotes an Indigenous leader of Wilson-Raybould’s stature to cabinet, the underlying message is that her standing depends on following the orders of the PMO. The Liberals are scrambling to bring forward child-welfare legislation ordered by the courts, and a long-awaited Indigenous Languages Act, and offering support to NDP MP Romeo Saganash’s private member’s bill, which seeks to line up Canada’s laws with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. But these bills may not get through parliament by late June, and the Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls will not wrap up before the election. Some slow progress has been made on other fronts, such as reducing the number of Indigenous communities which lack clean drinking water. But the days when Justin Trudeau could count on positive photo ops to camouflage his missteps are off reserve, all past history, and his government may pay a heavy price.

The stench of hypocrisy

Yet again, right-wing politicians and pundits are setting their hair on fire over an alleged outbreak of anti-Jewish propaganda. This time, their ire is directed against a group of Palestinian students, for inviting the supposedly “notorious anti-Semite” Norman Finkelstein to speak at the University of Toronto-Mississauga campus on October 24, according to the student newspaper, the campus is almost universally understood within the overarching framework of racist and colonialist repression. Even when a so-called feminist and enlightened Liberal progressive promotes an Indigenous leader of Wilson-Raybould’s stature to cabinet, the underlying message is that her standing depends on following the orders of the PMO. The Liberals are scrambling to bring forward child-welfare legislation ordered by the courts, and a long-awaited Indigenous Languages Act, and offering support to NDP MP Romeo Saganash’s private member’s bill, which seeks to line up Canada’s laws with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. But these bills may not get through parliament by late June, and the Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls will not wrap up before the election. Some slow progress has been made on other fronts, such as reducing the number of Indigenous communities which lack clean drinking water. But the days when Justin Trudeau could count on positive photo ops to camouflage his missteps are off reserve, all past history, and his government may pay a heavy price.

The truth is that anti-Jewish hatred in Canada is almost exclusively promoted by ultra-right activists, not by anti-war movements or Palestine solidarity supporters. Anyone who believes that Norman Finkelstein and the “Israel Apartheid Week” campaign are “anti-Semitic” should do some reading or research. The truth is that anti-Jewish hatred in Canada is almost exclusively promoted by ultra-right activists, not by anti-war movements or Palestine solidarity supporters. Anyone who believes that Norman Finkelstein and the “Israel Apartheid Week” campaign are “anti-Semitic” should do some reading or research.

Cuban Ambassador replies to CBC News

The Ambassador of Cuba to Canada, Josefina Vidal, has responded to a CBC News article. “Canada at odds with Cuba ‘ally’ over Maduro’s fate.” Ottawa, March 3, 2019

To the Editor of CBC News

I reject categorically and in the strongest terms the tendentious and manipulative article “Canada at odds with Cuba ‘ally’ over Maduro’s fate”, written by journalist Evan Dyer and published today, Sunday, March 3, 2019, by CBC News.

Good journalism does not speculate, it informs objectively. The assertion that thousands of Cubans would allegedly be inserted into the structures of the armed and security forces of Venezuela, holding the government of (legitimate) President Nicolás Maduro in a scandalous slander. I demand that CBC News present a proof, which evidently it does not have, since it does not appear in the whole article. What Cuba has been offering collaborators participate. 94% of them health workers, others in education, as they do in 33 countries around the world.

It is regrettable that CBC News does not denounce the US government’s military aggression plans against the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, and the fact that it openly declares that its ultimate objective is to overthrow the Cuban Revolution. What else to expect from a sinister character like John Bolton, who in 2002 organized the coup against Venezuela, while accusing Cuba of developing a biological weapons program at a time when the false pretext of the presence of WMD in Iraq was fabricated to launch the war against that country? The latter lie was quickly shot down by the US Intelligence Community itself.

Let’s hope that CBC News, with its biased coverage, does not support the aggression of the United States against the peoples of our America, and then apologize, as so many media organizations had to do after the war against Iraq. Our peoples will not forget.

As the Cuban Government recently stated, what is at stake today in Venezuela is “the sovereignty and dignity of Latin America and the Caribbean”, “the survival of the rule of International Law and the UN Charter”, “and whether the legitimacy of a government emanates from the express and sovereign will of its people, or from the recognition of foreign powers”. History will severely judge a new imperialist military intervention in the region and the complicity of those who might responsibly supply it.

