Max Bernier’s new “ANTI-PEOPLE PARTY”  
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High school walkout lifts Ontario fightback:  page 5

York U crackdown
Violating the principle of free speech on campus, York University administration is targeting student and union activists who spoke out during the strike by CUPE 3903 members.  
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Vote “YES” on P.R.
Mail-in ballots will go out soon to British Columbia voters in the upcoming referendum on electoral reform. B.C. Communists will be campaigning for a majority “YES” vote  
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A nazi is a nazi...
Fascist movements are making advances in a number of European countries, but it doesn’t help clarify matters to call them “demagogues” or “right-wing populists”.  
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End the Blockade!
The annual vote in the United Nations General Assembly calling on the U.S. to end its blockade against Cuba takes place this month. Last year the vote was 191 in favour, and only 2 opposed.  
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Bernier forms hard-right “Anti-People’s” Party

By Liz Rowley

Maxime Bernier, the defeated Tory leadership candidate, and a former Foreign Affairs Minister under Stephen Harper who left his top secret files with a girlfriend who consulted with the Hells Angels, has left the federal Tories to form the “People’s Party of Canada”.

Already christened the “Anti-people’s” party by progressives, Bernier’s policies are consistent with the hard-right policies advocated by most of the candidates in last year’s Tory leadership race. These include sharp attacks on Muslims, immigrants and diversity coupled with demands for deep cuts to immigration and foreign aid, and testing for “Canadian values”.

Bernier also wants to cut the corporate tax rate from 15% to 10%, eliminate the capital gains tax which mainly benefits the wealthy, while slashing income taxes on the wealthiest. He wants balanced budgets – on the backs of the wealthy, while slashing income transfers and welfare payments that are intended to address uneven development across Canada and guarantee basic needs for working people.

With this in mind, Bernier advocated for the people of Toronto, and airports, and Capital Pod, for starters. He also wants to get rid of the provincial government that has protected workers’ wages and working conditions to some degree against the power and greed of the biggest national and transnational corporations.

Bernier opposes action on climate change and the Liberal carbon tax in the first place, no mind that it has done nothing more than put a price on carbon emissions.

He has a special place in his heart for gun owners who he says has been too long ignored, and should be reimbursed for property loss from previous government “gun grabs”. Bernier’s government will “respect the rights of firearms owners” - but not women’s right to choose. Bernier proposes a free vote on abortion rights in Parliament.

One of the first to praise the new party is the leader of the Libertarians who wants a merger of the two to kill off the Greens. But his interests lie elsewhere for the present, as he works to shear off the “four MPs, four cabins and two horses” he supports his fledgling party and re-form the political right in Canada on a more populist and right-wing base.

True to form, Bernier has launched his new party with a sledge attack on his former colleagues, calling the Conservative Party “maliciously corrupt”. Possibly the only thing Bernier has said that has a ring of truth to it, the criticism was not about the past but about the future. Bernier’s criticism is that the Tory caucus is unwilling to adopt the stance and policies of far-right parties like the Republicans to the south, or even more right-wing parties in Europe.

Bernier’s new political party is evidently willing and anxious to provide just such an alternative in Canada. Whether it will wither away or - like the Reform Party or Wild Rose in Alberta - re-invent the Conservative Party in an even more reactionary direction, remains to be seen.

But what is concerning for progressives is this public call to action by one of the most right-wing politicians in the country. Coupled with the election of the Ford government in Ontario, the possibility of a victory for the right-wing CAQ in Québec’s October 1 election, and the likely win for Jason Kenney’s Tories in Alberta next spring, the outlook for the federal election next fall is anything but “sunny”.

Working people across Canada are struggling with widespread unemployment and precarious work, stagnant wages and declining purchasing power, unable to afford either post-secondary education or housing, carrying massive debts while facing further belt tightening. Anger is growing at a political system and Parliament that are unable or unwilling to address these massive problems. These are the people who are most vulnerable to the siren call of the Doug Fords, the Donald Trumps and the Francois Leguats, who declare themselves against “the elites” and “for the people”, but who neglect to mention that it’s the rich and the corporations they actually represent.

Exposing these reactionary mechanisms such as ISDS as defined in Chapter 11. These undemocratic courts take precedence over national judicial systems and Canada’s legal blueprint for deregulation, privatization and the elimination of public services.

Since the adoption of NAFTA 25 years ago, Canada has stepped back from the NAFTA renegotiations and take the time to put together a clear plan for building a just and fair trade arrangement that benefits all Canadians and is compatible with the Human Rights covenants as set out by the United Nations.

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Exposing these reactionary political forces for what they really represent is what’s required today. The other half is to mount a real fight for policies that will meet people’s needs for jobs and wages and living standards; for peace; and for a progressive vision of a country that will fight to deliver those policies.

That’s the job for the next 12 months leading up to the federal election. What we get on election day depends on what the labour and democratic movements do in the months before October 2019. We must maintain that the corporations and reaction will use every minute of this time to consolidate and strengthen their positions and their favoured parties in the months ahead.

The CLC must take up the challenge, working with its social and political allies, to make the case for solidarity and for a movement that puts people’s needs before corporate greed, for peace, for environmental action, and for a government of and for the people.

That’s the best answer to Bernier, and to the Tory Party who have no intention of representing the most powerful and reactionary forces in Canada today.

(Liz Rowley is the leader of the Communist Party of Canada.)
Ford’s attack on local democracy shows need for constitutional reform

Central Executive Committee, Communist Party of Canada
Sept. 20, 2018

The legal and political battle around Bill 5, the Better Local Government Act, once again prove that Ford’s党政 and Tories intends to undermine local democracy, in order to strengthen the power of the corporations in municipal decision making.

It is clear that the working people is not consulted or even informed about the contents of the bill, as it seeks to weaken local democracy, in order to strengthen the power of the corporations in municipal decision making.

The notwithstanding clause is itself a reflection of serious undemocratic faults in the Constitution. It is a clause added in the final night of negotiations in 1982 which removed Quebec’s power to veto decisions made in English-speaking Canada that would negatively affect the people of Quebec. The notwithstanding clause was also a ploy to block opposition and impose this decision on the government and the people of Quebec. The decision further reduces Quebec’s status in Canada to being one of ten provinces, and denies its de jure right to self-determination within Canada with the right to self-determination up to and including secession. The Constitution likewise does not reflect a nation-to-nation relationship between the government and Indigenous nations in Canada, nor reflect the rights of Indigenous nations and peoples to self-determination. Vestiges of Canada’s colonial past, including administrative and compulsory assimilation, run through the Constitution. Combined with 500 years of physical and cultural genocide, and forced integration and theft of Indigenous land and resources, the only basis for reconciliation is through recognition of Indigenous status as nations with the right to self-determination.

These massive flaws cannot be corrected with small amendments. The current Constitution, drafted by a Constituent Assembly reflecting the nations in Canada and with a strong voice for workers, labour, women, youth, and racialized people. Such a process is needed to draft a new constitution that truly reflects the rights and interests of the people of Canada, the states and provinces, and the transnational corporations. The fight for democracy and social justice is always likely to get much bigger before victory can be declared. The Communist Party will continue to give its full support to and to just this and vital struggle.

