

# Socialist Worker

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## THEIR CRISIS OUR RESISTANCE

### WE WON'T BAIL OUT THE 1 %



by PAM FRACHE

**AFTER THREE years of global economic crisis there is no end in sight, and the crisis in the Eurozone threatens to trigger another recession. The only response by governments across the political spectrum—from military rule in Egypt, to the social democratic government in Greece, to the Democrats in the US—is to impose more austerity measures. But from Cairo to Athens to Wall Street, more and more people are starting to question and challenge the profit-driven system of capitalism.**

On October 5, tens of thousands of Greek workers took to the streets as part of ongoing resistance to the austerity agenda—imposed by the social democratic government of George Papandreou—which has plunged the country into recession. Most of Greece was at a standstill and the two main union federations are calling for another general strike on October 19.

The Greek and European banks, fearful that Greece may not be able to repay its debt, negotiated a second €109-billion bailout package in July and private creditors agreed to a notional debt write-off of 21 per cent. According to Geoffrey T. Smith of the *Wall Street Journal*, “The deal involved asking private creditors for partial debt forgiveness, something no developed country has done since World War II. But at the same time, they had to dress it up in such a way as to make it look like Greece wasn’t defaulting on its debts.” Once agreed, EU member countries each need to approve the plan in order for it to be fully implemented. That’s why many were relieved when the German parliament approved the second bailout package at the end of September.

In early October, Greece was to receive an €8 billion-installment. But the game suddenly shifted over the weekend of October 1 when Greece announced that its economy actually shrank by 2.5 per cent (when it was forecast to grow by 0.6 per cent), that its

budget deficit is coming in at 8.5 per cent (instead of the targeted 7.6 per cent), and that its debt is expected to grow to more than 172 per cent of GDP.

Markets went into a tailspin. The EU postponed the release of the €8 billion-installment from early October to mid-October and then again to mid-November. During this time, Greece is to prove its readiness to receive the funds by bleeding its workers.

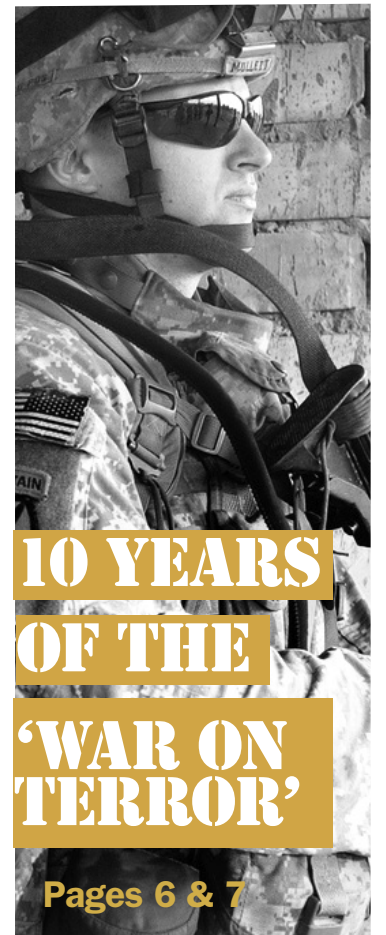
This explains the viciousness of the current round of austerity being imposed by the Papandreou government. In addition to the tens of thousands of public sector workers already laid off, as well as the cuts in wages and pensions—as much as 20 per cent (the equivalent of losing more than two months’ pay)—the Socialist government has said it intends to sack an additional 30,000 public sector workers by the end of December. At the same time, the so-called “Troika” (the European Union, the European Central Bank and the International Monetary Fund) has advised Greece to reduce the

minimum wage and further water down labour law.

Part of the reason that Greece has been unable to make its debt reduction target is the magnificent resistance of Greek workers. Since October 2009, there have been 17 general strikes and countless other smaller strikes, demonstrations and occupations, involving nurses, teachers, taxi drivers, transit workers, doctors, airline staff and pilots, and more. This resistance has grown, despite the reluctance of the national trade union federations to call for all-out mobilizations against the social democratic government.

The Troika’s criticism of Greece for the slow pace of privatization is a reflection of the impact workers’ resistance has had in Greece. This resistance helped force European banks to take the 21 per cent “haircut” and more and more workers are concluding that since the banks lent the money (and made handsome profits), they should be the ones to pay the price.

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‘Blame-the-teacher’ agenda threatens education

by TARA EHRCKE

THE BC Public Schools Employers’ Association (BCPSEA) is threatening to lock out the province’s teachers, in response to job action designed to push contract negotiations forward.

The BCPSEA Board consists of both elected trustee representatives as well as appointed government representatives. They are under the direction of PSEC—the Public Sector Employers’ Council, who are clearly an arm of government and who dictate the terms of bargaining.

When the Liberals first came to power, they enacted special legislation that mandated that teachers be an essential service. In 2002 this government unilaterally legislated teachers back to work and imposed a three-year contract that was not negotiated. In 2005 they again legislated teachers back to work but teachers stayed out regardless.

This government has been intent on stopping any job action by teachers and instead are using a legislative hammer to force an end to disputes. The result has been low morale and frustration.

The BC Teachers’ Federation is conducting a phase one job action. Teachers are not attending evening events or monthly staff meetings. They are not attending the once yearly “meet-the-teacher” or “formal” parent-teacher interviews.

But teachers are continuing to meet with each other and to have department meetings without administration. They are continuing to contact parents and communicate regularly. They are continuing extra curricular activities. They are teaching full time. Many teachers are using the few freed up hours to do additional lesson preparation. Many are using the time for additional one-on-one support for students with particular learning needs. Many are saying that teaching and learning haven’t been better in years.

Teachers are fighting back against the BCPSEA agenda to bring in US-style education “reform.” Proposals include the virtual elimination of seniority, the removal of any due process requirements for teacher evaluations, the ability to force a teacher to move to another job merely with one month’s notice, and the ability to fire a teacher after a single evaluation.

The US “blame-the-teacher” reform agenda is political. It is about commodifying and privatizing education. It is a total rejection of the notion of equity. Instead of quality, equal access, and equal opportunity, it promotes competition, consumer driven models and private service delivery.

The end result? Very good schools that are hyper-competitive for the rich. Pretty awful schools for the poor. Struggling schools for everyone in between. Is this where we want to go?

If you would like to show support, please contact your local school trustees and let them know we need a solution, not to take teachers out of the classroom.