Josefina Vidal, Ambassador of Cuba to Canada

Pizza delivery man wins $28,000 fight against Domino’s

From Canadian Association of Labour Media

When a Domino’s kitchen deliverer for the company’s kitchen in Toronto delivered Domino’s pizza, he worked to a schedule set out by Domino’s; he was owed the minimum wage. He was not entitled to minimum wage, overtime or vacation pay. He was an “independent contractor.”

He complained some more. It finally got him the $28,144.55 he always said the fast food giant owed him.

The father of six from Mississauga delivered pizzas for Domino’s for over four years. Domino’s did not pay him minimum wage or any benefits. Juan knew this was wrong and so did the company.

Domino’s brushed off. They told him they only had to pay minimum wage and benefits to “employees”—which he wasn’t, they said. They categorized him as an “independent contractor” not entitled to minimum wage, overtime or vacation pay.

Juan didn’t buy it. He prepped vegetables and cooked pizzas in a Domino’s kitchen as a deliverer. Domino’s brushed him off. They told him they only had to pay minimum wage and benefits to “employees”—which he wasn’t, they said. They categorized him as an “independent contractor” not entitled to minimum wage, overtime or vacation pay.

Dominio Servantes was determined to make ‘em pay. When Domino’s Pizza didn’t pay him overtime, it got him fired. He complained some more. It finally got him the $28,144.55 he always said the fast food giant owed him.

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Central Committee, Communist Party of Canada, Feb. 10, 2019

At the end of January, the new CAQ government caucus met in Gatineau to prepare for the parliamentary session that began on February 5. With the support of the polls, Prime Minister François Legault reiterated his government’s intention to have a law adopted by the end of the session prohibiting the wearing of religious symbols by people in the penal system – judges, police, prison guards and prosecutors – as well as public school teachers, who are considered to be in a position of authority. Moreover, it also announced that private schools, although subsidized up to 60 per cent by the state, would not be subject to this law.

François Legault admitted that there were discussions in his caucus about the possibility of including a grandfather clause that could allow people already employed to escape the restriction against wearing of religious symbols. But he added that he personally did not like that idea and was prepared, if necessary, to fire those who would refuse to take away their symbols. At the same time, he reiterated his intention to invoke the “notwithstanding” clause if it were found that his law was declared unconstitutional.

On January 29th, the anniversary of the Quebec mosque massacre, Legault rejected the idea of declaring a national day against Islamophobia, which he said does not exist in Quebec, causing dismay in the Muslim community.

He was enthusiastically supported by the deputy mayor of Gatineau, who told to the newspaper “Le Droit” that Islamophobia does not exist and that Muslims do not integrate into society. According to her, it is normal to be afraid of Muslims, implying that they could be terrorists.

A few days later, going far beyond the question of state secularism, the newly appointed minister of the Status of Women, Isabelle Charest, shared her aversion to the Muslim veil, declaring that it is a symbol of women’s oppression. She explained that wearing this garment did not correspond to “her values” and prevent women from flourishing. However, a secular state does not declare itself to be atheistic or of any religious form, but only that it is neutral. Nonetheless, Legault refused to correct the words of his minister.

These unfortunate statements are regarded by the media as mistakes by inexperienced politicians. But objectively they are already helping to ignite more acrimonious debates and deepen the social split, to the point that we could think that the government is deliberately applying in Quebec the same tactics as Donald Trump in the United States.

Once again, we can see that social media is beginning to be inundated with hateful words. The situation is likely to be similar to that experienced at the time of the PQ’s “charter of values” in 2013. Yet there is no real social crisis or urgent reasons to legislate in haste. The government acts only on the basis of the interests of the ruling class, not in the interests of the Quebec working class.

Legault knows well that his law violates their fundamental rights.

All this at the same time allows the CAQ to divert attention from the real issues that are of direct interest to workers. At the end of its late-January caucus, the government indicated intentions to carry out public service budget and staffing cuts, and services across departments, in order to fund Legault’s election promises.

He wants in reality to continue the fiscal austerity policies of the previous government.

Trade-unions whose members are concerned by the prohibition of the wearing of religious symbols, such as teachers, have clearly expressed their intention to stand firm against any law that violates their fundamental rights. Legault knows well that his law against the wearing of religious symbols will not pass as a letter to the post, but he hopes that the people will fall into his trap and let themselves be divided.

The Communist Party urges the working class, its organizations and the people of Quebec to stand united against the divisive maneuvers of the Government, not to get carried away by the Sirens of intolerance and racism, in order to be able to roll back its neoliberal austerity program.

