We won’t be erased
Doug Ford’s far-right government wants to roll back social equality gains and anti-discrimination protections, but trans rights activists refuse to be erased, and they will fight back.

Postal Workers fight for justice!
Editorial on page 4

P3s failed in UK
In the country where Margaret Thatcher launched the neoliberal strategy of “public-private partnerships”, new studies prove what we said all along: P3s are an expensive disaster.

Action Caucus needed
The BC Federation of Labour opens on Nov. 26. Despite the change in government, the trade union movement still needs an Action Caucus to help develop a militant fightback strategy.

The age of Lawfare
There are new strategies of waging war in the 21st century. One of the most insidious and effective is “lawfare”, the use of legal systems to damage or delegitimize an enemy.
The British governments announcement that it will stop using the most common form of P3 privatization schemes in Britain — Private Finance Initiative (PFI) — shows that in the country that invented them, P3s are seen to have failed. Unfortunately for the British people, the British Conservatives appear set to do what privatization proponents around the world have done when a privatization scheme fails so badly it can no longer be defended — rebrand it under a different name. The British Conservative government was the first in the world to use P3 privatization schemes. They were announced in the 1992 British budget and the first one opened in 1995. Because P3 privatization schemes offered a way to borrow money without it appearing on the government’s books, the Labour government that replaced the Conservatives in 1997 continued to use them. By 2017 there were 715 PFI projects. There were a number of PFI schemes that used a different model than PFI. The impact of P3 privatization schemes on the cost of public services in Britain was the same as in Canada. A combination of higher borrowing costs and higher administrative costs dramatically increased the cost of projects where P3s were used. Because of the higher costs of P3s, the government has had to bailout or take over several hospitals that would otherwise have gone bankrupt. What will also be familiar to Canadians is the impact of P3 privatization schemes on the quality of service. Just as in Canada, a combination of private companies cutting corners to increase profits and the higher cost of P3s has led to problems. As a result of the higher costs and poorer service, PFI is universally recognized to have failed. It is a measure of how badly P3 privatization schemes have failed that even the British Conservatives — the party that invented P3s — are now critical of them. But as has been done with other privatization schemes that failed, the British government is planning to rebrand P3s rather than abandon them. In the same speech in which he claimed the government was abandoning PFI, the Chancellor of the Exchequer (the finance minister) said, “I remain committed to the use of public-private partnership where it delivers value for the taxpayer and genuinely transfers risk to the private sector.”

While the privatization industry has not been good at running public services, it has been very good at sweeping its many failures under the rug. What’s being done in Britain will look very familiar to Ontario residents who saw how P3 privatization schemes were rebranded in that province. After serious problems with a P3 hospital in Brampton were uncovered, the Ontario Liberals announced they were scrapping P3 privatization schemes. Then they continued them under the name Alternative Finance and Procurement (AFP). Infrastructure Ontario was created to provide expertise for infrastructure projects, but ended up being a publicly funded lobbyist for P3s. In Britain P3 privatization schemes have already been rebranded once. In 2012, they were renamed PF2 and the government of the day claimed they were nothing like the discredited PFI schemes they replaced. Now as PF2 is shown to be no different than PFI, the government is embarking on another rebranding exercise.

If inventors disown their invention, why use it? The money inventors, law firms, consultants, outsourcing companies, think tanks and others are making from P3 privatization schemes means they will fight to keep them going as long as possible. But when the political party that invented them, the party of Margaret Thatcher, acknowledges the problems with the privatization schemes they invented, there is no reasonable excuse for continuing to use them. (From the National Union of Public and General Employees (NUPGE), which represents over 390,000 members.)

The United Nations voted 189-2 on Nov. 1 to condemn the illegal United States blockade of Cuba. Only Israel backed the US in opposing the resolution calling for an end to the 60-year-old measure aimed at isolating and suffocating the Cuban Revolution. The two countries were the only ones to oppose it last year as well.

Every year the UN general assembly overwhelmingly censures the US for its crippling economic and financial embargo on the socialist island. This year’s vote was originally due yesterday, Nov. 20, but the administration delayed it by 24 hours by forcing votes on a series of weak resolutions first.

On behalf of the Group of 77 — an umbrella for 135 developing countries including India, China — Egyptian ambassador to the UN Mohamed Edrees said he regretted increased US hostility to Cuba under President Donald Trump.

Easing of travel restrictions and money transfers to Cuba under Mr Trump’s predecessor Barack Obama had been “positive steps in the right direction,” he said, but Washington’s new policy was “aimed at strengthening the embargo against Cuba. This is a setback in the process of achieving normalised relations.”

The G77 appealed to the international community to step up its efforts to have the blockade lifted.

Bahamas ambassador Sheila Carey expressed the Caribbean Community’s “unequivocal opposition” to the blockade, which is estimated to have cost Cuba $933 billion (C$1bn) over the past six decades. She warned the US that its policy was “disapproved of worldwide.”

South Africa’s Jerry Matjila said the blockade had caused “immeasurable damage to the development of the people of Cuba and remains, as ever before, unjustified.”

(‘P3’ combined sources)
The public inquiry into the hydro megaproject at Muskrat Falls in central Labrador has been active for over a month now. Much has already been said by this author and many others over the course of the project’s completion. Hailed by former premier Danny Williams as something that would reap benefits for generations to come, the dam and generating station are now infamous over budget, set to cost the province around $13 billion.

Williams naturally continues to insist that Muskrat Falls is in our best interest, defending the project as a witness at the inquiry. What is not clear is whether the project was indeed the “best option” for power development. It will be some time before the inquiry concludes its business, but from the get-go many failures are apparent.

First and foremost is the matter of indigenous rights. For all the talk of reconciliation, this project, like Site C in BC, is fundamentally affecting the land of Labrador Innu and Inuit. While there is some conflict making its way over the matter of needing local jobs, indigenous Labradorians have been at the forefront of opposition to the hydro project, dubbing themselves “land protectors.” Many of them continue to face court proceedings for blocking access to the construction site in earlier demonstrations.

Then there is the matter of the cost itself. Cost overruns in a large project are not unprecedented, but Muskrat Falls is now over double its original estimate. It remains unclear where much of the power is going to be sold, and the people of the province have been told to expect substantial increases to their electric bills in order to cover the cost.

With the cost of living high enough as it is, premier Dwight Ball has attempted to mitigate concerns by saying that ratepayers should not be affected when Muskrat Falls comes online. The plan is unclear, other than the Public Utilities Board is looking at the large shipment of natural gas.

As identified last month, much of the electricity in Newfoundland is provided by a private utility, Newfoundland Power, which is owned by Fortis. Bringing Newfoundland Power under public ownership would eliminate the need to increase rates to please Fortis investors, but that of course is not on the table.

Another question is what contributed to the outrageous cost overruns. Nalcor, the crown corporation responsible for the project and NL Hydro, contracted out much of the construction work, principally to the Italian firm Astaldi. Astaldi was contracted in 2013 for $1.1 billion. The company asked for more money to finish the project and the contract was increased to $1.8 billion in 2016. Early in October this year, Astaldi applied for creditor protection. It seems to be unable to pay its bills and is facing bankruptcy. It is not a stretch to say that our public money has been squandered keeping a private foreign construction firm going a little bit longer. When it became clear that Astaldi was no longer in a position to pay their workers, Nalcor ordered the company to cease work and send their five hundred workers home. Nalcor insists it can finish the remaining work at the site without them.