A sign on the Aamijwnaang Reserve  
PHOTO: TOBAN BLACK

Feds ignore suicide epidemic in First Nations communities

by AMELIA MURPHY-BEAUDOIN

**THE WILLFUL ignorance of Canadian governments at all levels is perpetuating the cycle of abuse that First Nations people have been grappling with since residential schools.**

Government officials who have knowingly ignored the myriad of issues affecting First Nations communities are complicit in the epidemic of suicides affecting these communities.

Early in September, Ontario’s Chief Coroner issued a report on the death by suicide of 16 youth in

the Pikangikum First Nation over just two years.

The report recommends improvements in health care, education and social services; like the recommendations of previous well-meaning reports, these will likely not be implemented for lack of funding.

According to Health Canada, suicide rates are five to seven times higher for First Nations youth than for non-Aboriginal youth. Suicide rates among Inuit youth are among the highest in the world, at 11 times the national average.

The soaring suicide rate in First Nations communities is a result of the appalling social and physical conditions in which First Nations people live: overcrowded, sometimes contaminated environments, usually without adequate access to basic services like sewage systems and running water, lower standards of education and housing, high levels of poverty and unemployment.

All of this fosters a sense of hopelessness and results in high rates of alcoholism, drug addiction, domestic violence, involvement in the sex

trade and suicide.

Initiatives to protect communities and prevent these tragic outcomes are underfunded and largely ignored. It is vital that we understand the spiraling rate of suicides in First Nations communities as a tragic and unnecessary symptom of the white hegemonic and racist system in which we live.

Socialists can play a role in building and expanding solidarity between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people to force the government and its agents to take decisive action and to stop the tragedies.

Yet another scandal for Charest

by JESSICA SQUIRES

**ELECTION FUNDING, construction contracts, and shale gas; the illegal retroactive awarding of a contract in Quebec City in exchange for a hockey team: Quebec Liberal premier Jean Charest has been plagued by scandals, seemingly since coming to office. And now, fresh allegations are prompting renewed calls for his resignation.**

The report of the Duchesneau investigation—a government task force—was leaked to the media in September.

The report outlines corruption on a previously unimagined scale, with ties to organized crime reaching as far as political party financing. Companies rigged bidding processes for public contracts and charged for work not performed. Organized crime used the entire set-up to launder money.

The Quebec opposition parties have been weak at best in calling the Liberals to task. The PQ’s Pauline Marois can’t hold a press conference without facing awkward questions about her disintegrating caucus.

Most recently, a third of her caucus voted against the party line when the Quebec arena bill was voted on. (The bill still passed by a majority.)

The other corporate party in Quebec—the Action Democratique—is calling for a public inquiry, but not for Charest’s resignation. That’s because they don’t want an election.

**Québec solidaire**

The only political party in Quebec willing to challenge the Liberals is Québec solidaire. With only one MNA, Amir Khadir, there

are limits to what it can do. And there is not likely to be an election in Quebec before next year. But to their immense credit, Khadir and party president and co-spokesperson Françoise David joined union-led protests on September 24 in Quebec City and Montreal, calling for an inquiry. In Montreal, over 2,000 people protested at Charest’s office downtown.

It will be left to social movements to continue to pressure the government for a full public inquiry—and for Charest to resign immediately.

People with disabilities face cuts, fight back

by MELISSA GRAHAM

**It’s not a question whether austerity will affect Canadians with disabilities, but a question of when.**

In Scotland, people with disabilities are once again taking to the streets this month to fight back against government proposals that would see the Disability Living Allowance cut by 20 per cent, pushing those people into increasing poverty.

Hate crimes are also on the rise. Some 47 per cent of people with disabilities say attitudes towards them have worsened over the last year. A recent Equality and Human Rights Commission report concluded that “people with disabilities in the UK face harassment,

insult and attack almost as a matter of routine, while a collective denial among police, government and other public bodies means little is done to challenge the situation.”

**Canada**

The situation in Canada is similar. With recent provincial elections in Manitoba and Ontario, there is a heightened awareness that healthcare, housing and disability benefits in those provinces might be headed for the chopping block as the recession drags on.

Consider the case of Ontario’s Special Diet benefit. When people started using the benefit regularly to bring their income to a slightly less impoverished level, McGuinty cut it back, making it much more

difficult for people with disabilities to access it.

In the Ontario provincial election, it was not only social assistance programs, but also accessibility legislation that came under threat. During their campaign the Tories refused to commit to protect existing legislation, or effectively enforce it.

Municipal politicians are also unafraid to cut on the backs of people with disabilities. In Toronto, Rob Ford wants to put accessible transit and social housing on his cuts agenda.

Canadians too have faced high profile disability hate crimes in the past few months. In August, a man who used a wheelchair died four days after being viciously assaulted in his Winnipeg apartment.

Toronto has experienced

two situations involving police interaction with people with disabilities. In July, police used handcuffs to restrain a nine-year-old disabled boy who they say “became uncontrollable” at a daycare centre. Around the same time, a man with a disability was killed during interactions with Toronto police.

All of this points to a clear message that politicians and those who enforce the laws do not consider people with disabilities a priority.

We have Canada’s first woman with a disability in the Official Opposition, but people with disabilities are still feeling powerless.

Perhaps it’s time to take a hint from Scotland, and fight austerity before it has already won.

BC jobs plan fails workers and environment

by BRADLEY HUGHES

**BC PREMIER Christy Clark’s new jobs plan creates very few jobs, and most of the ones that it does create will destroy the environment and other jobs.**

Premier Clark announced the “Canada Starts Here: the BC Jobs Plan” in late September. She bragged about how little government money was being spent on jobs creation in the plan. The plan includes money to expand the port in Prince Rupert to accommodate increased shipments of coal and other goods, money to help open new mines, financial assistance to build a liquefied natural gas plant, and plans to lure more international students to the province to pay discriminatory inflated tuition fees, and a tax cut for those who invest in small businesses.

Although it has fallen slightly recently, according to Statistics Canada the unemployment rate in BC remains above 6 per cent, much higher than the 4.6 per cent rate from 2008 just before the last recession.

This jobs plan does nothing to deal with climate change and, by promoting coal and natural gas industries, it will also contribute to climate change. That change will destroy more jobs than this plan creates.

A realistic jobs plan would raise BC’s low corporate income taxes and use that money to create green jobs.

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4 per cent loss to the Liberals (from 42 to 38 per cent).