The Communist Party also reiterates its full support to declare January 29 as a cross-Canada day of action against Islamophobia.

Demonstrations across North America expressed solidarity with Venezuela on Feb. 23, the date when the US and its allies tried to use “aid shipments” to break through the country’s borders. The coup strategy has been temporarily blocked, but the situation remains dangerous. In Canada, there were “Hands off Venezuela” protests in Victoria, Vancouver (photo at right), Calgary, Edmonton, Winnipeg, Windsor, London, Toronto (see below), Montreal, Halifax (bottom right), and other cities.

Rallies across Canada say “Hands Off Venezuela”
People's Voice  March 16-31, 2019

**The planned plunder behind Canada’s support of the coup**

By Yves Engler

It’s convenient but incorrect to simply blame the USA for Ottawa’s nefarious role in the slow motion attempted coup currently underway in Venezuela.

Critics of the Liberal government’s push for regime change in Venezuela generally focus on their deference to Washington. But, Ottawa’s hostility to Caracas is also motivated by important segments of corporate Canada, which have long been at odds with its Bolivarian government.

In a bid for a greater share of oil revenue, Venezuela forced private oil companies to become minority partners with the state oil company in 2007. This prompted Calgary-based PetroCanada to sell its portion of an oil project and for Canadian officials to privately complain about feeling “burned” by the Venezuelan government.

Venezuela has the largest recognized oil reserves in the world. The country also has enormous gold deposits.

A number of Canadian companies clashed with Hugo Chavez’ government over its bid to gain greater control over gold extraction. Crystallx, Vanessa Ventures, Gold Reserve Inc., and Rusoro Mining all had prolonged legal battles with the Venezuelan government. In 2016 Rusoro Mining won a $1 billion claim under the Canada-Venezuela investment treaty. That same year Crystallx was awarded $1.2 billion under the Canada-Venezuela investment treaty. Both companies continue to pursue payments and have pursued the money from Cito, the Venezuelan government-owned gasoline retailer in the US. In 2011 the Financial Post reported, “years after putting” foreign investment away from his gold mining sector, Venezuelan President Chavez is moving on to the next stage: outright nationalization.” Highlighting its importance to Canadian capital, the Globe and Mail editorial board criticized the move in a piece titled “Chavez nationalizes all gold mines in Venezuela.”

In a further sign of the Canadian mining sector’s hostility to the Venezuelan government, Barrick Gold founder Peter Munk wrote a 2007 letter to the Financial Times headlined “Stop Chavez Demagoguery Before it is Too Late”: “Your editorial ‘Chavez in Control’ was way too benign a characterization of a dangerous dictator — the latest of a type who takes over a nation through the democratic process, and then perverts or abolishes it to perpetuate his own power — aren’t we ignoring the lessons of history and forgetting that the dictators Hitler, Mugabe, Pot, Pot and so on became heads of state by a democratic process?... autocratic demagogues in the prefer to invest in the (Taliban controlled) western part of Pakistan than in Venezuela or Bolivia. “If I had the choice to put my money in one of the Latin American countries run by (Bolivian President) Evo Morales or Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez — I know where I’d put my buck,” said Munk, referring to moves to increase the public stake in resource extraction to the detriment of foreign investors. Benefiting from the privatization of state-run mining companies the Globe and Mail Report on Business published a front-page story about Scotland’s interests in Venezuela, which were acquired just before his rise to power. It noted: “Bank of Nova Scotia (Scotiabank) is often lauded for its bold expansion into Latin America, having completed major acquisitions in Colombia and Peru. But when it comes to Venezuela, the bank has done little for the past 15 years — primarily because the government of President Hugo Chavez has been hostile to large-scale foreign investment in the country. Scotiabank is powerhouse in Latin America, Canada’s other big banks also do significant business in the region. At the height of the left-right ideological competition in the region the Stephen Harper government devoted significant effort to strengthening the region’s right-wing governments. Ottawa increased aid to Latin America largely to stunt growing rejection of neoliberal policies. And in 2010 trade minister Peter Van Loon admitted that the “secondary” goal of Canada’s free trade agreement with Colombia was to bolster that country’s right-wing government against its Venezuelan neighbour. The Globe and Mail explained: “The Canadian government’s desire to bolster fledgling free-market democracies in Latin America in an ideological competition with left-wing governments has led like Venezuela’s Hugo Chavez is rarely expressed with force, including the Bank of Nova Scotia’s Ottawa initiative.”