In the midst of this is the issue of the carbon tax. Of course a carbon tax can itself go on to change anything. We are not going to fight climate change just by making industries pay a bit more in taxes. Indeed, the provincial carbon tax scheme will hardly affect producers. We will have a slight increase in gas taxes, and numerous sectors are exempt including forestry, offshore exploration, mineral exploration, and methane gas.

According to natural resource minister Siobhan Coady, the oil and gas sector is expected to reduce emissions by up to 12% over four years; if they fail to do so, they must pay into an “emissions reduction fund” or buy “credits.” So, a slap on the wrist and nothing in this has teeth, and there is nothing to tackle other problems like reliance on gas-powered cars and trucks. The oil-fired generating plant at Holyrood will eventually be replaced by a much more real positive of Muskrat Falls coming into operation.

Newfoundland and Labrador needs clean alternative energy sources under public ownership, run by the members of First Nations and Inuit, strict laws to punish polluters, and a vastly expanded public transportation system.

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The analytical task before the convention is daunting and the diverse voice from the “Parliament of Workers” is of grand portion and necessary to our very precarious survival. Even the coming scourge of robots must be faced with our strategic words and resolute plans for a unified assessment and fight back.

A Call for An Action Caucus is very essential to sorting and prioritizing the many profound questions before our unions and awaiting ranks at this Convention.

Jim Sinclair, before he rose to the leadership, came out of the United Fishermen and Allied Workers’ Union led by Homer Stevens and John Radojevich, and was voted spokesperson for the Action Caucus many years ago.

I was there and held forth, from out of the ILUW Longshore Local 500, with other activists, to assess the call of the Action Caucus and ask the delegates to discuss the best ways to press front-table officers into recognizing the necessity of an expanded permanent, necessary, and conglomerate-motions, to push back wrong-headed government legislation or crony corporate wish lists of the those days.

On the first day of the convention, a delegate will announce a meeting of the Action Caucus and ask the Convention front-desk to find a meeting room along with your Committee Reports, and Resolutions Books, find the most pressing resolutions by reading those on Monday evening. Remember, there is always a grand selection made of the first-time delegates to the floor who will contain our future leaders. Sooner or later our brethren and sisters, children, comrades, all the marginal and oppressed visitors who watch and witness our timely and vast concerns.

Your union, your community, the country, the polluted planet, brothers and sisters, children, comrades, all the marginal, activists, workers, landless peasants, and oppressed citizens world wide are waiting on your Call to Action.

Dave Pritchett, retired,
Longshore ILUW Local 500

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Rally against the controversial Muskrat Falls project.

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Proportional Representation? YES
A message to BC trade unionists

Statement from the BC Labour Committee of the Communist Party of Canada

The Communist Party of Canada has, over the years, advocated for a change in our voting system so that it would be more reflective of the democratic will of the working class and less conducive to minority rule by the most privileged capitalists and imperialists via their parties, the Conservatives and the Liberals, and other like-minded corporate shills. A vote in favour of Proportional Representation, and away from First-past-the-post, would be a very strong improvement to our eroding democracy and a step toward greater power being placed in the hands of working people, the unemployed, the marginalized, and all other oppressed peoples.

Many Western Liberal democracies were constituted in such a way that the ruling class of the day would be able to maintain much, if not all, their power and privilege regardless of the will of the majority of its citizens. They were designed, and, in particular, the ones that use First-past-the-post, to ensure that policies could be readily enacted whenever the ruling class wanted it, and that such policies could be enacted without the consent of the majority working class.

These first-past-the-post parliaments and legislatures, including Canadian and American ones, are typically given 100% of the power while receiving 40-45% of the popular vote, and therefore garnering only 25% of the support of all eligible voters in federal and provincial elections, and even less support in municipal elections. Put in this perspective it’s easy to see why the biggest battleground for ruling class interests are the ones proclaiming the current system in the best – because it has been the best for them – and not for everyone else.

This month’s referendum is arguably the most important opportunity the working class has ever had in BC to fundamentally change the nature of how we elect officials and subsequently make them accountable to the government to respond to the will of all voting people.

Labour Convention, which at the 2018 BC Federation of Labour (B.C. Fed) Convention, voted to support the introduction of Proportional Representation in BC. The BC Labour Committee of the Communist Party of Canada urges all workers, organized and unorganized, employed and underemployed, oppressed and marginalized peoples, to support the Proportional Representation campaign and vote accordingly so that we can have governments that are at least proportionately reflective of the voting public.

While we specifically support the first PR ballot option of a “Mixed Member Proportional” system, any of the proportional representation voting systems proposed would be better than the current first-past-the-post system.

Organized labour has much to contribute to the debate and file of All Unions represented at the 2018 BC Federation of Labour Convention, which begins on Nov. 26. Perhaps most telling are the many experiences over the decades, that have spoken up for the sovereignty of indigenous nations, health of the environment, the rights of the unorganized, recognition of women for equal pay provisions, pensioners, students and the marginalized within the province, the country and the world. Our Conventions have also spoken against the wanton destruction and tax drain of the military-industrial complex.

The international reach and scope of the current power of the union movement is an essential voice of protective insurance against the relentless hoarding and oppression of capitalists and their drive to sell the resources of the country offshore while leaving the citizens with the massive cleanup bills as the land, rivers and coastal waters.

Yet so-called “free” trade agreements, meanwhile, are very sovereignty and close our factories, only to open in union-free countries, and to turn toward fascism for simple solutions to complex human relations.

The Pakistan-India war of 1947 against Indian sovereignty and the interesting ways in which the country and the world reacted to the issue of the Kashmir look suspiciously similar to the one that has been raging in the Equatorial Guinea of the Congo.

As Nicaragua is the next country to get its economy and its resources seized by the发展of the world and the world economy.

We refer to the 1989-90 experience in Nicaragua, where the Sandinistas had to flee the country. The new Sandinista government is now in control of the country, the polluted planet, brothers and sisters, children, comrades, all the marginal, activists, workers, landless peasants, and oppressed citizens world wide are waiting for your Call to Action.
CUPW is fighting for all workers!

As the dispute at Canada Post continues, its workers need the solidarity of the labour movement and community allies more than ever. Instead of reaching a new collective agreement that meets the needs of its employees and millions of Canadians, Canada Post seems determined to drag out the process, perhaps in hopes of a legislated settlement imposing onerous conditions on CUPW members. On Nov. 2, the mandate of the mediator appointed by the federal Minister of Labour expired, without Canada Post agreeing to resolve key issues around health and safety, workload, staffing, wages, pay equity, and equality for all workers.

While the company refuses to budge, the rotating strikes and overtime ban strategy of the union is having an impact, making the prospect that Canada Post depends on its government-appointed bosses. As CUPW says, “after more than ten months of negotiations, the intervention of two mediators and two weeks of rotating strikes, Canada Post is showing its true colours. All of its lofty rhetoric and the image it is attempting to project that its employees are turning out to be nothing more than smoke and mirrors.”

To give just one example, Canada Post claims that it does not promote precarious work. Yet the company wants the power to hire an unlimited number of temporary, on-call, “disposable” employees and assign them all the work it wants in peak periods (for three months of the year). These on-call employees might have to work more than 40 hours a week with no overtime pay, and would be let go when the peak period is over. (See cupw.ca for details.)