UBCIC urges immediate cancellation of Trans Mountain

(Coast Salish Territory/Vancouver, B.C. – September 17, 2018) The Union of BC Indian Chiefs (UBCIC) is calling on Prime Minister Trudeau to accept the judicial verdict, doubling down on the integrity of the consultation process, making notes of Indigenous peoples’ concerns. The legal and political battle around the Trans Mountain pipeline and tanker project’s go-ahead in the Federal Court of Appeal, and to cancel the disastrous Canada-Federal government’s plans.

“Trudeau’s own ministerial panel in 2016 predicted the Federal Court of Appeal verdict, noting the same serious deficiencies with the approval process as we are seeing now, for the Trans Mountain pipeline and tanker project as the court did,” said UBCIC President and Chief Stewart Phillip. “This project should never have been approved—it’s an unreasonable consultation process” that fell “well short of the mark set by the Supreme Court of Canada in Canada versus British Columbia.

“The unanimous Federal Court of Appeal verdict was clear: Canada did not consult Indigenous concerns and then shielding them and proceeding as normal.”

“Do not work to build the Trans Mountain pipeline and project,” said UBCIC Vice-President Bob George (Musqueam). “Acknowledging that the Canadian government erred when it failed to develop the project in good faith to fix those errors, they continue with statements that the TMX project can be built makes a mockery of revisiting Consultation with First Nations and disregards the commitment to implement the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.”

“For the leader of this country to continue to insist that the Trans Mountain pipeline and tanker project should be built despite this court ruling is a slap in the face to the relationship between Indigenous Peoples and the government of Canada, and is contradicted by the reconciliation falling short of recommendations in the RoyalCommission on Aboriginal Peoples and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s 94 Calls to Action” said Chief Judy Wilson, Secretary-Treasurer of the UBCIC.

Opposition to the pipeline and tanker project includes the Teams Alliance Against Tar Sands, Expansion, representing more than 150 nations across America, more than 350,000 petition signers, the cities of Montreal and Vancouver, which serve a population base that is bigger than most provincial governments.

Conservative BC politicians are often the strongest advocates of other measures to strengthen democracy and reconciliation, and the transnational corporations. The fight for democracy and social justice is always likely to get much bigger before victory can be declared. The Communist Party will continue to give its full support to and to just this and vital struggle.

BC Communists campaign for “YES” vote on PR.

The Communist Party of British Columbia (CPBC) is calling on the people of British Columbia to vote “YES” in the 2018 PR referendum, in order to advance a democratic process that is fair and inclusive.

PV Vancouver Bureau

"Proportional representation makes your vote count." That’s the message from the Communist Party of British Columbia, urging the people of this fall’s mail-in referendum on electoral reform in British Columbia. The CPBC is calling on British Columbians to vote “YES” in the 2018 referendum for electoral reform in British Columbia.

The CPBC says that this election is an historic opportunity for the people of BC to vote for a system that will be fair, democratic, and reflective of the wishes of all BC voters.

The CPBC notes that the “YES” option, which supports proportional representation, would mean that a stronger government would be formed by those parties that receive the most votes, and that voters would have a greater say in the final government.

The CPBC also points out that proportional representation is supported by a majority of people in BC, with most BCers believing that it is important to have a more representative system.

The CPBC is calling on all BC voters to vote “YES” in the 2018 PR referendum, in order to advance a democratic process that is fair and inclusive.

The CPBC campaign for “YES” will take place on post-secondary campuses, at labour meetings and events, at the BC Horse Racing Association, at the BC Labour Day parade, at the BC Day Parade, and at public events which attract large numbers of people.

The CPBC is also encouraging its members to take part in local activities of Fair Vote BC Canada, see: www.fairvote.ca, which is carrying out a strong campaign across the province. Fair Vote BC members are often the strongest advocates of other measures to strengthen democracy and reconciliation, and the transnational corporations. The fight for democracy and social justice is always likely to get much bigger before victory can be declared. The Communist Party will continue to give its full support to and to just this and vital struggle.

For more info, or to arrange meetings with the Communist Party of BC about the PR referendum, call 604-254-9836.
Take a principled stand on Iran

Recent events, including the deadly Saudi-backed terrorist attack on Sept. 22 against an Iranian military parade, emphasize the need for progressiveness in Canada to project a clear and principled stand on developments in Iran. People’s Voice urges popular and democratic movements in Canada to maintain solidarity with the struggles inside Iran for freedom, national dignity and economic change, but without giving an inch to campaigns calling for outside military intervention and “regime change”.

The only guarantee of social change in Iran must be the heroic people of that country themselves, striving under extremely difficult conditions to improve their working and living standards, despite the repression used by theocratic leaders. We stand in solidarity with their struggles, which People’s Voice covers frequently. At the same time, remember that U.S. imperialism, the powerful backer of reactionary Islamic forces, has demonized the Islamic Republic of Iran for decades, making it difficult for many activists in Canada and the west to understand that the situation in that country is far more complex than the endless hell of fascist torture portrayed by the corporate media.

Genuine allies of the working class and people’s movements in Iran need to speak out strongly against war-mongering. One such case occurs regularly in Vancouver and Surrey, where public forums about the dangerous threat of war against Iran were interrupted by people who tried (but failed) to close down the meetings, allegedly to show solidarity with the Iranian people.

Those who echo the anti-Iran propaganda coming from the White House should understand that whipping up hatred against Iran simply plays into the hands of the regime in Tehran. Have they not grasped that U.S. plans to make Iran the next Iraq or Libya would only spell catastrophe for the Iranian people — not “liberation”?

Ontario court rulings make it difficult for rape victims to get justice

By Saleh Waziruddin

Two back-to-back Ontario court decisions have acquitted rapists and made it even more difficult for survivors to get justice. The Ontario Superior Court has overturned a provincial law that prevented accused rapists from claiming intoxication as a defense, under the argument that it violates Charter rights as declared by the Supreme Court of Canada in 1994.

This follows weeks after an Ontario court acquitted four young Niagara men of raping a young woman who was drunk, because the judge held the prosecution had to meet a very high bar to show her incapacity for consent.

These cases come only one year after a Nova Scotia judge acquitted a man of raping a woman who was so drunk she was found unconscious, on the grounds that it was unknown when she passed out, prompting Dalhousie University law professor Elaine Craig to declare that it’s “open season on incapacitated women”.

Earlier this year, Prof. Craig launched a novel legal issue, “Putting Trials on Trial: Sexual Assault and the Failure of the Legal Profession.” The chance that a sexual assault in Canada will result in legal punishment is less than one percent, which leads to justified distrust and fear by assault survivors of a justice system which so often victimizes them.

A 1994 Supreme Court of Canada case, R. v. Daviault, ruled that holding a rapist responsible if they are drunk would violate their Charter right to a defense. Ontario passed a law shortly afterwards abolishing self-intoxication as a defense against assault accusations.

This law was challenged in R. v. McCaw, where Ontario Superior Court Justice Nancy Spies overturned it, calling it a violation of Charter rights. Activists in Ontario have started mobilizing against this ruling, including launching a change.org petition “Intoxication is not a valid defence for sexual assault” signed by over 25,000 people in just a few weeks.

English common law under the Leary rule holds that if someone is drunk they are still responsible for their actions, because they chose to become drunk, as people are accountable to drink responsibly. Driving while drunk is still a crime, but raping someone while drunk may no longer be a crime in Ontario.

This is especially perverse given that a young woman who survived a gang rape in Niagara was held to a different standard. Although she was very drunk when raped by those who were supposed to be giving her a ride, “designated driver” ride from a party, the judge ruled the prosecution had not met the high bar to show she could not give consent, as that requires a “low level of cognition”, despite agreeing the Crown’s case was more compelling than the defense’s (R. v. N.B.).