Another reflection of untapped anger is the voter turnout: for the first time in Ontario’s history, a majority of eligible voters refused to vote, despite highly promoted changes to make it as easy as possible to vote. A declining voter turnout was seen in other elections across the country—from Manitoba to PEI—and is part of a global trend, as the system’s mechanism’s for reform fail to deliver. This is not a sign of apathy but of anger with the system, coinciding with the electric response to the Occupy Wall Street movement—a renewal of the anti-capitalist movement.

McGuinty’s “major minority” was based on only 1.58 million votes, out of 8.7 million eligible voters in a province of 13 million people. He and the Tories have no mandate for austerity, and there are seven more NDP MPPs who have the potential to provide an opposition—if they unite with the growing movements outside social democracy fighting for a real alternative.

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# Statehood bid exposes backers of apartheid

by CHRIS BRUNO

**MAHMOUD ABBAS, Chairman of the Palestinian Authority (PA), submitted his application for the recognition of the State of Palestine to the UN on September 23. Three days later, the Security Council began a process of deliberation which may last weeks or months until a decision is made.**

Nine out of the fifteen members of the Security Council must approve Palestine’s bid in order for the country to win a seat. Palestine does have these nine votes. However, three of the five permanent members are op-

posed: France, the UK and the US. China and Russia recognize the state of Palestine. Since these nations have veto power, it is their vote which truly matters.

Last year in his annual speech at the UN, US President Obama stated, “True security for the Jewish state requires an independent Palestine —one that allows the Palestinian people to live with dignity and opportunity.” This year he is arguing for precisely the opposite: “Peace will not come through statements and resolutions at the UN,” he said, two days before Abbas applied for recognition. “Ultimately, it is Israelis and Palestinians – not us – who

must reach agreement on the issues that divide them.”

Britain and Canada echo this sentiment. “We will get a Palestinian state alongside an Israeli state by the Palestinians and the Israelis sitting down and talking to each other,” proclaimed British Prime Minister David Cameron.

Stephen Harper said earlier this month that, “we view this unilateral action on behalf of the Palestinian Authority to be not helpful.”

While the UK, US and Canada are simultaneously asking for peace and arguing against statehood, Israel’s Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman voices his opposition more belliger-

ently, promising that if Palestine’s statehood bid goes through, “that would bring us to an altogether new situation, and this would have repercussions, tough repercussions.”

If Palestine does what the US and UK recommend—just wait and discuss—there will be no progress. Palestine as it exists today without state recognition is at a disadvantage when negotiating with Israel.

But ultimately peace cannot thrive under partition defined by an antagonistic border. We must have a unified Palestine; we must have a single-state solution. This will be possible when the Palestinian people are treated as equals.

# Turkey postures against Israel

by AVI HALIGUA

**SINCE THE release of the UN Investigation Commission report on the Israeli raid on the Turkish ship *Mavi Marmara*, Turkey has taken a strong stand against Israel.**

The *Mavi Marmara* was part of a flotilla of six vessels that was attacked by the Israeli military in international waters on May 31, 2010. The ships were carrying humanitarian aid and were about to break through the blockade on Gaza. The Israeli military killed nine people in the course of the raid.

Turkey immediately reduced the level of diplomatic relations

with Israel and announced a halt to military agreements. The UN report on the incident stated that the Israeli commandos “used excessive force.” However, the report also claimed that the Israeli commandos encountered violence and used force for self-protection, therefore criticizing both governments. The report also supports Israel’s “right” to blockade Gaza. The publication of the report was delayed in hopes of reaching a compromise between Turkey and Israel.

Foreign Minister of Turkey, Ahmet Davutoğlu, expressed the government’s discontent. He announced the withdrawal of the ambassador and that diplomatic

relations with Israel were reduced to the level of second secretaries. Foreign Minister Davutoğlu declared that sanctions were going to be applied to Israel until the country fulfilled Turkey’s demands, including an apology to Turkey, compensation payments, and lifting the embargo on Gaza. Davutoğlu’s sanctions include “taking all measures considered necessary for freedom of navigation as the country with the longest shore line on the Eastern Mediterranean coast.”

This crisis with Israel is one of many factors that is empowering the Turkish government around the region. Prime Minister Tayyip Erdogan, as the face of this new

politics, has gained huge popularity around the Middle East. He has visited Egypt, Tunisia and Libya to salute the Arab Spring.

In these countries, he was welcomed as a popular leader and has spoken to huge crowds. After his visits in region, his last stop was in the United States to meet with President Barack Obama.

Turkey is using its opposition to Israel, and the dislike of America in the region, to improve its influence in northern Africa and the Middle East. However, no one should be fooled that Turkey’s intentions towards popular uprisings are any different from the other NATO powers.

## Yemenis fight for democracy

by YUSUR AL-BAHRANI

**Yemeni security forces have used snipers and rocket-propelled grenades against protesters demanding the resignation of President Ali Abdullah Saleh. Hundreds have been killed and injured.**

Saleh returned to Yemen on September 23 after spending three months in Saudi Arabia, where he received medical treatment after a blast that hit his palace mosque.

At a meeting in New York on September 23, the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) stated that “they affirm their commitment to help their brothers in Yemen to reach an agreement for the immediate implementation of the Gulf Initiative.” The initiative would imply transfer of power from Saleh to the Yemeni Vice President Abdu Rabbu Mansour Hadi. This would make sure that Yemen would not be under the control of the opposition, if Saleh resigns.

Any neighboring democracy would threaten the dictatorships of the Gulf, especially Saudi Arabia. Initiatives by Gulf monarchies have no value in the eyes of Yemeni protesters. GCC countries, including Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and United Arab Emirates, have participated in killing and injuring hundreds of pro-democracy activists in Bahrain, while detaining thousands. There are fears that Saudi troops would enter Yemen as they did in 2009 when Saudi warplanes hit Yemeni rebels leaving hundreds of deaths and casualties in many villages.

Saleh has made promises to step down, but thousands of protestors are unconvinced and continue demonstrating in several Yemeni cities, demanding the resignation and the trial of the “murderer.”

## Turkey cracks down on Kurds, socialists

by AVI HALIGUA

**Turkey is returning to armed confrontation with its Kurdish minority.**

This new policy comes after “secret peace talks,” and now the Turkish government is slowly restoring as many Kurdish politicians and activists as it can.

The pro-Kurdish Peace and Democracy Party (BDP) won 35 seats in the recent election. Among the arrested members of BDP are elected mayors, district executives and many others. Thousands of people have been arrested in the last two years as a part of this campaign. At the same time, the Kurdistan Workers’ Party, Partiya Karkerên Kurdistan in Kurdish (PKK), has started a new series of attacks against the Turkish military. Tens of people have died this month and the government is responding with a military build-up. Prime Minister Erdogan is also talking about operations and strikes on the adjacent Kurdish region in Iraq. In response, there have been peace demonstrations on streets of big cities in Turkey.