CUPW members are not simply defending their own immediate interests; their struggle is a crucial fight for the entire working class in Canada. As the pressure builds, they need our full support!

After the mid-terms: what next?

Fair warning: this issue of PV went to the printer on November 6, hours before voting closed in the pivotal U.S. midterm elections. But certain predictions are already possible.

Perhaps most depressing, even if large numbers of Republicans go down to defeat (as progressive-minded people hope), the results will likely be interpreted as proof of the reactionary foreign policy of U.S. imperialism. Even since the “isolationist” Trump took office, he has faced attacks from hawkish Democrats in Congress for supposedly being “weak on America’s enemies”. The same “new Cold War” Democrats voted overwhelmingly for last year’s enormous boost in U.S. military spending, at the expense of health care, education, and social programs. Equally frustrating, the silver lining of progress during the Obama years towards reducing the U.S. carbon footprint will continue to be eroded. Even if a President and Congress seriously committed to tackling the climate change crisis are elected in 2020, four crucial years will have been lost.

But certain predictions are already possible. Unfortunately, this is a time to mobilize and push back.

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Hello everyone, thank you so much for coming out today. It’s so important that, given what has happened over the past year, we rally our community and our allies together. We have witnessed a shift towards right-wing politics in the United States, as well as here at home.

In the United States, the Trump Administration are trying to erase transgender people from existence: they have reversed Obama-era decisions that allowed for trans youth to access the bathroom of their choice; and most recently, the Department of Justice ruled that employers can legally discriminate against transgender employees.

And it’s not just in the United States, we see this shift in attitudes. Here in Ontario, with the election of Doug Ford, we saw swift rollback of important policies. Geopolitically, the U.S. and Latin America, Trump wanna-be:s are making political gains. But the working class has faced huge challenges before.

In the United States, as well as here, a shift towards far-right politics is something that threatens our people and a future for white supremacy; their struggle is a crucial fight for the entire working class in Canada. As the pressure builds, they need our full support!

Doug Ford’s recent Free Speech directive will be used to protect the discriminatory behaviour of those holding repressive and often fascist views. There is concern that this directive will legitimize the misgendering and deadnaming of transgender students. So we can’t give Ford and his policies an inch. This is a time to mobilize and push back.

Across the world, we are witnessing a rise in transphobia and homophobia. In Brazil, Bolsonaro, who has called himself a “proud homophobe” was elected president. He went on record stating that he would rather have his son die in an accident than come out as gay. These are the attitudes that are starting take root all over the globe. During times like these, we need to stand together, because if we don’t, we will watch as we have all of our rights for gay people are taken away.

As a member of the Young Communist League, I have parti- cipated in countless demonstrations here in London against the crypto-fascist organization PEGIDA. They represent a growing threat to our communities, as they are finding new strength far too close to home. During the municipal elections in Toronto, PEGIDA supported Faith Goldy, a white supremacist who ran for Mayor. She is a woman who once on Sun Media said that so-called “bathroom bills” would result in more women being raped, a woman who, during an alt-right podcast, said the infamous 14 words, “We must secure the existence of our people and a future for white children”, which was coined by David Lane, a white supremacist terrorist who died in prison while serving a 199-year sentence for racketeering, conspiracy, and the murder of a Jewish radio personality.

The thing I want everyone to take away from what I’m saying today is this: Faith Goldy wasn’t a fringe candidate. Faith Goldy got 3rd place in an election for mayor in the largest city in Canada. The threat that we see in the United States is something that threatens us here at home. We are not safe unless we stay united as a community, and are organized politically. We will not be erased, we will fight back!

"We will not be erased, we will fight back"

From a speech by PV supporter Clara Sorrenti to a Nov. 4 rally in London, Ont.

The following open letter was initiated by the Catalyst Project and the International Jewish Anti-Zionist Network.

We are Jews committed to liberation for all people. We are heartbroken and outraged by shooting at the Tree of Life synagogue. Our hearts are with the Jewish communities of Pittsburgh and the many communities facing the terror and loss caused by horrendous acts of violence driven by bigotry and hate. To the people who lost loved ones at the Tree of Life synagogue, we send our deep sorrow and grief. To those who were injured or traumatized, we send you our comfort and strength.

As we mourn this horrendous act of violence against Jewish communities, we know that this is not an isolated attack and our response cannot be isolated either. The attack on the Pittsburgh synagogue is part of the growing threats and acts of murderous violence based on white supremacy, xenophobia, Islamophobia, anti-Jewish hatred, misogyny, homophobia and transphobia. Just days ago, two Black victims were killed by a white man in a supermarket in Louisville after he was refused entry into a Black church.

Trump callously suggested that had the synagogue had armed security, things may have turned out differently. To that we say that we believe safety of Jewish people is inseparable from all those targeted by bigotry. The same police that terrorize and kill Black and Brown people daily while allowing white supremacists to voice and act on the same racism and prejudice cannot be part of stopping it. Instead, we seek the safety of a world in which human dignity, diversity and life are valued above all else.

With fascism on the rise across the world, we must make the connections between these horrific acts of violence, the ideologies of hatred they stem from, and the States that collude and enact them. In India, Israel, the United States, Brazil, the Philippines, Saudi Arabia, Canada and more than a dozen European countries—authoritarian, Far Right governments and white supremacists and fascist movements have taken or continue to control state power, are fighting for it and are gaining steam. Economic, political and climate refugees, indigenous, third world and Black, queer and transgender people and peoples with disabilities, women and workers are being persecuted, detained, deported, and killed. This is not just a problem of Palestine, particularly those living in Gaza, of whom over 200 have been killed in the past two months, or those more injured since March 2018 during weekly mass demonstrations for their right to return, or the victims of origin since being displaced in 1948.

As Jews who have been organized against white supremacy and the rising fascist movements that have been encouraged and emboldened by the Trumps of the world here and internationally, we know that anti-semitism is inextricably linked — presently and historically — to other forms of white supremacy and racism. We cannot find safety or liberation in isolation or behind armed borders and doors. We are strengthened by yesterday’s and today’s struggles for justice across the United States and the globe to build the basis of Jewish participation in our own and collective struggles against persecution and for liberation and with all those who are defending themselves daily against bigotry and hate and building communities and movements grounded in love and justice.

No basis for U.S. accusations in Warmbier case

The tragic death of Otto Warmbier, the 22-year-old student from Wyoming who died in June 2017 continues to be raised by some as an argument against reconciliation between the U.S. and the DPRK.

The U.S. student had been on a tourist trip to the DPRK when he was charged and sentenced for committing an “anti-DPRK hostile act” in January 2016. A few months later, according to Korean authorities, Warmbier became ill through botulism, and fell into a coma. Four months later, on October 11, 2017, several American doctors submitted a “medical observation” to a federal district court in Washington D.C., claiming that he had died of torture, alleging that “his teeth were dislocated and his gum bone damaged by physical force from a clipboard.”

Nikki Haley, the U.S. permanent representative to the United Nations (soon to step down from that post) has jumped on the case, calling North Korea an “evil place” where Otto Warmbier was tortured to death. Speaking to the Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) on Oct. 27, 2018, Kim Song-hui, the director of the Pyongyang Friendship Hospital, said “I cannot repress my indignation over the American total distortion of the truth regarding (Warmbier’s) death.” Kim Song-hui points to a USA Today article, printed on June 21, 2017, in the Cincinnati Enquirer, in which doctors at the University of Cincinnati (UC) state that they found no trace of physical abuses like bone fracture or internal organ injury.