An unnamed Conservative told the paper: “For untold millions of people in the Bolivarian revolution to simply blame the USA for the [planed] plunder behind Canada’s support of the coup.

LEFT FILM NIGHTS presents a special screening of “Rosa Luxemburg”

Sunday, March 31, 7 pm, at the CSE
706 Clark Drive, Vancouver

This classic 1986 film (114 minutes, with English subtitles) depicts the life of the famous German Communist leader, assassinated in January 1919. Free admission, donations welcome.

Celebrate Women’s History Month 2019

Caracas streets fill with Chavista supporters

Hundreds of thousands took to the streets of Caracas on Feb. 27 in solidarity with President Nicolas Maduro and defending the legacy of Hugo Chavez and the Bolivarian Revolution.

They were marking the 30th anniversary of the 1989 Caracas uprising when thousands of Venezuelans “broke the chains of imperialism.” Thousands poured out from the barracks on that day, onto the streets of the capital and the nearby city of Guarenas in protest at rising prices of basic goods.

It was met with violent oppression and the crackdown by Venezuelan security services left at least 3,600 dead, according to Human Rights Watch.

The Caracas uprising is seen as the start of the process that led to the 1999 election of Hugo Chavez and the beginning of the Bolivarian Revolution which changed the lives of millions of Venezuelans, lifting them out of poverty and bringing them access to free healthcare and education. Engler is a Canadian political writer and activist who writes for Communists on the Web, including many on Latin America and the Bolivarian Revolution. He is a 2019 recipient of the leftist site’s prestigious Solidarity Prize. Engler is a Canadian political writer and activist who writes for Communists on the Web, including many on Latin America and the Bolivarian Revolution. He is a 2019 recipient of the leftist site’s prestigious Solidarity Prize.
The history of DPAs in the US and UK is instructive, and was very likely considered by Canadian prosecutors in their decision not to enter into a DPA with SNC Lavalin. As reported in the New York Times, 51 banks in the US and UK entered into DPAs over a 15-year period, and had to enter into similar agreements with the Chinese government to avoid a criminal prosecution. DPAs have been effective in targeting large banks and American banks regarded the DPAs and the fines that were levied in lieu of prosecution as simply a cost of doing business. A damning indictment of Deferred Prosecution Agreements, and of the Liberal government which legislated them into Canadian criminal law anyway.

In the 20 months between February 2016 and September 2018, SNC Lavalin logged more than 80 recorded meetings with top government officials including the PMO, the Privy Council, Export Development Canada, Global Developay and Innovation, Public Service and Procurement Canada, Public Treasury Board, Natural Resources and Environment, and Public Safety, lobbying the government to introduce Deferred Prosecution Agreements in Canada, and to do so before the prosecution of SNC Lavalin would start in September 2018. In response, DPA legislation was included on page 200 of the Liberals’ February 2018 Budget Bill, passed into law in June, and came into effect September 10, 2018. During this time SNC Lavalin made major efforts to get federal prosecutors to cut them a deal under a Deferred Prosecution Agreement, abandon a criminal prosecution, settle their well-documented and extensive crimes, and avoid the 10 year ban on bidding on government contracts that was a certain consequence.

September was the beginning of the orchestrated campaign by the Prime Minister, his staff, Cabinet and the Clerk of the Privy Council to force Wilson-Raybould to order federal prosecutors to abandon their criminal prosecution case and instead cut a deal with SNC Lavalin using a Deferred Prosecution Agreement. To her credit, the Attorney General stuck to her guns and refused to bend to the heavy pressure exerted. In mid-October SNC Lavalin announced it would legally challenge the prosecutor’s decision to prosecute, and the pressure on the Attorney General to stop the prosecution grow more and more intense as Jody Wilson-Raybould testified to the Justice Committee February 27th.

In December SNC Lavalin announced that “ongoing legal challenges” threatened the jobs of 19,000 SNC Lavalin employees and their families in the first place, and at the federal level. The Prime Minister, his staff, Cabinet and the Clerk of the Privy Council lobbied the Attorney General to give SNC Lavalin a legal victory, to abandon a DP on charges of bribery and corruption in Canada and around the world. This was a major factor in the decision of Justice Department prosecutors – supported by the Attorney General Wilson-Raybould to abandon DP proceedings and to do it before the prosecution is complete. This was in fact a double barreled threat and pressure on the Attorney General, who is the first victim of the SNC Lavalin, like General Motors, the people of Canada, they should be left out of this, because they can. Further, the government deems it so, because they can.
Racially called out at Namibian mines

Employees of Basel Read Mining have levelled allegations against the company for unfair labour practices and paying lower rates for black employees. In a letter to the company, the South African company operating in Namibia, is demanding payment of bonuses for black workers, besides Scorpion zinc mine in Rosha Pinah and Weatherly Mining Company in Tsumeb. The company has denied blasting and excavation work.