It is difficult to see how such a high bar could be met. Even more perverse were the defense’s arguments, including the survivor was driven by “alcohol, estrogen, and adrenaline,” as if estrogen can be partly responsible for rape. Even the judge recognized the defense was ignoring the survivor’s trauma.

In the same case, the judge said there was no proof of incapacity for consent? The previous year a Nova Scotia man was convicted of raping his taxi passenger, who was so drunk that she was found unconscious. Judge Gregory Lenehan ruled that she could still appear to give consent even though actually unable to. The judge even commented that he would not want his daughter or any other woman to be driven by the accused, while at the same time acquitting him.

Nova Scotians were so outraged they marched against the judge, launched a petition signed by over 37,000 people, and filed 121 misconduct complaints, prompting the judge to change his phone number. The judge was cleared earlier this year on the grounds that his decision was accurate within the law, and the review committee cited a previous ruling that they needed to be “watchdogs against mob justice”, without mentioning who would be watchdogs for rape survivors.

The legal system and laws, both the rulings as well as the high barrier to prove incapacity to give consent, are part of rape culture which give impunity to rapists and punishes survivors with gross injustice.

No one has challenged drunkenness as a defense for driving under the influence of alcohol, but not only has rape been challenged as something men should be held accountable for when they are drunk, judges have agreed with the challenge and granted near impunity to terrorizing women.
By Dave McKee

On September 21, more than 40,000 high school students, in nearly 100 communities across Ontario, staged a mass, province-wide walkout to protest the education policies of Doug Ford’s Conservative government.

The walkout was initiated by two student groups, March for Our Education and Decolonize Canadian Schools, in response to the provincial government’s decision to replace the updated sex-ed curriculum with one from the early 1990s. It is also coinciding with the incorporation of Indigenous knowledge, teaching and history into the curriculum.

“We the students need to show our government that we do not consent to this action,” reads the call to the action. “The impacts of these changes have been repeated by hundreds of experts: they will not keep our students, our women, our families or our Indigenous population safe. It’s time for us all to stand up and fight for our right to education. Which is why on September 21st, 2018, students across Ontario are invited to participate in a walkout.”

Both groups are grassroots networks—neither organization is maintained by funding or staffing or has an established provincial structure. In fact, key organizers Madison Indigo Arscott (DCS) and Rayne Fisher-Quann (MOHE) never even met in person until the day of the walkout. And yet, within just three weeks, the initiative had spread to schools across the province, from Ottawa to Windsor to Thunder Bay and all points in between. Nearly one out of six high schools in Ontario participated.

In the city of Guelph alone, 1000 students left their schools and converged for a rally at city hall, one of the largest rallies in Guelph’s history. For many people, there were parallels with the development of the school strike of 1990’s, Kennedy Stewart, a provincial candidate running in Guelph, and Fraser Valley MRI in Abbotsford. The clinic was purchased by the province this year, with increased capacity for next year.”

“An accurate diagnosis is the first step to ensure patients receive the care they need to get well,” says MacHattie. “Increasing the province’s ability to provide timely public MRI scans will play an important role in driving down surgical wait times.”

One task for the province will be to ensure that the public system plays an important role in discouraging unnecessary diagnostic testing. This could be done by adopting guidelines such as the physician-endorsed “Choosing Wisely Canada” initiative. A centralized waitlist for MRIs is also part of the province’s plan to address people waiting too long for scans.

The BC Health Coalition backs purchase of private MRI clinics

By Peter Marcus, Vancouver

Candidates endorsed by the Vancouver and District Labour Council for both Vancouver and North Vancouver were in attendance for the Coalition for a New民Vancouver Mayoral Candidates Forum this past Saturday at the Fraser Health Authority purchased Surrey MRI in January 2017 mobilized, within only two months of Donald Trump’s election, seven million women and supporters who spoke up around the world to oppose his misogynist policies and statements. The Sept. 21 walkout, occurred on the large and defiant spontaneous protests in Toronto, against Ford’s decision to use the Constitution’s notwithstanding clause to impose cuts to the size of the city’s municipal government. For many people, there are parallels with the development of the school strike of 1990’s. Kennedy Stewart, a provincial candidate running in Vancouver, and Linda Buchanan from the north shore, gave short speeches.

As announced last issue, in Vancouver, Peoples’ Voice supports Kennedy Stewart, all of City council candidates, March for Our Education, students, students “lazy” or “enabled” and calling for mass suspensions.

The BC Health Coalition has welcomed the Minister of Health’s Sept. 24 announcement that the province is purchasing two private, for-profit MRI clinics in order to make use of them in the public system.

“For too long B.C. has allowed public MRI wait times to grow while allowing a market for private MRI clinics to flourish,” says Edith MacHattie, BCHC co-chair. “These two clinics will further reduce wait times for MRIs in Fraser Health Authority by providing an extra 2000 scans over the next year, with increased capacity for next year.”

Private scans are unaffordable for many British Columbians and place a financial burden on others. Fraser Health Authority purchased Surrey MRI and Fraser Valley MRI in Abbotsford. The clinic will provide the existing equipment as the best use of resources when looking at the cost of building new facilities and purchasing more MRI machines.

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One task for the province will be to ensure that the public system plays an important role in discouraging unnecessary diagnostic testing. This could be done by adopting guidelines such as the physician-endorsed “Choosing Wisely Canada” initiative. A centralized waitlist for MRIs is also part of the province’s plan to address people waiting too long for scans.

In the meantime, the Health Coalition agrees with the private MRI clinics to increase the capacity in the public system represents a direct departure from years of inadequate action on MRI wait times and a “Don’t ask, don’t tell” approach to unlawful private fees.

Private for-profit MRI clinics were recently granted a six month study on whether the province’s ability to provide timely public MRI scans will play an important role in ensuring patients receive the care they need to get well.”

Inaccurate diagnosis is the first step to ensure patients receive the care they need to get well,” says MacHattie. “Increasing the province’s ability to provide timely public MRI scans will play an important role in driving down surgical wait times.”

One task for the province will be to ensure that the public system plays an important role in
We were exhausted from a trek that was not so much long as painful. We had landed on December 2, at a place known as Las Costaradas beach. We had lost almost all our equipment, and wearing new boots had trudged endlessly through saltwater swamps. Almost the entire troop was suffering open blisters on their feet; but boots and fungal infections were not our only enemies. We reached Cuba following a seven-day voyage across the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean Sea, without food, in a poorly maintained boat, almost everyone plagued by seasickness from not being used to sea travel. We left the port of Tampa on November 25, a day with a stiff wind when all sea travel was prohibited. All this had left its mark on our troop made up of raw recruits who had never seen combat. All we had left of our equipment for war was nothing but our rifles, cartridge belts, and a few wet rounds of ammunition. Our medical supplies had vanished, and most of our backpacks had been left behind in the boat. When we had passed through one of the cane fields of the Niquero sugar mill, owned at the time by Julio Lamotte, we had managed to satisfy our hunger and thirst by eating sugarcane and bamboo roots. We had left a trail of cane peeling and bagasse. Not that the guards were looking for us, but lacking experience in the use of war was nothing but our rifles, ammunition. I remember the baptism of fire — descended on it belonged to Camilo Cienfuegos — shouting, “No one surrenders here!” followed by a swear word. [José] Ponce approached me, agitated but nothing hard. He showed me a bullet wound that appeared to have pierced his lung. He told me he was wounded and I replied, indifferently, that I was as well. Then Ponce, along with other compañeros, crawled toward the cane field. For a moment I was alone, just lying there waiting to die. Almeida approached, urging me to go on, and despite the intense pain I dragged myself into the cane field. There I saw the great compañero Raúl Stalzer, whose thumb had been blown away by a bullet, being attended by Faustino Pérez, who was bandaging his hand. The whole group was being stood on its head — low-level airplanes strafing the field, adding to the confusion — amid scenes that were at once Dantesque and grotesque, such as an overweight conspirator trying to hide behind a broken sugar stalk, or a man who kept yelling for silence in the din of gunfire, far from the scene of action. A group was organized, headed by Almeida, including Commander Ramiro Valdés, in that period a lieutenant, and compañeros [Rafael] Chao and [Reynaldo] Benítez. With Almeida leading, we crossed the last path among the rows of sugarcane and reached the safety of the woods. The first shouts of “Fire!” were heard from the cane field and columns of flame and smoke began to rise. But I can’t be sure about that. I was thinking more of the jungle than the condition of the struggle and the imminence of my death.