The article quotes Dr. Daniel Kantor, a UC Health neuroscientist, stating that Otto Warmbier had received good medical care in the DPRK, surviving while unable to communicate or move for 14 months, and arriving home in a “well-nourished” condition.

Kanter was able to review contemporaneous medical records from Warmbier’s period of imprisonment, and conducted MRI tests. He said Warmbier’s injury most likely occurred because his heart stopped, cutting off oxygen to the brain. Kantor said that botulism might have damaged his heart and lungs, but any trace of botulism would not have lived in his body after 14 months.

Dr. Lakshmi Sammarco, the coroner of Hamilton County, Ohio, reported that no autopsy was performed, at the Warmbier family’s request. In her statement, Dr. Sammarco wrote, “No conclusions about the cause and manner of Mr. Warmbier’s death have been drawn at this time as there are additional medical records and imaging to review and people to interview.”

Her postmortem examination did not indicate the young man’s teeth had been disfigured. “The teeth are natural and in good repair,” the report said, and his nose and ears show “no remarkable alteration.”

Despite these findings, a vicious anti-DPRK campaign began in the United States. But there are more questions than certainties about this case. Despite the torture accusations by U.S. politicians, the extensive medical examination of Otto Warmbier when he arrived in Ohio could certainly have found evidence of such claims. It’s also puzzling that after his death the student’s family requested that no autopsy be performed.

Are the accusations based on political grounds or more than medical evidence? It’s interesting to recall that the initial attacks against the DPRK around this case, during the summer and fall of 2017, coincided with President Trump’s efforts to completely destroy the country. It was only several months later that relations thawed, leading to the Singapore Summit between Trump and Kim Jong Un last June.

Since the summit, the anti-DPRK campaign has not stopped, with a constant stream of accusations from politicians and some media outlets seeking to rouse public anger. Warmbier’s family continues to demand that the DPRK be treated as a “terrorist state,” and has launched a legal bid to change Warmbier’s death suit against the DPRK.

But in the absence of any factual evidence to back up the accusations of torture, one can only conclude that this case is political in nature. Certainly, the escalating tensions in the region is to continue the process of dialogue and de-escalation of military confrontations, leading towards the eventual reunification of the Korean Peninsula.

Attempts to demonize the DPRK move in the opposite direction, seeking to escalate a war which would have devastating consequences for all Koreans, for East Asia, and even the entire planet.

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Stop Bannon: hate speech is criminal activity

Central Executive Committee, Communist Party of Canada, Nov. 2, 2018. This statement was issued to condemn the “Munk Debate” organized on that date in Toronto, between Steve Bannon and David Frum. Hundreds of people protested outside Roy Thomson Hall where the event was held, and twelve were arrested.

That’s the argument in today’s Toronto Star, headlined “Don’t Fear This Debate”. The article is called “Toronto Star that’s wrong. The ideas that Bannon promotes are racist, xenophobic and anti-Muslim. Raptors fans turned to stoke feelings of hatred and fear against immigrants and especially Muslims and racialized peoples in Canada. This is hate speech and it’s illegal in Canada.

Bannon is not here to exchange ideas about hate. He’s here to build a movement that’s based on hate.

Bannon is here to unite the growing number of hate groups that have and continue to be a brutal acts of genocide, land clearing of the plains, came in Canada. With colonization and families, and Nations. Sadly, Anishinabe and other Nations for Indigenous knowledge systems time immemorial have tied their on these territories since 100 kilometres. The province Dunes that stretch for nearly sand beaches and the incredible lights. It is also one of the most state power.

In Europe, the US, and Canada we are already seeing racist attacks on religious minorities, and murders carried out or motivated by hate and by the ideas and the organizations advocated and supported by Bannon. This has nothing to do with democracy and free speech. This is about hate.

The murders in a Quebec mosque last year, the murders in a US synagogue this week, and the arson at a Toronto refugee hotel last month are what hate speech and organizing generates. The defence of democracy and free speech demands that Canada’s hate speech laws be rigorously enforced by law enforcement and that stiff penalties for hate speech and organizing include jail time. This must also include defence of the free speech rights of people targeted by Bannon and hate groups.

We stand united with the many demonstrating in Toronto today against the Bannon - Frum debate organized by the Munk Centre. Mass protests are vital now to stop this escalating attack on democracy and on fundamental human rights. “First they came for the Muslims…”

Pam Palmater, October 31, 2018. This commentary first appeared on the rabble.ca website.

Saskatchewan is known as the “land of the living skies” for its breathtakingly clear northern lights. It is also one of the most beautiful Prairie provinces in Canada, with stunning purple sand beaches and the incredible Sahara-like Athabasca Sand Dunes that stretch for nearly 100 kilometres. The province also boasts over 100,000 lakes and rivers, making it nearly 12 per cent water. The diverse Indigenous Nations which have thrived on these territories since time immemorial have tied their customs, practices and traditions, and even their traditional Indigenous knowledge systems to the life-giving resources from these rich lands, waters and eco-systems. The very land that has sustained the Nehiyaw, Amiskwache, and other Nations for thousands of years is firmly rooted in their identity as individuals, families, and Nations. Sadly, Saskatchewan is also well-known as one of the most racist provinces in Canada. With colonization and the clearing of the plains, came brutal acts of genocide, land displacement and further violence against First Nations -- a legacy that has and continues to be a lethal reality for the many.

Saskatchewan is the home to farmer Gerald Stanley, who shot and killed an unarmed First Nation youth, Colten Boushie, in cold blood in 2016, but was found not guilty by an all-white jury two years later - a result that shocked the nation. But it’s not just white farmers, killing Indigenous peoples -- 62.5 per cent of people who died from police encounters in Saskatchewan were Indigenous, despite being only 11 per cent of the population. This should not be as much of a shock to anyone. It wasn’t that long ago in 2004 that the Neil Stonechild Inquest exposed the Saskatchewan police practice known as “Starlight Tours” to the world. Starlight Tours occur when police officers detain Indigenous youth, drive them out of town and leave them stranded in sub-zero temperatures, causing their deaths. While this racist practice was well-known by First Nations as common practice, Canada had a hard time accepting the persistence, prevalence and lethal nature of racism in this country. Meanwhile, the rate of murdered and missing Indigenous women and girls continued to climb.

In 2014, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) released a report on the “known” cases of murdered and missing Indigenous women and girls in Canada which showed that Indigenous women and girls make up only 2.5 per cent of the Canadian population, but 16 per cent of the murder victims in Canada. However, Saskatchewan had the highest provincial rate -- 55 per cent of all murders were Indigenous. This unique intersection of racism and misogyny creates a situation where sexualized violence is perpetuated against Indigenous women and girls at alarming rates with relative impunity and by all walks of society. While it is true that domestic violence is part of the issue, many of the murders and acts of sexualized violence were committed by society -- doctors, lawyers, teachers, judges, social workers, foster parents and even police officers. Human Rights Watch released a report about the issue stating “because the police who commit sexualized violence against Indigenous women and girls in their custody, including sexual harassment, assault, invasive strip searches by male officers, and groping.