A shop steward from the mine at Rosha Pinah told the New Era newspaper that the workers are demanding equal pay and conditions. Union members have been dismissed following allegations that they draw bigger salaries for similar jobs done by their black counterparts.

He said: “The problem arose when our pay slips were put on the notice board. That’s how we found out that all the white workers in the company have higher salaries than blacks even those that are doing the same job as blacks. Some white mechanical artisans get N$40,000 while black mechanical artisans get N$30,000. And there is certain white cleaner that gets paid N$5,000 while black operators get paid N$20,000 while black machine operators get N$5,000.”

The payroll clerk was suspended because of the pay slips displayed on the notice board.

The New Era also found out that while white workers receive 100% of allowance, black employees who work night shifts and when they have to travel are frequently fired unfairly.

Product targets are increased to deprive workers of bonuses, with white workers having more than 200 workers recently paid in Chuparipao, the capital city of Burkina Faso, with placards alleging collusion with the government against the Balaji Group. The workers reject the employer’s proposal to reduce working hours and overtime.

After buying Inata gold mine in 2018, the Balaji Group neither resumed production nor paid the workers what is due to them. Although they have been without jobs since the mine closed, the workers are demanding a tripartite meeting in which their rights to fair compensation will be respected, and to be paid wages backdated to November 2017.

They also want medical and pension benefits to be paid to the workers who were contributing retirement benefits paid to those who were within five years of retirement.

The labour movement says the case shows the lengths to which some mining companies will go to avoid paying compensation.

Unions representing the workers’ interests stated that workers who are employed by the new employer must not be allowed to close mines and lay off workers, even robbing them of their benefits.

The Balaji Group has operations in India, Iraq, Kuwait, Malaysia, Philippines, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates.

French unions oppose tuition increase

Last November, French Prime Minister Édouard Philippe announced tuition increases for students from non-EU member states. At the beginning of this academic year, fees are set to rise to €2,770 for undergraduate students (from €170) and €3,770 per year for those studying at masters and doctoral level (from €243 and €380 respectively).

The closure put 1,000 workers out of employment, including contract workers.

The company, which was taken over by Avocet Mining, which then sold the company to the Balaji Group, operates with a third world contract, the former Avocet Mining workers risked their lives to achieve the union’s demands. The workers formed the Balaji Group. But efforts to negotiate with the government of the Balaji Group, while the mines of miners has simply ignored the issue.

To press for their demands, more than 200 workers recently picked in Chuparipao, the capital city of Burkina Faso, with placards alleging collusion with the government against the Balaji Group. The workers reject the employer’s proposal to reduce working hours and overtime.

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The strike and subsequent agreement caps long efforts by students to achieve rights at plantations across Colombia. Up to 130 union activists were killed or injured during the period.

A coalition of workers throughout Colombia’s palm sector have organized plantation by plantation since 2013, winning campaigns that ensure direct hiring and living wages. With support from palm workers at other plantations, the Indupalma workers are now the largest that the vice minister of labour helped negotiate a preliminary pact in mid-2018.

Luton airport staff strike

Baggage handlers and check-in staff at Britain’s Luton airport began a week-long strike against pay on March 3. More than 96 per cent of the workers supported the strike, a call to action submitted by the Union unite were ignored.

Management agreed to talk with the union a few days previously, but Unite representatives rejected the bosses’ offer of a pay freeze for last year and below-inflation wage rises after that. The strike was expected to continue until March 10.

Luton airport staff strike

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**THE PEOPLE UNITED: An Open Letter to the People of the United States from Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro**

If I know anything, it is about people, such as you, I am a man of the people. I was born and raised in a poor neighbourhood of Caracas. I forged myself in the heat of popular and union struggles in a Venezuela submerged in exclusion and inequity. I am not a tycoon, I am a worker of reason and heart, today I have the great privilege of presiding over the new Venezuela, rooted in a model of inclusive development and social equality, which was forged by Commander Hugo Chávez since 1998 inspired by the Bolivarian legacy.