We walked until darkness made it impossible to go on, and decided to lie down and go to sleep huddled together in a heap. We were cold, hungry and thirsty, the mosquitoes adding to our misery. This was our baptism of fire, December 5, 1956, on the outskirts of Niquero. Such was the beginning of foraging what would become the Rebel Army.
Call a nazi a nazi: the fascist right and racism in Europe

By Kevin Ovenden, Morning Star

Demonstrations and concerts across Greece in September marked the fifth anniversary of the murder by Golden Dawn neonazis of rap artist Pavlos Fyssas. That case forms part of the base of the trial of Golden Dawn to determine it a criminal organization masterminding as a political party. The trial began in April 2015 and is now in its final stages. Verdicts are expected early next spring.

To mark the anniversary also, the radical left grouping of members of the European Parliament published a study it produces annually and the wider anti-fascist movement. It is titled “The Terrorist Activity Of Neo Nazi Organisations In Europe: the case of Golden Dawn.”

It is based on the three-and-a-half year of court proceedings and on the work of the Jail Golden Dawn small group of lawyers for the anti-fascist movement in Greece and for some of the victims of scores of neo-Nazi crimes.

It falls into two parts. A forensic examination of the critical evidence and context to assess the implications for mass democratic opposition to violent racism and the fascist threat which are so apparent in much of Europe today.

It is important to understand the nature and legal basis of the prosecution. In the Greek legal system it is driven principally by the victims and their lawyers, with the state prosecuting authorities adopting a less adversarial role.

It’s a model of ideas. It is not seeking to ban Golden Dawn under those kinds of constitutional provisions or restrictions on speech and political organisation which exist in many countries to stem the fascist right.

It is a criminal trial under criminal law — specifically Article 187 of the penal code introduced to deal with neonazism, evidence of which commissions and directs the fascist right is now dominant.

That apparatus has grown enormously across Europe in the wake of the war on terror. From France and its state of emergency to Germany and its bans on communists from employment by the Bonn state after WWII there is no lack of policing and intelligence powers.

The issue is a lack of political determination and a constant tendency to judge and acquiesce to demands from the left and immigrant communities as the threat, not the adherents of Hitlerism.

There is a further necessity: not to yield a millimetre to racist ideas but instead to counter those lies with discussion anti-racism based upon the good sense of working people.

The biggest group of terror investigations in Britain in the last 12 months has been of the far right — such is the threat.

How many more might have been foiled and criminals brought to justice had the authorities not been sending spy cops into environmental and peace groups, blacklisting trade unionists and criminalising law-abiding Muslims with the Prevent strategy these last 20 years?

Fomented anti-Semitism is one common thread across the spectrum of radical and racist right-wing politics from Ukraine’s Communist Party has condemned Lviv regional council’s decision to ban the public use of the Russian language as unconstitutional. Located near Ukraine’s western border with Poland, Lviv has a population of 725,000, making it the country’s seventh-largest city. Lviv province has 2.5 million residents, many of whom are Russian-speakers.

Fifty-seven of 84 Lviv regional councilors approved the region-wide ordinance on September 18, applying to all Russian-language books, films and songs. The measure is intended to continue until “the complete cessation of occupation of the territory of Ukraine,” referring to the Crimean peninsula, which voted to reunite with Russia in 2014 after Russian troops moved in to secure the Sevastopol naval base in the wake of the Maidaun coup in Kiev of February that year.

The council is also appealing to the national parliament to adopt similar measures, which could be explosive among the Russian-speaking third of the population.

The Communist Party said the ruling amounted to “ethnocide” and “the construction of a mono-ethnic state in Ukraine.”

It pointed out that President Petro Poroshenko has proposed an Ukrainian-language citizenship test, and that the very day after the Maidan coup the parliament cancelled ratification of the European Charter on regional and minority languages.

“One tongue, one nation” had been a nazi slogan, the party observed.

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Another German town two weeks later where a violence core raised the chant: “National-Socialism (Nazi) now and forever.”

It was also reported that Maassen had unpublished figures showing that Golden Dawn is the second most dangerous militant far-right organisation masquerading as a charitable organisation.

The episode casts light on the nature and legal basis of the prosecution. In the Greek legal system it is driven principally by the victims and their lawyers, with the state prosecuting authorities adopting a less adversarial role.

It’s a model of ideas. It is not seeking to ban Golden Dawn under those kinds of constitutional provisions or restrictions on speech and political organisation which exist in many countries to stem the fascist right. It is a criminal trial under criminal law — specifically Article 187 of the penal code introduced to deal with neonazism, evidence of which commissions and directs the fascist right is now dominant.

That apparatus has grown enormously across Europe in the wake of the war on terror. From France and its state of emergency to Germany and its bans on communists from employment by the Bonn state after WWII there is no lack of policing and intelligence powers.

The issue is a lack of political determination and a constant tendency to judge and acquiesce to demands from the left and immigrant communities as the threat, not the adherents of Hitlerism.

There is a further necessity: not to yield a millimetre to racist ideas but instead to counter those lies with discussion anti-racism based upon the good sense of working people.

The biggest group of terror investigations in Britain in the last 12 months has been of the far right — such is the threat.

How many more might have been foiled and criminals brought to justice had the authorities not been sending spy cops into environmental and peace groups, blacklisting trade unionists and criminalising law-abiding Muslims with the Prevent strategy these last 20 years?

Fomented anti-Semitism is one common thread across the spectrum of radical and racist right-wing politics from Ukraine’s

Livist regional council bans public use of Russian language

One tongue, one nation” had been a nazi slogan, the party observed.

On Sept. 17 2013 in Athens by Pavlos Fyssas, the front banner reads in red “finish with the nazi.”

A huge demonstration in Piraeus, Athens, marking the fifth anniversary of the murder of rapper Pavlos Fyssas. The...
GLOBAL CLASS STRUGGLE

Swazi police create "war zone"

Dozens of Swazi police in riot gear attacked workers during a peaceful demonstration on Sept. 14, injuring 10 and leaving one dead for pay increases. Police fired stun grenades and physically assaulted three in the main city Manzini. Several workers sustained serious injuries and need medical attention. An estimated 500-600 two labour leaders were jailed.