Racialized violence, abuse and incarceration is so ingrained in Saskatchewan that it is not only reflected in societal and economic conditions, but is also reflected in the treatment of Indigenous peoples by the police. Saskatchewan police practice is incredibly different from other provinces in that First Nations and other Indigenous peoples are over-represented in prison were in the child welfare system. It should be no surprise then that Indigenous foster girls are also over-represented as murdered, missing, and sex trafficked and those exploited in the child porn industry. Human traffickers kill exactly where to get them -- foster and group homes. These multiple, overlapping crises rooted in racism and violence against Indigenous peoples are getting worse. The Supreme Court of Canada, the federal Office of the Correctional Investigator, the auditor general, child welfare advocates, and numerous United Nations human rights bodies, together with countless research findings, commissions, inquiries and coroner’s reports all point to continued failures by federal and provincial governments to take concrete action to stem or reverse these crises. This failure, which is nothing less than colossal in Saskatchewan, sends the very toxic message to society that the deaths of women and girls who exist in Canada, and link those deaths to racism and violence. This is the reason that Idle No More was born. Not only did this organic social movement grow from Indigenous grassroots community members, it was inspired by federal and provincial government inaction on these social issues and their constant breach of our Aboriginal and treaty rights. Omnibus bills to remove protections for the many lakes and rivers which make up Saskatchewan, together with provincial leases, permits and other authorities for corporations to continue to treat First Nations from Indigenous lands helped inspire a Saskatchewan-born, nationwide movement to demand action. Idle No More wasn’t the first public show of protest over racial injustice, and it won’t be the last. First Nation family members of lost loved ones organized the Justice for Our Stolen Children Camp to again raise awareness and demand action. Their message was simple -- the gross injustices committed against see SASKATCHEWAN, p. 11
Women in China: scrabbling towards equality

By Bennett Galluaine, in Shanghai

Any evaluation of gender (in) equality in the People’s Republic by a Western man with a less-than-perfect grasp of the Chinese language may be tentative. But let’s begin by noting that one of the most obvious equal one condition. Like all large countries (and not only large ones), China has regions with significantly different levels of development and varying cultural tendencies. That might lead one to point out, for example, that the ‘politics’ of the domestic sphere—the home—may vary dramatically in determining the public status of women. Equality before the law and even State promotion of female workforce integration and social participation may, obviously, have limited effect if women are left with most or all of the responsibility for domestic chores and childrearing. And it is true that, in general, Chinese women see their career opportunities and chances for participation in politics and social organizations limited by the tendency to leave them with more responsibilities at home.

In some places, children and chores limit them?

A fairly recent poll revealed 61.6 per cent of Chinese men and 54.6 per cent of women agreeing with the statement that “the household is the domain for women is within [the] household.” Worrisome for equality advocates was the fact that these percentages had climbed markedly since a similar poll conducted by the World Values Survey in 2000. (What was unclear was whether respondents felt that these roles were merely descriptive of current conditions or how things naturally ought to be.)

Youthful women and men I have questioned on the topic are critical of such data, suggesting they are in fact contrary to the social reality. In fact, these citizens say, there are great regional and class variations to be found.

I live in a majority where, at first glance, China’s claims to still be a predominantly agrarian society are excessively modest. In huge, industrial (or what many would call post-industrial) Shanghai, an urban area with possibly the highest level of female workforce participation on the planet, relations aren’t what the poll cited above imply. Most men do gallons of housework here, it is cited above imply. Most men do participate on the planet, the highest level of female workforce industrial (or what many would say varieties on the theme. They distort a more complex critical of such data, suggesting have questioned on the topic are were merely descriptive of poll was conducted in 2000. climbed markedly since a similar participation in politics and social agree with the statement that 61.6 per cent of Chinese men and 54.6 per cent of women.

And it is true that, in general, Chinese women see their career opportunities and chances for participation in politics and social organizations limited by the tendency to leave them with more responsibilities at home.

Income growth across the board

Hauges have climbed steadily in all sectors over the last decade, always in dramatic fashion, and certainly in sectors where huge numbers of women work. In the period from 2005-2016, for example, and according to China’s National Bureau of Statistics, average manufacturing earnings climbed by over 200 percent accounting for inflation. Real wages for wholesale and retail employees increased even more dramatically. Salaries grew less sharply in hotels and catering, but the climb still appears to have exceeded 150 per cent, even allowing for inflation totals beyond the official rate. In education, another sector in which women are numerous and whose growth is frequently cited for its growth was in the vicinity of 250 per cent. To be sure, these figures are averages that hide inequities. They include earnings by managerial and professional women, which growth qualifications may be applied to such data, they indisputably reflect the fact that women’s growth overall necessarily ties into the movement of millions of young adults to cities to find work. Critical of assorted policies and I receive from numerous persons grievances, they say, “but after all, what else is there to do?” China’s women, one point higher than their peers, one point lower than their party membership overall. The Communist Party Politburo has emphasised, in reality, one woman out of 25 members. “One low and three small” is the government’s “new normal” characterization: a low overall proportion of women in government, a small number of women in top positions; a relatively small number of women in positions where real influence can be exercised; and a relatively small number of women holding important positions overall. Yet perhaps the next step ought to be a special emphasis on women’s positions in the workforce and in particular, those that are already being overstretched. Where can Chinese women be found in the workforce? In the factories, offices, schools and hospitals of the country. According to Chinese statistics, 40 per cent of China’s working-age female population were employed in the industrial sector (or infamous) one-child policy, in strong support of gender equality. Which isn’t to say that the one-child policy’s effectiveness in limiting population growth. But what undoubtedly is true is that the one-child policy enabled women’s public role. Careers, though interrupted by one child, were not derailed. A battery of supports such as public childcare and grandparents who continue to play a big role in our world, a real “princess” syndrome – the society) frequently ridicule the real “princess” syndrome – the women of all urban strata are (or infamous) one-child policy, in short, “invited” to be perfect. Women of all urban strata are, they want to be... and objects of sexual desire and pieces of human décor in other spheres of existence.

And when things are churned at the route to emancipation real nonetheless, offering salaries, personal mobility, and increased freedom to form relationships, among other opportunities.

Some facts and figures

China’s Constitution states in Article 48, “Women in the People’s Republic of China enjoy equal rights with men in all spheres of life, in political, economic, cultural, social and family life, undifferentiated with the rights of ‘all persons’”. Likewise, the Law of People’s Republic on the Protection of Rights and Interests of Women underscores the equal right to all. In 1992, the State issued Article 49 of the Law: Discrimination against, maltreating, abandoning and physically abusing women are prohibited.

And the official scale, gender inequality in China is relatively low. In 2014, China ranked 40th out of 187 countries in the United Nations Gender Inequality Index. China’s maternal mortality rate is 21 per 100,000 live births, compared to the US (2016). As of 2014, 59% of women (aged 25 and older) have completed secondary education or more, compared to 72% for men, and women’s labour force participation rate was 63.9% (78.3% for men). Women hold 24.9% of seats in the National People’s Congress (compared to 27% in Canada’s Parliament).

The fruits of the Communist Party’s long-standing commitment to gender equality— and the ambition of contemporary Chinese women— are apparent in other data as well. Despite being outnumbered in society as a whole, women are now more numerous than men in universities. And between 2000 and 2013, female middle-ranking and senior technical staff climbed from 35 to 44 per cent of the total, according to Vivian Yang (or infamous) one-child policy, in short, “invited” to be perfect. Women of all urban strata are, they want to be... and objects of sexual desire and pieces of human décor in other spheres of existence.