The police have arrested many at the peace demonstrations, including socialists. Three leading members of Revolutionary Socialist Workers Party (DSIP) have been arrested and one is still in jail.

# Egyptian regime stokes sectarian violence

by JESSE MCLAREN

**AS STRIKE waves by independent trade unions fuse economic and political demands and push the Egyptian Revolution forward, the regime is using violence in an attempt to create divisions along religious lines.**

Half a million Egyptian workers went on strike throughout September, including teachers, transport workers, health technicians and sugar refinery workers. A students strike also spread across campuses, including the elite American University in Cairo—where striking workers demanding higher pay and permanent jobs

joined students on a sit-in for lower tuition fees and democracy on campus.

Many of the strike waves are being organized by newly formed independent trade unions, and are fusing economic and political demands. According to Egyptian socialist and journalist Hossam El-Hamalawy, “the current mass strikes are political in essence, not just economic. While activists are mobilizing thousands in Tahrir to denounce the military tribunals, the workers in the hundreds of thousands are in effect breaking the anti-strike law which refers strikes to military courts. The common denominator between all the strikes, though they still lack a centralized

command or coordinating body, is the purging of the company management from corrupt, regime-affiliated figures. The strikers are even raising questions about global politics, anti-imperialism and anti-Zionism, during their industrial actions. The strike wave constitutes the only hope for the Egyptian Revolution.”

In response, the military regime has been trying to divide the revolution along religious lines, pitting Muslims against Christians. On October 9 the regime viciously attacked a peaceful march of Coptic Christians and Muslim allies who were protesting attacks on Coptic churches. The military shot people with live ammunition and ran over

others with armoured vehicles, leaving more than 20 dead and 300 injured. Egyptian state television claimed Christians were armed and attacking soldiers, and called on people to defend the soldiers, but cut transmission “for security reasons” so the reality of the scene would not be broadcast.

The regime is trying to pit ordinary Egyptians against each other to undermine the strike waves and justify military rule. But Christians and Muslims joined together to fight back against the regime, chanting, “Muslims, Christians: one hand!” This unity in struggle was key in bringing down Mubarak, and is essential to keep pushing the revolution forward.



## Constitutionally speaking: Quebec and the Supremes

The claim that “constitution fatigue” is a “problem” in Canadian politics serves to silence a key aspect of the oppression of Quebec within the federal system of capitalist rule. In a Supreme Court decision pronounced in August 1998, the highest law of the land ruled that Quebec does not have the right to unilaterally declare its independence from Canada according to the Constitution, nor does it have such a right according to international law.

But even this decision did not go far enough to satisfy the cacophony of bigotry that characterized the Constitutional debates in the 1990s.

The same decision ruled that if a majority of Québécois vote in a referendum to secede, Ottawa and the rest of the provinces would be obliged to negotiate the terms.

The ruling followed the referendum of October of 1995, which came within a hair’s breadth of success for the sovereigntists. Before that outcome, the legality of the referendum process was not questioned.

In fact, one of the main arguments used by the federalists during the referendum was that a “Oui” vote could only mean immediate separation without negotiation. But Quebec, apparently, only had the right to self-determination if it would not be asserted.

### “Plan B”

The legal challenge was part of the federal government’s package of threats known as “Plan B.” It included the threat to partition Canada and maintain a system of militarized borders in the event of another referendum.

“Plan A” was much less developed. It was based on the aim to win over a majority of Québécois to the benefits of federalism voluntarily.

But with the failure to win an unconditional Supreme Court decision against any road to independence, many commentators at the time thought that Plan B had backfired.

The get-tough strategy for the federalists won the legal battle against Quebec sovereignty, after a fashion. The unrequested compulsion to negotiate in the event of a successful referendum took away the government’s ideological ground, virtually negating the legal victory.

Lucien Bouchard, at the time Premier of Quebec and leader of the pro-sovereignty Parti Québécois, refused to recognize the entire process.

And fair enough.

The nine judges were appointed by the federal government. And they were ruling according to a Constitution to which no elected government in Quebec had ever consented. True to form, the judges ruled against Quebec’s right to self-determination. And what’s more, the ruling expressly denied that Quebec is an oppressed nation within the federation.

But the entire history of Quebec belies such legalisms. And the mere fact that the Supreme Court was even debating Quebec’s right to secede indicates that there is an issue of national oppression to discuss, despite the interpretation of the judges.

### Politics

Importantly, however, the legal ruling did not reduce the political debate to a matter of law, which was what then-Prime Minister Jean Chrétien and his supporters had hoped. Instead, the judges threw the issue of negotiating sovereignty back into the court of the politicians.

In the months after the ruling, political debate about Quebec’s right to self-determination intensified.

The Supreme Court’s ruling against Quebec’s right to self-determination was a clear expression of the oppressive character of the federal state.

The leaders of the Parti Québécois and Bloc Québécois were and remain committed to the capitalist system without apology, including all the cuts, union-busting and exploitation that goes with it. But no genuine unity between workers in Quebec and English Canada is possible if it based on threats and coercion.

And the ruling came along with a caveat that reveals a deep divide within the federalist section of the Canadian ruling class about how to address the sentiment for independence within Quebec.

The bigots in English Canada, including those in the federal Liberals and the then Opposition Reform Party (read: Stephen’s Harper’s alma mater), were cringing about part of the Supreme Court ruling. They had unleashed a process that ruled that negotiation in good faith was to be followed should a clear majority in Quebec choose to secede on the basis of winning a clear referendum question.

The national question in Canada was hardly settled by the Supreme Court ruling. Stéphane Dion, the Liberals’ Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, had already renewed the threats against Quebec. Chrétien had suggested that “a clear majority” to secede would be at least 67 per cent, despite his insistence that the federalists won in the October 1995 referendum by only 0.6 per cent above 50. This was the background to the Clarity Act, ultimately passed into law in 2000.

But the fact that the federalists did not fully have the outcome they hoped for indicated that in one sense the Supreme Court judges were right. It is politics that would determine the outcome of Quebec’s relationship with the rest of Canada in the future.

But what type of politics remains an open question to this day. The growth of Québec solidaire in Quebec, which advances a new type of sovereignty and solidarity with progressive forces in English Canada, poses a challenge. It is not, as the judges perceived, the politics of the elite, but the politics of mass struggle among workers in common cause in Quebec and English Canada that will be decisive.