The Swazi Police Union issued a press statement denouncing the brutal violence of their superiors, confirming that they were given orders to shoot and kill anyone who “disturbs” the deeply flawed upcoming elections.

The protests by the Trade Union Congress of Swaziland (TUCOSWA) was unilaterally banned, after previously having been declared legal and in accordance with section 40 of the Industrial Relations Act.

Police turned Manzini into a “battlefield” and a “warzone” on the second day of a national strike against low pay and poor working conditions in the textile sector which surrounds South Africa. The Swazi Observer, a newspaper in effect owned by King Mswati III, the absolute monarch, reported that “stun grenades, teargas, teardrops and tear gas bombs became the order of the day.”

The Observer reported that the police were in a “battlefield” for more than four hours as armed police and workers “engaged in fierce confrontation.” The situation got out of control when public transport drivers and conductors joined the protesting workers and clashed with the police, who threatened everybody who was wearing a red T-shirt (to show their support for trade unions).

TUCOSWA members changed their red colours and wore different T-shirts, but police tried to arrest anyone who tried to enter Somhlolo Park where a union rally was held. Since the roads were blocked, bus conductors could not conduct business, and many threw stones at police officers and burned tires on the streets.

Pay up, say garment workers

Garment workers in Bangladesh have rejected an increase in the minimum wage, saying it is still not enough to live on. Their unions have asked their brands to pay more for the clothes they buy.

Bangladesh raised the minimum wage by more than 50 percent in mid-September, to 8,000 taka ($95.30) a month. It was the smallest increase in 13 years, when a string of factory accidents thrust poor working conditions and wages into the global spotlight.

“The new wages announced are unacceptable by many union leaders,” said Islam Khan, field coordinator for a key labour organization. “Workers were demanding 16,000 taka. They are not happy and many organizations are talking about an indefinite strike if the wages are not reconsidered,” he told Reuters news agency.

Bangladesh is the world’s second-largest garment producer after China, and its $30 billion industry employs an estimated four million people, 80 percent of whom are women. The workers are among the worst-paid in the world. A compensation report released by the Fair Labor Association in April stated that overtime income accounts for 20 percent of their salary, and half the workers put in more than 60 hours a week despite the impact on their health.

The unions also say production targets should not be increased after the wage hike, which many small and medium factory owners argue is a “burden” that may lead to the closure of units. “After the last pay hike in 2013, we realized that many factories could not produce enough targets for workers and the work pressure built up tremendously,” said Nahidul Hasan Nayan, general secretary of the Sommilito Garments Samrak Federation, which represents 2,100 garment workers. “Many factories came to us and said their pay had gone up but they did not even have a minute to drink water or use the restroom during their shifts.”

Then said the situation had improved since the collapse of the Rana Plaza complex in 2013 killed 1,136 garment workers, but fashion brands had a duty to do more.

“Garment workers have to step up and pay more for the clothes they are buying,” he said. “After Rana Plaza disaster, the Bangladesh garment and retail manufacturing industry has made big efforts to meet international standards. Now international brands have to show their commitment to the workers.”

Italian media face new threats

The Italian government has threatened to cut indirect state funding to the press, accusing newspapers of “polluting the on their health.” Federation Nazionale Stampa Italiana (FNSI, an affiliate of the International Federation of Journalists) has condemned these threats and expressed serious concerns over the situation.

After the announcement on September 12, Luigi Di Maio, head of the populist Five Star Movement, called it “a racist and intolerant measure,” the Swedish foreign minister, Willman, said it is “a deplorable development in the Italian press policy. All our legislations and rights are determined and strengthened by a union deal.”

The unions want the complete withdrawal of the law on Strengthening Public Finance, which seeks to introduce a series of taxes, and limiting salary and pension increases and severance payments and severance packages in the public sector.

In August, the unions submitted an alternatively named bill, known as the Just and Solidary Tax Reform, as a basis for negotiations. The alternative bill focuses on combating tax evasion and increasing tax on companies and banks that generate extraordinary profits; eliminating “luxury” pensions for former presidents; and reducing state financial support for political parties. The proposal would avoid hurting middle and working class people and public sector workers who would lose benefits in the executive’s bill.

Alvordado’s legislation would establish a value-added tax to replace the current sales tax, and expand tax collection to the informal sector, with a blow to the media industry. The proposal would threaten many newspapers’ survival and deal an economic blow to the media industry.

In response, the FNSI declared: “The umpire edit of deputy prime minister Luigi Di Maio made a new threat to workers, to the aversion of the government and the political forces that support it to the principles of representative democracy, of which freedom of expression and pluralism of information are essential pillars. Announcing the ban on state-owned companies to advertise in newspapers is not just a threat to those who try to inform citizens, fuel debate and hold power to account, but provides the exact representation of the idea that the deputy prime minister has this associates control democracy.”

Anthony Bellanger, General Secretary of the IFJ, added: “If the Italian government executes their threat to cut state funding to the press, it will be both a terrible decision for media pluralism and an economic decision for public workers. This could involve the death of many media titles, especially local ones, political and social media spaces, which support a free and pluralistic democracy.”

The order by an Istanbul court to condemn 24 construction workers and union leaders in Turkey to 902 weeks in prison for attempting to silence legitimate protest. The workers and union leaders were among hundreds of others detained in custody following protests on Sept. 14 at the construction site of a new airport due to open in Istanbul next month.

“Justice in Turkey is a tool to silence free speech and to protect the government from criticism,” said the IFJ’s Secretary General, Anthony Bellanger. “Trade union rights in Turkey are not protected by the constitution, and the government and media are controlled by the same state-owned go-one.”

Costa Rica unions hold national strike

Costa Rica’s two main national unions have reached an agreement. The BWU is not negotiating with the state about increased taxes and social security payments. The alternative bill passed by the country’s government.

Turkey jails construction workers

The order by an Istanbul court to condemn 24 construction workers and union leaders in Turkey to 902 weeks in prison for attempting to silence legitimate protest. The workers and union leaders were among hundreds of others detained in custody following protests on Sept. 14 at the construction site of a new airport due to open in Istanbul next month.

Clashes ensued after thousands of police used tear gas and water cannons against the protesters, and more than 40 were detained. The majority of those were picked up after midnight on September 15, during a police raid on dormitories while they were sleeping. The protest had focused on infrastructural work and living conditions at the site, lack of workplace safety, and delays in receiving wages and social security payments.

In February 2018, the then-Prime Minister of Labor and Social Security said that 27 workers had died since the construction of Istanbul’s new airport began in May 2016 and that many more had been injured or suffered from problems and traffic accidents around the site. However, trade unions say the number is much higher.

Those detained in prison are accused of preventing public servants from carrying out their work, force or threatening state workers, damaging public property and participating in the protest with the aim to prevent the “appearance of entities that seek to substantiate these charges was presented at the court hearing.”

The Organization and Human Rights Foundation of Turkey said that lawyers representing the 24 workers were preparing a letter to ask the government to release the detained workers, and many had their statements taken by officers of the Istanbul Association, in violation of Turkish law. Several solidarity protests were held in Istanbul and Ankara, during which more than 30 people were detained, including at least one journalist.

Barbados dockers win pay increase

After long-running negotiations that had brought the Port of Barbados to a standstill, the Barbados Port Inc. and the Barbados Workers’ Union (BWU) have reached an agreement. The workers, who have not received a pay hike in close to 25 years, are now receiving a five percent salary increase backdated to October 1, 2016.