We live today in a historical trance. There are days that will define the future of our countries between war and peace. Your national representatives of Washington want to bring to their borders the same hatred that Washington want to bring to the countries aligned with this aggression is carried out with total impunity and in clear violation of the Charter of the United Nations, which expressly outlaws the threat or use of force among other principles and purposes for the sake of peace and the friendly relations between Nations.

We want to continue being business partners of the people of the United States, as we have been throughout our history. Their politicians in Washington, on the other hand, are willing to send their sons and daughters to die in an absurd war, instead of respecting the sacred right of the Venezuelan people to self-determination and safeguarding their sovereignty.

Like you, people of the United States, we Venezuelans are patriots. And we shall defend our homeland with all the pieces of our soul.

Today Venezuela is united in a single clamour: we demand the cessation of the aggression that seeks to suffocate our economy and socially suffocate our people, as well as the cessation of the serious and dangerous threats of military intervention against Venezuela.

We appeal to the good soul of American society, victim of its own leaders, to join our call for peace, let us be all one people against warmongering and war.

Long live the peoples of America! Nicolas Maduro, President of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

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**Release All Political Detainees in Sudan Now!**

Feb. 25, 2019 - The Communist Party of Canada today renewed its call on the Canadian government and Parliament to demand the immediate release of 3,000 political detainees arbitrarily arrested by the Sudanese government, including approximately 200 women and the leaders of opposition parties and civil society organizations for the crime of protesting government policies of austerity, arbitrary arrests, torture and detention.

Since the mass protests began December 19th, over 7,000 people have been detained by police. While some have been released as a result of a sizable protest movement across the country, combined with international pressure on the reactionary and repressive Sudanese government, more people are being arrested, detained and tortured.

Among those in detention are leaders of the Sudanese Opposition parties including Communist Party leader Mohamed al-Khateeb, and other prominent members of the Sudanese Communist Party Masoud Al Hassan, Sidiq Youssif, Ali Saeed, Hamad Fadi, Faiza Nuga, Saif Mohamed, Sama Gabriela, AL Digeur Mohamed Aburas, and Yahya Al Hussein.

The crisis in Sudan is a result of the government’s policy of deep austerity which has caused widespread hunger and poverty across the country, combined with severe repression against protesters, including arbitrary detention, torture, and deaths.

The mass uprising against the government and police is a direct consequence of these government policies and actions, and a clear rejection of the IMF imposed directives on Sudan’s economy and people.

We call on the Sudanese Communist Party and the people of Sudan who have rejected austerity and tyranny and are fighting for their rights to determine their country’s future free of IMF diktat and repression. We call on the labour and democratic movements, and all those who care for democracy, freedom, civil and democratic rights to demand the release of all those detained, and an end to repression, reaction and austerity in Sudan.

Central Executive Committee, Communist Party of Canada.

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**Cubans endorse new constitution**

Cuba’s new constitution has been overwhelmingly endorsed, with 87 per cent of voters backing it. The National Electoral Commission said on Feb. 25 that 7,348,343 people voted in the referendum — 90.5 per cent of eligible voters. Of these, 6,816,169 voted to approve it, while 706,400 voted against and 300,000 ballots were spoiled.

The new constitution had been subject to extensive consultation over a period of months, with many amendments being accepted before a final version went to the people. It preserves the dominant role of public ownership and commits the country towards “advancing towards a communist society” — the latter inserted because of feedback from the public after having been written as “socialist society” in the initial draft.

Changes from Cuba’s prior constitution involve recognition of the role of private and co-operative businesses, changes to the system of government including by reintroducing the role of prime minister (so the head of state and head of government are no longer one office, as they have been since 1976) and judicial changes bolstering citizens’ rights to legal representation, the presumption of innocence and the right not to be held without trial.

Drafters came under fire after a constitutional right to same-sex marriage was altered following criticism. However, evangelical Christians still called for a vote against on the grounds that the constitution changes the definition of marriage in a way that allows same-sex marriages to be recognised.

Cuban President Miguel Diaz-Canel said: “This constitution dignifies and upholds the legacy of Fidel and Marti, and of Raul, and strengthens rights.”
A look at fascism by a ruling class leader

He thinks that the US is owed billions of dollars for hiring out its armed forces. She thinks “It’s the cornerstone of world peace”. I wonder how many Afghans, Iraqis, or Yugoslavs would agree?

She returns to her students with the following exchange: Can a fascist movement establish a foothold in the United States? Yes, it can. Why? Because we are so sure it can’t.