## Pipelines and poverty kill in Kenya

by **SALMAAN ABDUL HAMID KHAN**

**ON SEPTEMBER 12 a leaking oil pipeline passing through the densely populated Sinai slum in Kenya exploded, killing more than 100 people and leaving scores horribly burnt.**

According to Daniel Mutinda, a spokesperson from the Kenyan Red Cross, an “informal school” close to the site of the explosion had been particularly badly affected. “They have all been burnt,” he said. Driven by acute poverty and desperation, many of the victims were caught in the fire as they scoured the area with jerry cans, trying to collect as much of the leaking oil as they could.

In response to this tragedy, the Kenya Pipeline Company, a state run corporation, has accepted no responsibility, and in an interview following the incident, a spokesperson for the KPC demanded that those who managed to take some of the oil before the fire erupted “should return it immedi-

ately.” Rather than acknowledge the dangers of transporting fossil fuels, the Kenyan government has pledged that it will forcefully evict slum dwellers that live close to pipelines.

### Molo Fire

This is not the first oil spill accident of its kind in Kenya: the “Molo Fire” in 2009 resulted in the deaths of more than 130 and left hundreds more injured. These tragic incidents serve as reminders about the risks associated with dangerous and dirty fossil fuels and the threat they pose to the surrounding population.

In Nigeria, an estimated 2,000 lives have been lost in recent years as a result of pipeline related accidents. According to the Associated Press, the Shell Oil Company spilled an estimated 4.5 million gallons of oil in Nigeria in 2009 alone, and according to Niger Delta Campaigners, there are almost “300 oil spills a year in Nigeria.” Not only is the population exposed to risks of oil fires but the leaking oil destroys

precious farm land and pollutes nearby water reserves.

Given the threats posed, it is inconceivable as to why any government would approve of the proposed 2,673 km Keystone XL pipeline. The pipeline would carry up to 900,000 barrels of oil per day from Canada’s tar sands in Alberta—one of the most destructive energy projects in the world—to refineries on the Gulf Coast.

According to a University of Nebraska study, the Keystone XL pipeline is likely to leak nearly 100 times over the next 50 years. Increasing this risk is that fact that the corrosive oil found in the Alberta Tar Sands must be pumped under high temperature and pressure, dramatically weakening the pipelines and increasing the potential for oil spills.

Given this impending threat, not only to the lives of innocent people but to the surrounding environment, it is important that we organize against the Keystone XL pipeline, and prevent future “Molo Fires” and Sinai tragedies.

## BP returns for more profits and pollution

by **JOHN BELL**

**BP HAS filed applications to drill new deep-water wells in the Gulf of Mexico. The applications came just one week after a US government report confirmed what the whole world already knows: that BP was “ultimately responsible” for the explosion of the Deepwater Horizon rig which killed 11 workers and resulted in over 5 million barrels of oil fouling the Gulf.**

US environmental groups are appalled by the timing, and are seeking to block BP through the courts.

BP is anxious to get going, as the Macondo oil field was its most profitable operation. Its rivals have been pumping the region while it was

forced to sit out.

Cynically, BP proposes to use future Gulf profits to pay into the \$20 billion fund, mandated by the White House, to clean up the oil still washing up on beaches throughout the region.

Meanwhile, aerial photographs show that a massive oil slick is resurfacing in the area of the Macondo spill, raising two possibilities: either attempts to disburse the oil using chemicals (just as toxic as the oil itself) have failed, or attempts to cap the well itself failed and leaking continues.

Analysis of surface oil samples from the region done by scientists from Louisiana State University proved them chemically identical to oil from the BP well. They believe that the well

is still leaking and call on the government to check.

The US Coast Guard insists it has not seen any new oil slicks. USCG officials suggest the new oil samples are “natural seepage, or a burp out of the wreckage down below.” BP concurs. Based on experience of the past year and-a-half, both are lying.

Meanwhile, new studies reveal that, far from returning to normal, Gulf spawning grounds remain toxic and fish are exhibiting a wide range of health problems and deformities.

Scientists expect many other species, including commercially important snappers, shrimp and oysters will suffer chronic illness that shortens their lives and lowers their ability to reproduce.

September 27. On October 2 dockworkers throughout the country shut down ports in opposition to cuts to pensions. On September 29 there were mass strikes and demonstrations in Greece, Portugal, Ireland, Slovenia and Lithuania. That same day, over 100,000 marched on the European Union’s headquarters in Brussels in a demonstration organized by the European Trade Union Confederation.

As we go to press, analysts are now openly speculating about the need for European banks to accept as much as a 50 per cent write-off of Greek debt. It’s up to workers in Greece and around the world to make sure that the banks’ write-off is 100 per cent.



# Libya and the myth of ‘humanitarian intervention’

## NATO’s bloody history

by **PAUL STEVENSON**

**FAR FROM signaling the “end of history,” the end of the Cold War left the world open to a new and volatile competition between states. The US, while publicly proclaiming that it was the lone superpower, was still worried about the emergence of potential rivals.**

Russia was economically weakened, but retained a huge nuclear arsenal. China had (and still has) a rapidly growing economy. Western Europe competed directly for resources and markets. Together, they represented a major threat to US dominance.

In June 1999, a report called “Coalitions of the Willing: NATO and Post-Cold War Military Intervention” argued that “NATO has several important post-Cold War roles. These roles include providing a hedge against a long-term revival of Russian expansionism, projecting stability eastward by taking in new members as well as by contributing to the establishment of a cooperative European security system, and helping to prevent the re-emergence of national rivalries in Europe.”

For the US, the United Nations was an inadequate vehicle for American imperial ambitions. China and Russia, both permanent members of the Security Council, would prevent UN-sponsored military interventions from securing Western interests at their expense.

NATO, therefore, became the vehicle for numerous interventions that have ensured a dominant US military presence in their wake.

### The Balkans

The NATO bombing and subsequent occupation of the Balkans left five permanent US bases on Russia’s western borders and an American foothold in a strategically crucial area.

Far from being a war to protect civilians, the NATO conflict in the former Yugoslavia exacerbated nationalist tensions. Internal displacement of ethnic groups was accelerated by the bombing campaigns in Serbia and Kosovo in 1999. Over 15 years after the first NATO combat operations, tensions between various forces continue to grow.