Talks ran aground in August when port workers walked off the job for 45 minutes, angry with their union as well as with management. Workers who spoke to the media at the time said they were upset after learning the BWU had accepted the port’s offer to match the Government’s five percent increase for public workers, without first consulting them. The dockers stopped work at 9 am that day, prompting a conference call with BWU General Secretary Toni Lockhart, who was overseas on business.

“Beyond negotiation for itself, it is negotiating for us, so how could you agree to something without coming back to us,” said one dock worker. “We will not accept it. We will be consulted because we are the ones who are in the position and know what our needs are and what would be a fair payment for us.”

A subsequent walkout brought enough pressure on the port to eventually offer nearly two years of retroactive pay increases.
By W.T. Whitney, People's World

Cuba’s government on August 24 released a 59-page report on the adverse effects of the US economic blockade. Its authors maintain, “The blockade—against Cuba constitutes the principal obstacle to the development of all potentials of the Cuban economy.” Taking inflation into account, they say the blockade has drained US$933.68 billion from Cuba’s economy since it took effect. Losses during the most recent year amounted to US$3 billion.

Once again the report appears ahead of a vote in the United Nations General Assembly on a Cuban resolution titled, “Necessity for putting an end to the economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed by the United States against Cuba.” The vote this year will be held on October 31. Cuba’s first purpose in issuing the report is to inform national delegations about the blockade. In effect, the Cuban government is also sending a message to the world.

Nations of the world have voted on this Cuban resolution every year since 1992, and every year they have overwhelmingly voted down the US blockade. Only the United States and Israel have supported the blockade in recent years.

The blockade is the centerpiece of US aggression against a sovereign nation. The US people on the whole have come to realize that the trade embargo toward Cuba have reason to call their own government to account. The US embargo serves as an incentive and a resource for information.

Cuba’s 2018 report surveys US laws authorising the blockade, US violations of international law, and US and worldwide opposition to the blockade. The report offers a flood of examples of blockade-related damage showing up between April 2016 and 2018. It surveys harm done to healthcare, education, sports, culture, economic development, foreign trade, and Cuba’s relations with international financial institutions.

The report touches upon new US regulations imposed by the Trump administration in November 2017, in particular the tightening of travel restrictions and banning of US trade with 179 specified Cuban companies. This report returns to Cuba’s charge over the years that the blockade exerts an “extraordinary” effect. It reaches beyond Cuba to affect countries throughout the world.

The report outlines mechanisms by which means of the blockade are carried out, and the report outlines the prohibition of direct dealings between entities of the two countries. The major exception is an allowance dating from 2000 for US agricultural products to be sold in Cuba.

Monetary losses also result from US sanctions, or the fear of sanctions, that serve as a knock-on effect to specific companies, agencies, and financial institutions in third countries. Their vulnerability stems from any affiliation they enjoy with US counterparts or from any significant advantage of third country devices in foreign countries may be unavailable due to providers’ affiliations with US companies.

Tourist revenue is down as a result of Trump administration’s new travel restrictions. The refusal of third country banks to handle dollars heading for Cuba curtails revenue.

Frustration results from a lack of access to equipment and spare parts that are essential for improvements in the agricultural, educational, and healthcare sectors. Shortages in health care cause “pain that never can be quantified.” The near impossibility of Cuban Airlines to secure spare parts or to rent or buy replacement planes is a recipe for danger.

Blockade regulations have long interfered with various both directions of performing artists, scientific delegations, academic groups, and cultural representatives. Academic exchanges and US student programs in Cuba have been put on hold.

Economic reverses suffered by Cuba at the hands of the blockade are thus quantifiable and serious. But, as the report demonstrates, the blockade also causes fatigue, discouragement, and dashed hopes affecting people’s daily lives. That, in fact, is the way it was supposed to be. According to a State Department report, the blockade would inflict pain and suffering and thereby, in theory, provoke revolt.

The dominant US media are ignoring the current Cuban reality. They report what they choose, and what they choose to ignore, in an effort to keep the United Nations. One Internet search yielded two articles in English, one from a US news agency and the other from Cuba. A modified one identified another posting by the official “People’s Voice” arm of the US propaganda arm Radio and TV Marti.

The blockade itself receives little mention in the US press, which dwells on Cuba’s economic problems. Any pretense at objectivity surely would require much more space than policy, not least because the blockade has much to with shortages and economic matters.

We note, lastly, that the US blockade operates in concert with other US measures against Cuba, in particular, many well-established US programs providing money and support for a political opposition there. Broadcasting of counter-revolutionary propaganda from the US has continued for decades. The US Congress recently approved US$15 million in support of anti-government subversion inside Cuba and US$29 million to fund the US propaganda arm Radio and TV Marti.

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November 1, 2017. - The Cuban resolution “Necessity of putting an end to the economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed by the United States against Cuba” was widely supported in the United Nations, obtaining 191 votes in favor, 2 against (USA and Israel) and 0 abstentions.

By W.T. Whitney, People’s World

Cuba to UN: End the blockade

By Saccaro Gomes, President of the World Peace Council

We revolt and indignation we once again denounce the threats against Bolivarian and sovereign Venezuela, this time coming from the Organization of American States (OAS). On Sunday, Sept. 16, the Secretary General of the Organization of American States, Luis Almagro, echoing the criminal statement of US President Donald Trump, said that the “military option” against the government of President Nicolas Maduro should not be ruled out.

The World Peace Council and various democratic forces around the world repudiated Trump’s threats and repeatedly expressed their resolve opposition to the harassment coordinated between various governments of the region serving US imperialism against Venezuela that is creating the atmosphere of war between brother countries.

That Almagro made similar declarations to US President Trump’s statements from Colombia, where he was visiting, and representing the OAS banks to threaten Venezuela behind such an outrageous, interferential, aggressive and imperialist action“military option” are contrary the promotion of peace or dialogue. His obsession was evident when the secretary general said that he will not rest until Maduro’s Government is overthrown, a government legitimately elected by its people.

As usual, in other interventions that destroy countries and victimize peoples in so many regions... Almagro claimed that such aggression would be justified to counteract “human rights violations”, using hammers so dear to progressive forces. However they are anything other than pretexts for the empire in its devastating invasions or the promotion of coups for the establishment of dictatorships or subversive regimes, of which millions have fallen victim in so recent a history in the region.

The Colombian government has faithfully served the United States, intensifying its antagonism against the Venezuelan government, in addition to other governments that serve US imperialism, which have united to attack Bolivarian Venezuela by all means. Such means include media and financial wars, attempts to isolate, defame, destabilize and ferment internal crises to ignite an animosity and bring the government down. But the Venezuelan people resist! They insist, bravely in the defense of popular and national sovereignty, democracy and the commitment to social justice that marks the Bolivarian Revolution. Hence the desperate and/or aggressive for the reactionary forces and the unpatiotic and antidemocratic national oligarchy, which call for more and more extreme aggressions.

The World Peace Council and all progressive and democratic forces strengthen their solidarity with Venezuela and the other countries that denounce the attempt to promote war in Latin America.

For sovereignty and peace, for the end of interference and aggression against the Venezuelan people! Hands off Venezuela!

Rousseff runs for Brazilian parliament

Following a court ruling, former Brazilian president Dilma Rousseff will stand as a candidate for parliament in the October 7 election. The regional electoral court of Minas Gerais voted by four votes to three in allowing Rousseff to stand in the election, following legal challenges to try to block her candidacy.