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Philippines banana plantation worker killed

The killing of a banana plantation worker in the Philippines has been seen as the latest in a series of violent acts against workers in the region. The victim, a worker named Bautista, was shot dead at a plantation owned by Sumifru Philippines, a company involved in the country's banana industry.

Bautista, a member of the Kilusang Mayo Uno, the largest trade union in the Philippines, was employed as a harvester at the plantation. According to the union, Bautista was killed while working in the fields, and his death follows a string of violent incidents targeting workers in the industry.

The union has called for the immediate investigation of the killing and the holding of the company accountable for the death of their member. They also called for the government to take action to protect workers' rights and end such violence.

The killing of Bautista highlights the ongoing struggle for workers' rights and safety in the banana plantation sector. The union has called for a stronger commitment from the government to address these issues and protect workers from violence.
Google workers walk out against sexual harassment

TeleSUR - Hundreds of Google workers in Asia and Europe staged brief midday walkouts on November 1, with thousands more expected to follow at offices worldwide to protest the company’s lenient treatment of executives accused of sexual misconduct.

Demonstrations at the company’s offices around the world began at 11:10 a.m. local time in Tokyo, followed by Singapore, Zurich, London, and Dublin.

The Google protest, “Walkout For Real Change”, started unfolding a week after the New York Times published a story on Oct. 25 detailing allegations of sexual harassment against Andy Rubin, the creator of Google’s Android software. Instead of firing Rubin, Google paid him a hefty US$90 million severance package in 2014 even though the company concluded that the sexual misconduct allegations against him were credible.

Rubin denied the allegations in a New York Times story, which he also said contained “wild exaggerations” about his compensation. Google, however, did not dispute the report.

The story disclosed allegations of sexual misconduct by other executives, including Richard DeVaul, a director at the same Google-affiliated lab that created projects such as self-driving cars. DeVaul remained at the “X” lab even after allegations of sexual harassment but resigned on October 30 without severance.

Google CEO Sundar Pichai has apologized for the company’s “past actions” in an email sent to employees. “I understand the anger and disappointment that many of you feel,” Pichai wrote. “I feel it as well, and I am fully committed to making progress on an issue that has persisted for far too long in our society. And, yes, here at Google.”

On Oct. 25, Pichai and Google’s executive in charge of personnel issues, Eileen Naughton, wrote that Google had fired 48 employees including 13 senior managers for sexual harassment in recent years without paying them any exit.

In response, on the Twitter page “Google Walkout For Real Change, employees are demanding five changes in the company’s policy [see box for their demands]. The Google workers called on Google parent Alphabet, Inc. to add an employee representative to its board of directors and internally share pay-equity data. They also asked for changes to Google’s human resources practices to make harassment claims a fairer process.

The walkout organizers urged employees to leave a flyer at their desk which reads: “I’m not at my desk because I’m walking out in solidarity with other Googlers to protest sexual harassment, misconduct, lack of transparency, and a workplace culture that’s not working for everyone.”

Google Chief Executive Sundar Pichai in a statement that “employees have raised constructive ideas” and that the company was “taking in all their feedback so we can turn these ideas into action.”

The walkout was gaining huge support from people around the world.

Mike Clancy, the general secretary of Prospect, the U.K. union for technology workers, said: “The events at Google highlight the frustration many of our members feel about the lack of voice in how many tech companies are run. We need a zero tolerance for harassment and greater transparency over terms and conditions for staff.”

Jackie Speier, a Silicon Valley congresswoman, tweeted her support of the walkout using the #MeToo hashtag, which has become a battle cry for women fighting sexual misconduct and harassment.

By Steve Sweeney

Far-right Brazilian presidential candidate Jair Bolsonaro has threatened a purge of the left in a chilling address to supporters, raising fears of an authoritarian dictatorship.

The former army captain, who has praised the brutal military junta that ruled Brazil for more than 20 years, promised a “clean-up operation” for more than 20 years, promising a “clean-up operation” the country.

He told an audience last year: “Either the institutions solve the political problem through the courts, removing those elements involved in illegal acts from public life, or we will have to impose the solution,” adding: “We have very well-made plans.”

The 1964 US-backed military coup was carried out under the pretext of clamping down on communism, and the dictatorship that followed shut down democracy for 21 years, with presidential elections scrapped and congress barely functioning.

Violence has dominated Bolsonaro’s election campaign, with a surge in attacks on political opponents, including the murder of a prominent Workers Party activist. He is accused of colluding with big business to run an illegal smear operation against Haddad, with Brazil’s electoral commission considering action after more than 160,000 people signed a petition demanding Bolsonaro’s disqualification from the election.

The right-winger promised to “build a new nation,” claiming to be the “voice of freedom” and telling supporters: “We do not want socialism.”

Bolsonaro threatens to ban “red outlaws”

PT presidential rival, Fernando Haddad, could suffer the same fate.

His tirade raised fears of a return to political dungeons and oppression of the left. The Brazilian congress has consistently expressed his support for torture and previously told congress he was “in favour of a dictatorship”.

Bolsonaro’s vice-president running mate, former army general Antonio Mourao, suggested the military had considered overthrowing the Brazilian government.

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Tens of thousands of people took to the streets of Sao Paulo in Brazil’s first major demonstration since far-right Jair Bolsonaro’s presidential election victory. The protest was organised by the Landless Workers Movement (MST), the Urban Homeless Workers Movement, trade unions and student groups.

The Front promised to step up to the resistance of the fascists in Brazil and to the election of the former army captain, who has promised the biggest purge of the left in Brazilian history.

Opposition to Bolsonaro has been led by women, who have united under the slogan “Not Him” following his comments denigrating gender equality and invoking legal lynchings.

Student Caroline Reiss explained that she joined the protest as she cannot remain silent in the face of racism, sexism and the exploitation of workers. “He needs to know that his government will be watched very closely by the women he wants to destroy,” she said.

In his first major interview since the Oct. 28 election, Bolsonaro branded the MST and Homeless Workers Movement “terrorists” and ruled out talks with the social movement organisations. His comments came days after an MST camp was burnt to the ground by supporters of the president-elect, who has threatened tough action against the group in the state of Mato Grosso do Sul.

MST leader Marisa Ricardo has explained that Mato Grosso do Sul is “conservative, reactionary, a state of agribusiness, where the landowners are involved in a very large offensive.”

He warned that Bolsonaro’s victory would “be the entire country.”

Homeless Workers Movement spokesperson Guilherme Boulos, who was the presidential candidate of the Socialist and Liberty Party, said he joined the protest to defend democracy.

“We do recognize the result of the elections,” he said. “Bolsonaro has now been elected president. But not Brazil’s emperor, not the owner of Brazil. He doesn’t own us. A president has to respect democratic freedoms. A president has to respect freedom of protest, freedom of expression. He has to respect opposition and not say that they go either to jail or into exile. He must listen to the people.”

Bolsonaro made his first public appearance since his victory at an evangelical church in Rio de Janeiro and then travelled alongside anti-gay televangelist Silas Malafaia. He told those workers feel about their lack of solidarity with other Googlers to protest sexual harassment, misconduct, lack of transparency, and a workplace culture that’s not working for everyone. His back looks at my desk later.