### Afghanistan

The first salvo in the “war on terror,” the NATO bombing and invasion of Afghanistan have resulted in tens of thousands dead and more than a million displaced. The situation for the people of Afghanistan continues to deteriorate, with poverty and corruption even more widespread than in 2001.

The war’s original goals are even further out of reach after a decade of occupation. The real interests of the West are to establish a military beachhead in Central Asia on China’s borders and to

control pipeline routes from the Caspian Sea region.

### Libya vs. Bahrain

The idea of a humanitarian mission has fooled many in the West who have been inundated with images of violence from around the world. But the selective application of R2P and the involvement of the West in fuelling local conflicts prove that “humanitarianism” is just a smokescreen.

For example, compare the responses to the uprisings in Libya and Bahrain. In Libya, the call for R2P was immediate. In Bahrain, the same backers of intervention never mention the killing of civilians by the Bahraini regime. The reason? Bahrain is a close ally of the Saudi pro-West dictatorship.

Another justification comes from the idea that the West must “protect” people in failed and failing states—a modern-day “White Man’s Burden.” But there is collective amnesia about the reasons some states “fail” in the first place—another attempt to erase the destructive role of imperialism around the world.

### Somalia

Take Somalia, for example. In early 2004 the Islamic Courts Union (ICU) took control of the country, largely by default, and established an indigenous leadership that didn’t represent Western interests. For the first time in decades, there was a real prospect for peace. The US, fearful of losing control over the longest coastline in Africa and crucial access to the Red Sea, backed an invasion by neighbouring Ethiopia. US air support helped destroy the ICU. Labeled a “humanitarian” mission by the US to rid Somalia of Islamist rule and “protect women’s rights,” it has led to years of warlord rule and the return of rape gangs. The US and its proxies made the state fail.

The Canadian government and its NATO partners have their own interests at heart whenever they use invoke R2P. They have no intention of liberating anyone from tyranny. Instead, they want to maintain strategic dominance for Western imperialism—at any cost. The utter failure of “humanitarian interventions” to achieve their publicly stated goals is proof that the concept is bankrupt.

**‘the main objectives for NATO were to gain control of the country and to sever links with revolutions in Egypt and Tunisia’**



**Paul Stevenson** examines NATO’s imperialist role in the Arab world and emerging divisions within the National Transitional Council over Libya’s future.

**T**he Conservative government is using the war in Libya to revive the concept of “humanitarian intervention” and to justify massive increases in military spending. Stephen Harper has argued that Canada should use its military for regime change around the world.

Echoing Harper, Foreign Affairs minister John Baird bragged in his recent United Nations speech that Canada has flown ten per cent of the bombing runs over Libya, adding that he wouldn’t hesitate to unleash the Canadian Forces abroad.

This is nothing new. NATO countries have peddled the myth of “humanitarian militarism” since the end of the Cold War—to justify NATO’s existence once the Eastern Bloc had dissolved, and to muster support for military interventions from the Balkans to Afghanistan and Iraq. It’s the same old sheep’s clothing for the imperial wolves, and a cause of confusion for liberals in the West who are swayed by arguments about “protecting civilians” from dictatorial regimes.

### Foreign intervention

The Responsibility to Protect (R2P) doctrine is an attempt to codify this idea into international law. Conceived at a conference initiated by the Canadian government in 2001, the doctrine has subsequently been the basis for foreign intervention in Libya, Sudan, Somalia and Afghanistan. But the problem for NATO planners is the catastrophe of Bush’s wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, both justified as “humanitarian” missions. As their real motives were exposed and the situation in both countries deteriorated, the shine quickly came off the R2P concept. This is why war in Libya is so crucial for NATO and the West.

The revolution in Libya, inspired by revolutions in neigh-

bouring Tunisia and Egypt, has gone through a series of changes since it first began in February. Early protests were brutally attacked by the Gadhafi regime and quickly became an armed uprising. Initially, the movement was explicit in its opposition to foreign military intervention. As the weeks progressed, the composition of the opposition changed, with many former Gadhafi loyalists defecting and taking over the reins of the Transitional National Council (TNC). The demands of the uprising also began to change.

As socialist Simon Assaf writes: “The current leaders of the TNC owe their position to the West, and have become representatives of the Western interests in Libya. Their influence grew during the counter-offensive, as their alliance with the West brought international backing, as well as the no-fly zone and political, financial and military muscle. The young revolutionaries had little else to offer.

“These defeats deflected the revolution. The aspiration for total transformation of Libyan society was replaced by the drive for a simple change at the top—the removal of Moammar Gadhafi, his sons and a few others around the ruling circle. The faltering revolution presented imperialism with an opportunity to place itself between the Tunisian and Egyptian Revolutions, and French president Nicolas Sarkozy, always the opportunist, moved like a demon to implant imperialism back into North Africa.”

As the tanks surrounded Benghazi and the attacks on protesters increased, the call for foreign support from this section of the opposition hit a fever pitch, and the UN moved to pass resolution 1973 which called for a no-fly zone over Libya.

Almost immediately, NATO expanded its role from providing a

no-fly zone to using air strikes to hit all military targets. Canadian Lt.-Gen. Charles Bouchard, the overall commander of the NATO intervention, even called for an expanded bombing campaign to include buildings that “could” be used for military purposes.

### The fall of Tripoli

Since the fall of Tripoli, the role of NATO has changed again, to include providing policing and security for the new government. The concern for NATO is that the movement that fought against the Gadhafi regime is made up of many different forces, each of which has its own interests and aims. These different currents are competing for some control over the future of the country. But NATO has no intention of giving up its spoils, and it needs to maintain a military presence to stop the situation from turning against it.

Libya has extensive oil fields. Western corporations are lining up to exploit these resources, to gain valuable reconstruction contracts in the country. But many of these contracts are not new. They existed under Gadhafi and are simply being revived under the TNC. These lucrative deals are a nice byproduct for Western corporations, but are not the principal reason they went to war in Libya.

### Counter-revolution

The main objectives for NATO were to gain control of the country and to sever potential links with the revolutions in Egypt and Tunisia. NATO saw this as an opportunity to contain—and eventually roll back—the gains of the Arab Spring.

One thing is certain: the interests of NATO and the interests of the Libyan people will never be the same. As Libyans struggle to shape their post-Ghaddafi future, this fact will become even more apparent.



# TEN YEARS OF THE ‘WAR ON TERROR’



Ten years after the launch of the “war on terror,” **James Clark** examines the failure of US imperialism to achieve its aims in Central Asia and the Middle East, and the prospects for resistance in the Arab Spring.