Rousseff was impeached in a right-wing coup in 2016, but the congress did not remove her political rights.

“The court’s decision gives me justice. I always trust in justice,” she said, adding that it showed Rousseff, the Workers Party candidate for Minas Gerais, at 28 per cent of the vote, comfortably ahead of her closest rival, the Humanist Solidarity Party’s Carlos Viana, with 15 per cent.

“I grew up here [Minas Gerais] and I became politically and socially conscious here when I was a youth. This is where I started advocating against the military dictatorship at the end of the ‘60s,” Rousseff said, getting ready to register as a candidate with Brazil’s superior electoral tribunal.

The former president-elect: Front-runner Jair Bolsonaro has been leading in the polls, but by mid-September, Workers Party (PT) candidate Fernando Haddad had moved into second place. Polls are projecting that the two candidates may end up neck and neck, heading into a second-round runoff.

World Peace Council slams call for military intervention by OAS Secretary General

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By David Lethbridge

I know it’s unusual to review a book in which your own writing appears. I suppose its even more unusual to give such a book a negative review. But it can’t be helped. Something has to be said about the new book Rediscovering Norman Bethune, edited by M. Darrol Bryant, Yan Li, and Margaret Loewen Reimer. First of all, I must admit that I have yet to find a book that I read, even if it is unfavourable, that doesn’t make me feel as if I have a personal stake in the outcome. But ideological. It doesn’t help that the authors seem to actively dislike their subject.

Larry Hannant’s The Politics of Passion: Norman Bethune’s Writing and Art remains one of the very best books on Bethune, even if some minor omissions on contemporary research might now be necessary. It was not intended to be a biography but profitably be read as one. Norman Bethune: it’s important to get it right

My own recent Norman Bethune in Spain is the most up-to-date and comprehensive text on the antifascist period and has the added virtue of being written by a Communist and who, therefore, understands Bethune’s politics from the inside. What is needed, ultimately, is a new biography of Bethune both accurate in its details and in solidarity with the man himself. Whether such a work can be written in the present period, or stands any chance of being published, who can say? But to hold on to some aspect of the truth, to write down what happened and why, to rescue our history from the always voracious maw of deliberate capitalistic amnesia is not an ignoble thing to do.


Respect

The death of Aretha Franklin from pancreatic cancer on August 16 set off a wave of grief over her passing and a celebration of her life and legacy. The “Queen of Soul”, an artist of universal appeal, emerged from the epicenter of American gospel music - Detroit’s New Bethel Baptist Church. Its pastor was her father, Reverend C.L. Franklin, a close friend and collaborator with Dr. Martin Luther King in the civil rights struggles of the sixties. Her signature song, “Thinkin' about You, Respect”, was a smash hit in 1967. Whereas the narrative in Redding’s original recording portrayed a man coming home to his woman after a hard day’s work, Aretha’s version was celebrated as a statement of feminist empowerment and a gig was called for both racial equality and black power. In 1970, when activist and scholar Angela Davis, a communist, was jailed on trumped-up charges of murder, kidnapping, and conspiracy, Aretha offered to post $250,000 for her bail. She told Jet magazine: “Angela Davis must be free. Black people will be free... I know you’ve got to disturb the peace in your heart...” Aretha also expressed her desire to “do something” in the wake of the murders of Malcolm X and Robert F. Kennedy. Aretha’s “Respect” was an ode to “my Lorde” - the Great Teacher. It is a song of love and peace that is heard the world over. It is a song that speaks to the soul of humanity. It is a song that speaks to the spirit of the people. It is a song that speaks to the voice of the people. It is a song that speaks to the heart of the people. It is a song that speaks to the hope of the people. It is a song that speaks to the dreams of the people. It is a song that speaks to the future of the people. It is a song that speaks to the strength of the people.

Lana Del Rey cancels gig in Israel

American pop star Lana Del Rey was to have headlined the inaugural Meteor Festival, at Kibbutz Lehavot HaBanhan in Israel’s Galilee region Sept. 6-8. Everything seemed in place. Del Rey had been paid her $700,000 fee, and she responded on August 19 to the entreaties of BDS campaigners by deciding her decision to perform. As always, BDS activists like “Free Gaza Movement” were “fanatical missionaries of the centre, that he had made (I think he was saying) of my antireligious sentiment.” The last half of the Chinese novel, the Spanish chapters are completely inadequate, and the few pages devoted to Bethune’s childhood are mistaken.

Stuart and Stewart’s Phoenix regarded in some quarters as the definitive biography of Bethune, understands its protagonist not at all. The writers are at pains to present Bethune as a womanizer and a drunk, neither of which is true. The book is full of errors, distortions, and wilful omissions, most of which are not coincidental but ideological. It doesn’t help that the authors seem to actively dislike their subject.

Norman Bethune: it’s important to get it right

The Doug Ford regime has revoked a $500,000 grant to Sistema Toronto, an after-school children’s music program inspired by Venezuela’s acclaimed educator José Antonio Abreu. The Toronto offshoot of “El Sistema” was founded in 2011, after Abreu was awarded Canada’s Glenn Gould Prize, named after the city’s renowned pianist and music educator. Sistema Toronto had been looking forward to more than doubling its budget, allowing it to expand its after-school training of grades 1-8 students in at-risk neighbourhoods like Parkdale, Jane-Finch, and Scarborough.

Sistema Toronto under attack

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The renters and workers we’ve talked to over the past months are scared — and angry about the looming 4.5 per cent rent increase. They feel Vancouver will soon have no place for them. Our party is fighting for a rent freeze to keep rents down during and between tenancies. Meaning, the outgoing city government has rushed through a plan that could displace thousands of renters. On Sept 19, they approved a policy to rezone large parts of the city for expensive condos, allowing landowners to cash-out big time.

While these neighbourhoods include middle-income homes, many homes are subdivided and rented out as relatively affordable units in these areas, especially on the east side, more than half of residents are renters. But the city’s rezoning plan and protection policy doesn’t apply to these kinds of rentals, meaning that when tenants are displaced, their moving costs aren’t covered and they can’t return to renovated units, never mind at the same rents. Shockingly, the city admits they don’t have a tenancy dataset on how many tenants in these relatively affordable areas are likely to be displaced.

In the midst of the city’s rental-housing crisis, how could city council push through a massive rezoning plan like this without first studying the impact on renters? If elected on Oct. 20, COPE councillors would work to immediately broaden the city’s tenant-protection policy to include all parts of the city, including those affected by last week’s rezoning. We should be clear: this rezoning doesn’t provide housing for those who need it most. New developments will be only for people earning more than about $100,000 a year, while the people who are desperate for housing earn under $50,000.

For-profit developers will never build housing most people can afford, no matter how many taxes or regulations we waive for them, no matter how many carrots we dangle in front of them. A recent report from the U.S. claimed that Seattle and other U.S. cities that have had luxury building booms like Vancouver have seen rents drop slightly — but only for expensive homes. Rents for working class people have continued to climb.

If we want truly affordable homes, the city’s housing agency should step up as a public developer where for-profit developers have failed. To subsidize public housing development, the city needs revenue sources. COPE’s proposed mansion tax of one per cent on homes over $5 million and a two per cent on homes over $10 million would provide a major source of revenue.

The city’s new rezoning will also trigger a wave of speculation, escalating property prices without any means of recapturing the unearned value and councils will ensure the city captures this unearned value and targets it for non-profit and publicly owned housing.