The new president of Brazil will face strong opposition as he pushes his far-right agenda.

SHOWDOWN! chronicles the struggles of the trade union movement across North America, from the late 1800’s to the 1940’s: a decade where millions of workers took part in strikes across the continent.

In Windsor Ontario in 1945, 10,000 UAW workers walked off the job. In Hamilton in 1946, 12,000 workers went on strike from Westinghouse, Stelco and Firestone.

The book is wonderfully written and illustrated by Rob Kristofferson and Simon Orpana, with additional art by Matt McInnes. It also includes a forward by Paul Buhle. The imagery sends you back in time and invokes the struggles of working people and the conflicts in their community.

In the 1930’s labour unrest was rife, large meetings were pitched in and provided financial aid. The book covers events in Canadian labour history. The book covers acts of mass solidarity: railway workers refusing to run trains to strike-bound plants, war veterans marching with strikers, OPP and RCMP forces sitting idle, refusing to break up picket lines. The Stelco picket line featured nightly morale-boosting events; Woody Guthrie and Pete Seeger both performed. The book recalls many pivotal events in Canadian labour history.

In 1944 when the Mackenzie King government passed the order that legally certified unions in workplaces, he said: “Industrialists aren’t going to like this, but we cannot afford labour unrest with the war going on.”

In 1946 the Rand Formula was established. This created financial security for unions: “It determined that employees should not be required to join a union if one was formed in their workplace, but should be required to pay union dues, since they benefited from the gains the union had won.”

More recent events are also covered in the book. In 2015 punk band D.O.A. performed for striking steel workers for free, at the very spot where Pete Seeger played for strikers in 1946.

SHOWDOWN! is an inspiring book that shows what determination and solidarity can bring, and how successfully our history can be told through a well-crafted graphic novel.

From Venezuelanalysis.com, Nov. 1, 2018 - Two campesino leaders and members of the Communist Party of Venezuela (PCV) were assassinated on Oct. 31 in Nueva Bolivia, Merida State.

A press release from PCV Secretary-General Oscar Figuera revealed that central committee member Luis Fajardo had been assassinated along with his brother-in-law, Javier Aldana. According to reports, the two men were making their way home on a motorbike, when they were killed by a burst of gunfire from a moving car.

Figuera added that the PCV held landowners, as well as corrupt personnel of the National Guardsmen and politicians, responsible for the crime, while demanding that the state carry out a thorough investigation of the case.

The local branch of the PCV in Merida put out a press statement, recalling that Fajardo and Aldana’s activities in defence of campesino rights had made them a target for landowners and that Fajardo’s numerous public denunciations of the threats made against his life and his family had been ignored by authorities.

The PCV called on President Maduro and Attorney General Tarek William Saab to ensure that justice is served in this case.

The incident comes just weeks after a similar assassination attempt targeting Barinas-based PCV campesino leader Robinson Garcia, who came under fire from several motorcyclists on October 9, but managed to escape with his life.

Nueva Bolivia is located in the so-called Sur del Lago region, south of Venezuela’s lake Maracaibo, which extends along the states of Merida and Zulia. Fajardo was spearheading the claims of some 250 campesino families to the Cano Rico ranch, which was being occupied and utilized by the campesinos whilst they awaited legal adjudication of the lands.

The lake region has seen some of the most intense land struggles by small farmers, to which large landholders have responded with deadly force, often taking the form of paramilitary violence. This past July’s Admirable Campesino March, which covered more than 400 km on foot to demand a meeting with President Maduro, presented several grievances from Sur del Lago. In one of the latest examples of violence against campesinos, teenager Kender Garcia was murdered on September 19.

The Venezuelan communists have repeatedly drawn attention to the violence taking place in the countryside and what they deem a complicit lack of response from authorities.

Earlier in October, Figuera had called for an urgent meeting with President Maduro in the context of the electoral agreement between the ruling United Socialist Party and the PCV, signed before the May 20 presidential elections. The communist leader accused the government of not fulfilling any of the agreed-upon points, among them, addressing the campesino demands and putting an end to violent evictions and targeted killings in the Venezuelan countryside.
Saskatchewan political storm brewing...
continued from page 6

First Nations peoples in the name of racism and misogyny, like poisonous venom, are spewing vitriol at our children in foster care and murdered and missing Indigenous women and girls – are all getting worse, not better.

Our premier has himself deeply detached from the problem. His focus seems to be on maximizing extraction of resources from First Nation lands; ignoring Aboriginal, treaty and lands rights; and clearing the legal playing field for more violence.

In his recent throne speech, Premier Scott Moe announced that he will pass “trespass” legislation to allow more policing in “rural” areas. His focus is on the property rights of rural farmers without any mention for the safety of rural First Nation communities.

We all know what this means. More laws to protect farmers who may hurt or kill others. Simultaneously, he is quietly signing papers to open up his province to the possibility of a new era of economic crisis, with a more intensive and synchronized race to the bottom. One day, we will face the offensive of the imperialist powers that are competing to continue the race to the bottom over the peoples’ and nations’ resources. In this offensive, the corporations will use our laws and will act with ferocity. On the other hand, there are many indications of our common struggles and struggles of the peoples, organisations, movements, countries and peoples for peace and social progress. The WPC will strive for the broadest possible resistance and active action which would embrace all these struggles for common objectives. At the same time, specific efforts should be made to uncover the root causes of wars and their consequences such as poverty, misery and inequality. The WPC will continue to promote and strengthen the progressive and anti-imperialist forces and their actions.

In the situation of the Middle East, there is no easy solution for all of us. The core obstacle to peace in the Middle East continues to be the intransigence and strongly denounce and condemn the murderous actions of the Israeli army and their collaborators. The WPC, in Gaza and in the occupied West Bank, which, in the past few months, have been subjected to continuous attacks of Israeli soldiers, victims, most of whom were brutally killed or injured during peaceful protests against Israel’s actions and policies.

The WPC strongly opposes and condemns Israel’s irresponsible and illegal decision to move its embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, a city with a clearly defined multi-ethnic and multi-religious character and status as enshrined in UN resolution 381. The efforts for judaization of Jerusalem and the annexation of Israeli Settlements and 12 percent of the land of the State of the Jewish People – as adopted by the Israeli Parliament constitute a flagrant violation of the UN resolution 181.

The WPC reiterates its solidarity with the Palestinian people for their inalienable right to an independent State within the borders of pre-67, with Jerusalem as its capital.

We demand an end to the occupation of Palestinian territory by the Lebanese and Israeli forces in the Beqaa Valley and in Jerusalem, as well as of the Syrian Golan Heights and the Lebanese Shebaa farms. We further demand the release of all Palestinian prisoners from Israeli jails and the right of return of the Refugees to their homes according to UN resolution 194.

The WPC reiterates its solidarity with Palestine as a full Member of the UN and its respective recognition by states. We salute the struggle of our friends from the peace-loving forces inside Israel who face the reactionary regime and its policies while struggling side by side with the Palestinian people for an independent State and for social, political and people’s rights in Israel.