When the US launched its war in Afghanistan, imperial planners in Washington had set their sights on a much bigger prize. Despite all the talk of women’s rights and building democracy, the real aim of the war—just the first step of the “war on terror”—was to guarantee US global dominance in the 21st century.

A decade later, their plan is in ruins, although millions of people continue to feel its deadly effects. But the decade that began with 9/11 has ended with the Arab Spring. This should give us hope that it’s possible not only to resist imperialism, but also to think about building an alternative to it.

The blueprint for the “war on terror” goes back to the Project for the New American Century, a think tank backed by leading US neoconservatives in the 1990s that expressed their vision for a more robust and aggressive US imperialism. In the wake of the Cold War, neoconservatives such as Dick Cheney, Donald Rumsfeld, Paul Wolfowitz and Robert Zoellick worried that the US was too slow in taking advantage of the collapse of the Soviet Union to advance US interests in newly opened regions of the world. They perceived multilateralism, international law and global institutions as barriers that gave a competitive edge to US rivals. That vision informed US foreign policy under George W. Bush’s two terms as president, and betrayed US ruling class fears about the declining relative strength of the US economy (<http://bit.ly/qfkh9f>).

**Iraq**  
Cheney and Condoleezza Rice—Bush’s National Security Adviser during 9/11—saw the event as an “opportunity.” Although the war began in Afghanistan, the Pentagon was targeting Iraq almost immediately. According to the New York Times, a document called “Iraq: Goals, Objectives and Strategy” appeared in August 2002, which laid out US war plans: leave a “light footprint” in Iraq, and then quickly topple regimes in Syria and Iran (<http://nyti.ms/qzhhp3>). Bush & Co. thought Iraq would fall quickly, allowing the US to redraw the map of entire the Middle East.

In fact, the US was so confident of its plan, US General Tommy Franks announced shortly after his arrival in Baghdad in April 2003 that US troops would be reduced from 140,000 to 30,000 in just two months (<http://bit.ly/nQdPyX>).

The plan was part of a larger project to entrench US dominance in the region. Instead, it achieved the opposite result. The US was pulled into a quagmire in Iraq, where 1.2 million Iraqis have been killed since 2003. By contrast, the US death toll stands at over 6,000. Tens of thousands of US troops remain in Iraq, propping up an unpopular and undemocratic regime in a country scarred by sectarian violence. Every political party that participates in the Iraqi government wants US troops to leave.

**Palestine**  
Across the region, the effects of the war have

also undermined US influence. In Palestine, the pro-West, pro-US Fatah faction was routed by Hamas in 2006 elections, despite US intervention. Fatah only regained power by force, seizing control of the West Bank a year later, with US and Israeli backing. Hamas still runs Gaza. Under pressure from its base, Fatah has now turned on the US with its recent statehood bid at the United Nations.

Israel, the US watchdog in the region, suffered an unprecedented defeat at the hands of Hizbullah in the 33-day war with Lebanon in summer 2006, boosting resistance movements across the Arab world. In the wake of Israel’s war on Gaza in 2009, anti-Israel and anti-US sentiment spiked, further isolating the US and its allies.

Far from toppling the government in Iran, the war has actually helped strengthen Iran’s influence, which is now one of the biggest power-brokers in Iraq and the broader Middle East. Despite its sabre-rattling and talk of Weapons of Mass Destruction in Iran, the US has been unable to intervene as it had originally planned, although the threat of intervention remains.

**Afghanistan**  
To make matters worse, the “good war” in Afghanistan—which the US neglected during its war in Iraq—has now become the “bad war,” with US casualties now surpassing their rate in Iraq. Tens of thousands of Afghans have been killed. NATO military leaders and their political counterparts all over Europe now openly speculate about losing the war and the consequences of a US withdrawal. Resistance movements have grown in Pakistan, where the war has spread across the border, fuelling even more opposition and instability in Central Asia.

In early 2009, the US-backed Ethiopian invasion of Somalia brought the “war on terror” to Africa. The proxy war was partly in response to the waning political and economic influence of the US across the continent, as rivals such as China sank deeper roots and secured more oil and gas contracts.

**Arab Spring**  
In North Africa and the Arab Middle East, opposition to the war has helped nurture nascent democracy movements that dramatically burst onto the scene in December 2010. Their high point has been the toppling of key US allies, Tunisian President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali and Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak. Since then, a wave of revolt has spread through Libya, Bahrain, Syria and Yemen, with movements on the rise almost everywhere else. Even Saudi Arabia, a staunch US ally, has felt the shock-waves of regional revolutions.

By no means are the movements sweeping the region the direct result of the “war on terror.” Their roots can be traced to the Second Intifada in Palestine in 2000, which laid the foundation on which much of the resistance movements have grown. They also owe their success to the internal opposition movements that persevered through years of repression under brutal dictators. In particular, they were

boosted by a period of global anti-war solidarity that reached its zenith in February and March 2003, when literally millions marched to stop the Iraq War.

The combination of indigenous resistance movements in the Arab world and international solidarity has helped improve the terrain on which the Arab Spring emerged over the last year. Although the Arab Spring is far from over, and although it continues to face serious setbacks—not the least of which has been NATO’s intervention in Libya—it nevertheless represents a stunning reversal for US imperialism in the region, especially in light of the US’s ambitious war plans in 2001 and 2002.

**Economic crisis**  
In the midst of the “war on terror,” the US has had to face an additional, unexpected setback: the global economic crisis of 2008, which looks poised to throw the world into another global recession. The crisis has created three serious problems for US imperialism. First, it has made the cost of the war even more expensive in a weakened US economy. Nobel Prize-winning economist Joseph Stiglitz estimates the cost could reach \$3 trillion (<http://thetim.es/pWiXJx>). After a decade at war with no real gains, the US will soon be unable to afford a war on the scale of the last ten years.

Second, the crisis has generated widespread anger and discontent in the US and elsewhere, which appears to be growing: witness the strike waves in Europe and the Occupy Wall Street movement in the US.

Third, and most importantly, the crisis has sparked a deepening discussion about the nature of global capitalism—how it impoverishes billions while prosecuting endless wars—such that ordinary people are now increasingly open to alternatives to the global economic system. The war that was meant to ensure US global dominance in the 21st century appears to have fuelled a reaction that could lead to its undoing.

Herein lies the hope of the Arab Spring, and its potential to spread all over the world. If there is a lesson from the last ten years of war, it is this: resistance matters.