Give that high land prices have been a barrier to building truly affordable housing, the city can provide or acquire land and construction on a massive scale.

To be clear, this rezoning affects renters in all parts of the city and it won’t provide truly affordable housing. Exclusionary, west side neighbourhoods, in particular, do need to take more density, including social housing.

But when COPE broadens tenant protections, taxes mansions and doesn’t provide city-owned land and Ingramizes the city’s housing agency, we can stop this wave of evictions and build the social and rental housing many Vancouverites need.

This is how we can ensure renters and workers we’ve talked to over the past months are treated fairly. On Sept 19, they approved a policy to rezone large parts of the city for expensive condos, allowing landowners to cash-out big time. If elected on Oct. 20, COPE councillors would work to immediately broaden the city’s tenant-protection policy to include all parts of the city, including those affected by last week’s rezoning.

To subscribers: For the full, unabridged version of this article, please visit https://yvesengler.com/

By James Chuama-Jones

On September 21, Unite Here Local 40 organized a rally outside the Coast Bastion hotel in downtown Nanaimo, demanding that management negotiate a fair contract with employees.

Housekeepers and cleaners are currently being overworked while other staff members are having their hours cut, making it harder to keep up with the rising cost of living in British Columbia. The DisconTent City homeless camp just a few blocks from the Coast Bastion shows the struggle many people are facing to find affordable housing.

Members of the community were invited to join the rally, including Communist Party members who have previously supported a strike by Local 40 members at the Tokyo Golf Club.

Around two dozen people showed up outside the front entrance of the Coast Bastion to participate in the picketing and noise-making. Pedestrians and cars passing by also briefly showed their solidarity, as well as a couple of guests in the hotel. The rally ended with Unite Here organizers demanding the hotel management to negotiate a contract soon with its workers, declaring that they will be back.

Rally demands fair contract at Coast Bastion
US imperialism floundering in history’s wake

By Rob戈Telom, From The Guardian, weekly of the Communist Party of Australia

The Four Colours [Australian Broadcasting Corp. news show] interview on Sept. 3 with Donald Trump’s former strategist Steve Bannon yielded the information that as far as that was worthy was concerned, the USA was already in a war with China. Since the super patriots of the US Right cannot conceive (let alone admit) that the US might ever be in the wrong over anything, it follows that in their opinion, any hiccup in trade or diplomatic relations between the USA and China must be the fault of China.

And since they learnt what little they grasp of international relations mainly from watching Hollywood movies, they inhabit a curious never-never land where the USA is and always will be the most devastatingly powerful country on Earth, a country so awesome that other Powers tremble at the mere mention of its name. No wonder that Donald Trump had his hand in everything: from grain and corn to textiles, from laundering became the President-of-choice for the most fascist-minded regions of American big business. Trump now displays his woeful mix of ignorance and arrogance at gatherings of world leaders around the globe, seemingly unaware that history has passed on and left him wallowing in its wake.

Happily cocooned in his belief in American superiority, Trump is busy showing how powerful he is by imposing large numbers of punitive tariffs on Chinese products and generally trying to provoke Beijing into a trade war. Meanwhile his armed forces are doing their best to provoke an actual shooting war over America’s “right” to see its warships through China’s maritime territory.

In the meantime, numerous US commentators (as well as those in other countries that don’t work at the Pentagon) have noted that as far as a trade war is concerned, most of the truly effective weapon against China are in the hands of China, not America. Immarurable products sold by US retailers are sourced from China; the opportunities for Chinese authorities to impose bureaucratic delays or other restrictions on trade or production are too numerous to list. Many US producers are dependent on China to provide not only the labour but also the facilities and expertise that they can no longer do without. A request from China’s Party or government for its people to boycott US products or US firms would meet with an enthusiastic – and from an American point of view, very damaging – response. In fact, such a boycott would have catastrophic consequences for the affected US businesses. So far, China has refrained from retaliating in that manner, but their patience is not likely to be unlimited.

Most US manufacturing has moved to low-wage countries, much of it to China. But China itself is a huge – and growing – market. KFC is busy opening fast-food outlets all over the country. Starbucks has 3,300 outlets in China already but has plans to double that number. A consumer boycott would put a “knife through the heart” of a country that clearly meant to threaten China, the Chinese response was a series of government-encouraged boycotts that sent sales of South Korean-made Hyundais in China plummeting by more than half, decreased Chinese tourist traffic to South Korea by more than 60 percent and temporarily shut down 55 supermarkets in China run by the large Korean retailer Lotte.

US outfits like Walmart, which sources from China all the 7,000 new products it sells, view the possibility of a trade war with the Asian powerhouse with justifiable alarm. Donald Trump represents a different sector of US capitalism: neither retail nor manufacturing nor even commerce. Trump made his billions in property development and reportedly money laundering, but he was boosted into the White House by other billionaires with interests in coal and oil and similar polluting “energy” industries, industries that had Trump’s unequivocal support.

In the decades after WW2, their strategy was to gain control over as much of the world’s energy resources as they could. The socialist countries were an obstacle to achieving their goal but with the help of that nice Mr Gorbachev, they were able to overthrow Socialism in Russia and most (but not all) of Eastern Europe. Their gleeful joy that victory has since turned to dust: although they have been able to extend NATO into the east, everywhere from Poland to Bulgaria, elsewhere the world is being reshaped in an entirely different way.

Imperialism is still trying to keep control of the world’s energy resources but also the world’s food and water, to achieve what they call “full spectrum dominance”. Unfortunately, they have already missed the boat. Their quest to control not only energy but also food and water is forcing countries that are rich by today’s imperialist dream to co-operate in establishing an alternative economic bloc against the USA. Russia and China are co-operating to build up a formidable array of states that are not beholden to US imperialism for either their trade or their defence. These include Cuba and Venezuela as well as regional powerhouses Brazil and South Africa. The US response was to organise a “palace coup” in Brazil, attempt the assassination of President Maduro’s son in Venezuela when economic disruption failed to win the national election there for the Right. Brazil’s response was sanctions on Iran. Once again, as numerous commentators are pointing out, the US leaders are seemingly oblivious to the fact that those are the tactics of a bygone era, that here too, history has moved on and the leaders of capitalism’s self-appointed leading nation are once again floundering in its wake.

The world changed forever in 1917. It changed again in 1945 when the war that was supposed to rid the world of Socialism instead ended with the defeat of fascism, the collapse of colonialism and the emergence of a world Socialist system. The overthrow of Socialism in the East and the collapse of Eastern Europe led some in the capitalist world to think that they had won after all, but the euphoria was short-lived. Instead of the uni-polar world they hoped for, they are now faced with a determinedly multi-polar world, one dominated by the two countries imperialism has long feared: Russia and China. Both of whom are co-operating to establish a new power base. Two of the two principal foes: Russia and China, both of whom are co-operating to establish a new power base. Two of the leading nations of the world, both of whom are run by men who hold the US state to be a curiosity never-never land where the USA is and always will be the most devastatingly powerful country on Earth, a country so awesome that other Powers tremble at the mere mention of its name. No wonder that Donald Trump had his hand in everything: from grain and corn to textiles, from laundering became the President-of-choice for the most fascist-minded regions of American big business. Trump now displays his woeful mix of ignorance and arrogance at gatherings of world leaders around the globe, seemingly unaware that history has passed on and left him wallowing in its wake.

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