The WPC expresses our solidarity with and deep concern for the suffering people of Yemen, who are under heavy attack from the Saudi-led coalition with the full support of the USA, a criminal war of aggression which we strongly condemn. The WPC denounces the military presence of US troops in Yemen and demands their complete withdrawal, as well as the withdrawal of the Saudi and United Arab Emirates’ troops and armies from Libya, a country and people which have been suffering for more than seven years under a cruel and violent aggression and the actions of armed gangs and warlords who have torn the country into pieces. We denounce the growing religious fundamentalism and terrorist trends in Jordan and Iraq.

We express our serious concern about the escalation of threats by US forces against Iran and Israel against Iran, along with the deterioration of the situation between Iran and Saudi Arabia. We condemn the unilateral withdrawal of the US administration from the JCPOA (“Iran Nuclear Deal”) as a dangerous move that escalates tensions, and lays the basis for possible aggression against Iran. We reaffirm our solidarity with the people of Iran and their peace-loving forces against any foreign interference and in support of their struggle for social, political and people’s rights in all spheres. 

The Canadian Peace Congress will convene its 2018 Convention on November 24-25 in Toronto, and invites “all those concerned, war, peace, and the fate of our planet to join us!”

The announcement notes that “While aggression and war are nothing new, the pace of international relations, increasing tensions, and the intentions of the Trump Administration to launch a whole new round of the arms race are alarming developments indeed... Imperialistic wars of aggression on Syria and Yemen continue to rage. Despite international condemnation, Israel is tightening its siege of Gaza and its advancing its annexationist plans for the whole of the Occupied Palestinian Territories. ‘Regime change operations’ against Venezuela, Nicaragua and other progressive governments are intensifying. The hopeful signs of a peaceful resolution to the conflict in the Korea Peninsula are being threatened by ultra-right hawkish in Washington and the forces of the military-industrial complex. At the international level, the active cultivation of Russo-Phobia and Chinese-Phobia, a chilling ‘cold war’ atmosphere which the world has not experienced for decades. Add to this the U.S. decision to cancel the Iran nuclear deal (JCPOA), the INF Treaty, and its threat to reverse the new round of nuclear arms race.

Meanwhile, the Trudeau Government in Ottawa “has become one of the most bellicose voices promoting the drive to militarism, aggression and war.”

The convention will bring together delegates from across Canada, including from several recently-formed local chapters. For more information, email info@canadianpeacecongress.ca. 

We live in times of dramatic changes, moving from a unipolar to a multipolar geopolitical world, where important new players offer new options that promise a more balanced and peaceful world.

If we notice this, I am sure that the United States is also paying attention. The U.S. knows that it is losing its hegemony to other powers like China and Russia. Many other countries are taking notice. Venezuela is certainly one of them.

The U.S. is reacting by increasing its warmongering threats through NATO, by demonizing and sanctioning nations that challenge its domination, and by supporting questionable “partners” for regime change.

We are seeing the struggling gaps of a dying empire, a death gasp of a dying empire, a death that is imminent when measured in historical time. But unfortunately, the U.S. will not die in peace.

This image might help us understand what is happening today.

**Warfare tools**

There was a time – say, last century – when we called conflictive relationships among nations by their direct descriptive name. Countries declared or announced war, and sent soldiers to kill each other. They had, and still do have, “rules of engagement” that this was not an engagement to be married. It was truly an “engagement to be destroyed”.

Then we had invasions where one nation would attack another to kill their people - a kind of war that was not announced. We even had the so-called Cold War that was nothing else than a permanent threat of war. Today we have quite a wide range of “conflictive relationships” among countries. It’s interesting to see the corresponding proliferation of terminology used in describing those conflicts.

* Undeclared wars. Here we have to be careful how we use the term “war”. For example, there is no war in Syria. There is a war on Syria. Sanctions is important here.

* New Cold War. I don’t know what’s new about it. It’s still a permanent threat of war.

* Infowar. The production of false news with media participation in order to undermine the legitimacy and credibility of a government.

* Economic war, caused through sanctions. I’ll come back to that.

* Incitement to commit political crimes. For example, the attempt to kill President Nicolas Maduro and other high officials last August 4.

* Incitiation to mutiny.

Wikipedia gives the following definition of lawfare: “a form of warfare, and all have used the term for the first time in 2001. He defined “lawfare” as the “use of law as a weapon of war”, which he described as “the newest feature of 21st century combat.”

Another similar definition calls lawfare “the abuse of Western laws and judicial systems to achieve strategic military or political ends.” A law expert said, “lawfare is about more than just delegitimizing a state’s right to define itself; is about the abuse of the law and our judicial systems to undermine the very principles they stand for: the rule of law, the sanctity of innocent human life, and the right to free speech.”

All these definitions point to a blatant contradiction. Lawfare is not for the pursuit of justice; it is not the application of the law, but the opposite. It is the breaking down of the legal and constitutional order of another state for political gain. The U.S. laws that have come out after 9/11 constitute the new tools to express any resistance in the name of national security, not only in the U.S., but also in other countries.

But other countries are also misusing their own laws in a cruel copycat fashion to repress internal resistance. Think of the cases against Cristina Kirchner, Dilma Rousseff, Luiz Inacio Lula, Rafael Correa, and others.

Legal Trojan horses

In international agreements or charts, legislation often introduces “exceptions”, which invalidate precisely the main thrust of the agreement or chart. This is what I call a “legal Trojan horse” that facilitates the lawfare. I want to give an example closer to home in Latin America, in relation to the OAS.

Last February the illegitimate Lima Group, with no OAS authority, used Article 19 in Chapter 4 of the 2001 Inter-American Democratic Charter to prevent a panel of representatives appointed by the OAS from participating at the OAS Summit in Peru. They quoted the following bit from the article: “...any unconstitutional alteration or interruption of the democratic constitutional order of a state of the Hemisphere constitutes an insurmountable obstacle to the participation of that state’s government in the Summit of the Americas process.”

But that quote conveniently omitted the very relevant beginning of Article 19, which says: "Based on the principles of the Charter of the OAS and subject to its norms..." Therefore the 2001 Inter-American Democratic Charter does not supersede, does not invalidate or cancel out the 1948 OAS Charter. It recognizes it explicitly.

If we read the principles of the 1948 OAS Charter, the relevant Article 19 of Chapter 4 (not to be confused with the first few lines of the same article numbers in the two different documents) says: “No State or group of States has the right to intervene, directly or indirectly, for any reason whatever, in the internal or external affairs of any other State. The foregoing principle prohibits all forms of interference or attempted pressure against any State in any way which would be inconsistent with the purposes and principles of the Organization, or against its political, economic, and cultural elements.”

In my view the 2001 Inter-American Democratic Charter is the Trojan horse, intentionally planted to weaken the OAS Charter of 1948.

I do not believe that the team of international lawyers in 2001 would have made such a gross and incorrect error in the most relevant article of the OAS Charter that prevents precisely what is at the essence of all U.S. actions: Intervention!

To what to do?

I know what not to do. I don’t think we should all become international lawyers or experts to fight back the incongruous use of the law. But we must be sufficiently aware to have a working knowledge of the implications of those interventions in Latin America under the pretense of legality.

Once we understand that interventions in internal affairs of another country are illegal - by tribunal decision or by people’s majority decision - we can use those arguments in our solidarity work wherever and whenever necessary.

We only have a decaying U.S. empire to take on. We can do it if we stick together. (This is an edited version of a panel presentation at the 2018 conference via Skype by the author to an event in Toronto on October 13, 2018.)