This was written in 2017 and published just before the mid-term elections, so she might be a little less fearful, but then Trump has cancelled the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, so maybe not.

Albright writes well and this is an easy read if you can overcome the gag reflex. That reflex will not affect many Americans so this book is likely to have a wide impact.
**BC budget falls short of needs and demands....**

The 2019 budget does not address these issues in a meaningful way, except for some large commitments to improve transit networks, roads, and rail, not just in the Greater Vancouver area. Our resource industries have struggled, but the conservation practices over many decades. The forestry and fisheries are rich with potential, and if well managed can provide jobs and income for smaller BC communities for many years to come. Processing these resources here in BC and within local communities can sustain a greater technology and adding value before export has been one of our most difficult challenges, and still remains a viable alternative.

Despite their tough stand on the Trans Mountain Pipeline, this government betrayed the hopes of those who thought it would stop the expansion. This budget forges ahead with LNG pipeline and export facilities on the central coast, setting back the province’s commitment to reduce carbon emissions, which must now be recouped from other areas of the economy. While the LNG project provides initial employment, the government ignores the long-term impact on the smaller, community-based businesses.

**WHILE THIS BUDGET DOES NOT INFlict THE DAMAGE OF THE LER, THE POSITIVE ELEMENTS ARE TOO LITTLE, AND BEING IMPLEMENTED MUCH TOO SLOWLY**

bank (which is welcome, but ultimately a hand-aid solution in contrast to the real, long-term crisis). What is most needed are stronger measures to increase health services for low-income families, and to vastly increase the supply of affordable rental housing. We must depoliticize the end of evictions, and action to build thousands of affordable homes. We should be more short of what is really needed.

Budget 2019 boosts funding to public health care system by $1.3 billion over the next three years, including supports to the Children’s and Women’s hospitals, the BC Cancer Agency and adding coverage for new drugs to the PharmaCare program. This comes after a range of important commitments made last year, including more investments in seniors’ care, urgent care centres, PharmaCare coverage for low-income earners, reducing surgical wait times and increasing access to diagnostic services such as MRI. What more funding is still needed to develop the health care workforce, as well as roll out team-based community health centres.

Cleaners, food services and food delivery workers should be returned to the public sector, with those workers seamlessly moved to the publicly funded health care system. Private and P3 contracting should be eliminated.

Overall health care spending remains sustainable, and in fact is projected to fall from 7.8% of GDP in 2011/12 to 7.2% 2021/22. There is room to increase investments where needed.

The budget adds $74 million over three years to increase mental health and addiction services, and a $10 million increase to the opioid overdose emergency (building on $578 million already approved in the previous budget). But amid an overdose crisis taking an even greater toll, the government should provide all additional resources needed for those in crisis, ensuring that those suffering with addictions have access to a safe, livable place to sleep, and that funding is not opposed to a toxic, unpredictable street supply.

Health funding is also needed for secondary and long term recovery. Without long term planning, the recovery will likely be too expensive for people who need it.

Juan did not receive money to cover the whole four years he was cheated. Ontario’s Employment Standards Act only allows the ministry to order companies to pay out unpaid wages for the two years prior to the complaint being filed. But for Juan half a pension was better than none.Juan is not the first worker who had to fight against proﬁt-hungry, greedy corporations just to get what they are entitled to. Kyle Novak, for example, worked for a Domino’s in Guelph in February 2017 for the scandalous wage of $5 an hour. Kyle also ﬁled a complaint with the Labour Relations Board for $200 of back pay and vacation pay.

“I’d like enough employees to be able to have a good health plan and enjoy the circumstances after the minimum wage went up to $14-an-hour.” However, he explained that the owner of the Domino’s franchise about a pay increase, the business was strapped and he wasnt eligible. Juan knew his boss was wrong. He fought on to get his rights.

Bethune Dinner Door Prize Winner
MARCH 16-31, 2019 | 11

Vancouver, BC
NO TO NATO, protest the NATO Summit in Washington DC. Sat., March 30, start from Peace Flame Park, south end of Burrard Bridge. Organized by Vancouver Peace Council.

Left Film Night, Sunday, March 31, 7 pm, at the 7070 Kingsway Drive. Celebrate Women’s History Month, screening of “Rosa Luxemburg” (English subtitles), ph. 604-255-2041 for details.

Burnaby, BC
A Great Revolutionary Wave, the Women’s Suffrage Movement in British Columbia, speaker Lara Campbell, SFU Professor of Gender, Sexuality and Women’s Studies, Thursday, March 14, 7 pm, Burnaby Public Library, 6100 Willingdon Ave.

Salmon Arm, BC
Ten Days that Shook the World, Socialist Film Night, Thursday, March 28, 6 pm, OK College Room 36.

Regina, SK

Vancouver, BC
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**PEOPLE’S VOICE**

**PIZZA DELIVERY WORKER WINS AGAINST DOMINO’S...**

continued from page 3

continued from page 5

Bethune Dinner held in Toronto, is Arch Walker of Hamilton, Ontario. Bethune Dinner door prize winner...
Ukraine: NATO in the Constitution

By Manlio Dinucci, globalresearch.ca

The day after the signature of NATO’s membership protocol with North Macedonia as its 30th member, Ukraine did something without precedent: it included in its Constitution the engagement to enter officially into NATO and the European Union at the same time.

On February 7, on a proposition by President Petro Poroshenko – the oligarch who made himself rich by plundering public properties, and who is once again a candidate for the presidency – the Kiev parliament, by 34 votes to 35 with 16 abstentions, approved these amendments to the Constitution.

The Introduction pronounces “the irreversible movement of Ukraine towards Euro-Atlantic integration” and in the US/NATO command, and in the putsch of Place Maïdan under Nazi paramilitary formations in particular to Parliamentary elections to be held in March.

In other words, there would have to go to war with Russia. These dangerous implications of the modification of the Ukrainian Constitution – behind which are most certainly strategies by the USA and NATO – have been met with political and media silence. Including that of the Italian parliament, which, in 2017 established an agreement with the Ukrainian parliament, supported by Laura Boldrini and Andry Parubiy.

This cooperation has been reinforced between the Italian and US-funded trade unions of resistance against fascism and Nazism, and a regime which has created in Ukraine a situation similar to that which brought about the arrival of fascism in the 1920s and 1930s.

The inclusion in the Ukrainian Constitution of the engagement to enter officially into NATO bears with it some very serious consequences.

One of US imperialism’s more insidious tools is a wide range of funding organizations that pour money and other resources into political and social movements all over the world. The overarching objective is to maintain a pro-US discourse and orientation among foreign countries. The National Endowment for Democracy (NED) is among the most powerful of these instruments.

In Venezuela, NED has helped funnel $55 million annually to right-wing organizations and candidates, in an ongoing effort to undermine and destabilize the democratically elected and popular government. This interference dates back to 1990, and has intensified.

The NED has carried on similar campaigns throughout Latin America, including against popular and progressive governments in Brazil and Bolivia. The Center was established by Ronald Reagan in 1983, and one of its key partner organizations was the Free Trade Union Institute. The FTUI, renamed the Foundation for the Advancement of the International Labor Movement, was a creation of the AFL-CIO with the purpose of increasing US influence among European trade unions. Since 1983, it has been the largest single grantee of NED funding. In fact, it was the FTUI that in 1985 funded $1.5 million in NED funds to French trade unions opposed to the government of Francois Mitterrand; the FTUI’s stated reason for this interference was that Mitterand was a socialist who included Communists in his cabinet.

Currently, the NED has two trade union officials on its board of directors, but the penetration of NED into the trade union leadership goes far beyond these two positions. The officers of the FTU/Solidarity Center include the most senior leaders of the AFL-CIO and its major affiliates, ensuring an ongoing and institutionalized channel of communication from NED into the labour movement in the US and Canada.

This cooperation of the working class and its organizations has continued for decades. Workers in Canada must recognize that their interests align with those of their governments and organizations around the world.

For international working class solidarity - unions out of the NED

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Central Committee, Communist Party of Canada, Feb. 10, 2019

US imperialism has moved aggressively to deepen and reinforce the progressive movements and governments that have emerged and developed throughout Latin America over the past two decades. It has at its disposal a wide range of weapons, from direct intervention to blockades to economic sabotage and beyond. One of US imperialism’s more insidious tools is a wide range of funding organizations that pour money and other resources into political and social movements all over the world.

THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF CANADA NO LONGER SUBSCRIBES TO THE DOCTRINE OF CHILLING EFFECTS

To enter officially into NATO and the European Union is building coordinated and cohesive national and international strategies by the USA and NATO to criminalize and isolate the working class in many countries, including Canada. The Communist Party of Canada (CPC) was founded in 1921 as the party of the working class and its organizations and is building coordinated and cohesive national and international strategies by the USA and NATO to criminalize and isolate the working class in many countries, including Canada.

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