Millions of people, from Afghanistan and Iraq to Palestine and Somalia, have refused to accept the agenda imposed by the “war on terror.” Their resistance has made possible the emergence of movements that are now considering more than just opposition to war and imperialism. They are taking the first steps to change the world around them, and on terms that put the interests of humanity before those of global capital.

We still have a very long way to go, but the entry onto the world stage of masses of ordinary people, taking their lives into their own hands, is a major development. After ten long years of war, there is now hope that we might be able to stop it.

As the resistance movements show, it will be up to ordinary people to do it. The slogan on the homemade placard of a single Wall Street protester seems to say it best:

“We’re the ones we’ve been waiting for.”



## Civil liberties: The long struggle for justice

by JESSICA SQUIRES

**MOHAMMAD MAHJOUB, Mahmoud Jaballah, Hassan Almrei, Mohamed Harkat and Adil Charkaoui: arrested on security certificates. Ahmad Abou El-Maati: jailed and tortured in Syria. Ahmad Abou El-Maati: renditioned to Egypt. Abdullah Almalki: arrested and detained in Syria. Omar Khadr: tortured at Bagram and Guantánamo Bay. Maher Arar: renditioned to Syria and tortured. Abousfian Abdelrazik: detained without charge in Sudan. Muayyed Nureddin: detained and turned over to Syria. Bashir Makhtal: transferred to Ethiopia, perhaps to face the death penalty (he’s still there). Hassan Diab: facing extradition to France on hearsay evidence.**

All Muslim. All detained or imprisoned—in Canada or abroad. All publicly smeared by the Canadian government and Canadian security forces. Many tortured, often with Canadian complicity.

This is the record of civil liberties in Canada. If the list seems overwhelming, consider this: it’s only a sample of government attacks on civil liberties since 2001. It doesn’t include dozens of young Muslim men detained, deported or wrongfully charged and imprisoned over crimes they didn’t commit. The most high-profile of these cases have corresponded with parliamentary debates or government media releases about “fighting terror”—especially attempts to restrict civil liberties.

While Muslims have been the primary targets of attacks on civil liberties, the wider public has also been affected. The G20 Summit in Toronto in June saw the biggest mass arrest in Canadian history: over 1,100 arrested, but fewer than 100 now charged. International speakers critical of Canadian foreign policy have been denied entry into Canada—including British MP George Galloway, US anti-war leader Medea Benjamin, and Palestinian democracy activist Dr. Mustafa Barghouti. Similarly, Canadian NGOs have had their funding cut, not because they didn’t meet requirements for it, but because they opposed the Harper agenda: KAIROS and the Canadian Arab Federation are just two examples.

Since Canada’s “Anti-Terrorism Act” (ATA) became law on December 18, 2001, the RCMP and CSIS have launched a series of operations that have violated the most basic rights and freedoms guaranteed by Canadian law. Project O Canada, a Toronto-based RCMP anti-terrorism investigation, with arms in Ottawa and Montreal, led to the wrongful detention and rendition abroad of Canadians Maher Arar, Muayyed Nureddin, Abdullah Almalki and Ahmad El Maati. Project Thread, an operation of the RCMP’s Public Security and Anti-Terrorism unit, raided homes and arrested 26 young men, accusing them of terrorism; none were ever charged and almost all were deported to countries that treated them as if they had been convicted. Almost half of the so-called Toronto 18, arrested and detained under the ATA, had all their charges stayed.

But the picture is not entirely bleak. A number of important victories in the fight to defend civil liberties have helped improve the terrain for future struggles. The importance of these victories should not be underestimated, especially in light of the difficult conditions in which they were won.

**Victories**  
In 2002 the Supreme Court of Canada ruled that deportation to countries suspected of torture may be justified only in “exceptional circumstances.” In 2006 the O’Connor Inquiry entirely cleared Maher Arar. The government was forced to issue a public apology and compensate him with \$10 million. Although its recommendations have yet to be fully implemented, the ruling was crucial: it exposed the government’s complicity in violating civil liberties, and changed the terms of debate among the public.

In 2007 the Supreme Court ruled security certificates are unconstitutional in several aspects. Some detainees were released, although under harsh conditions. Also in 2007, Arar received an apology from the US House of Representatives. (Despite these successes, the Canadian Parliament renewed the ATA that year.)

In 2008 Adil Charkaoui successfully argued to the Supreme Court that CSIS’ destruction of evidence, retaining only the written summaries of interviews, was an infringement of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Omar Khadr’s lawyers succeeded in forcing the release of video footage of Khadr’s interrogation by US authorities. Their release further exposed Canadian complicity in torture. And the Jacobucci Inquiry exonerated Muayyed Nureddin, Abdullah Almalki and Ahmad El Maati, finding Canadian officials partly to blame for their torture.

In late 2009 Charkaoui’s security certificate was quashed. The one against Almrei was ruled unreasonable. These victories were made possible by two factors. First, the Canadian anti-war movement was a global leader in recognizing the role of Islamophobia in the “war on terror.” In the days after 9/11, it took a clear position against racist scapegoating, uniting with Muslims, Arabs and their allies against attacks on their civil liberties.

**Anti-war movement**  
Second, the anti-war movement committed to defending civil liberties as part of its anti-war opposition, defending those under attack—even when it was unpopular to do so. Without a doubt, there were many debates, but the movement was vindicated. The links between the government’s pro-war agenda abroad and its attacks on civil liberties at home are much more obvious than before.

War always breeds racism. World War I saw anti-immigrant discrimination and widespread detention. World War II saw anti-Semitism and internment camps for Japanese-Canadians. Creating a dehumanized “other” at home—to

blame for conflict abroad—is a tried-and-true tactic of almost every government at war. There are still major challenges facing us. The Conservatives plan to reintroduce the ATA, even though it expired in the previous Parliament. The changes to security certificates in Bill C-3 are only cosmetic, while fundamental problems remain. New certificates have been issued against all five of the men fighting them, and three certificates are still to be fought in the courts and in the public eye. Nureddin, Almalki and El Maati still await an apology. Although finally let back into Canada, Abdelrazik is barred from employment and his name remains on the UN no-fly list. Diab could soon be deported under Canada’s unfair extradition laws. Nevertheless, resistance must continue. And it will. While still too few in number, every victory defending civil liberties makes another one possible—even in difficult circumstances. As we re-new our movement a decade after 9/11, the key is to keep solidarity at the heart of every struggle.





PALESTINE

The Arab Spring is the real ‘peace process’

FOR DECADES the West has maintained control of the oil-rich Middle East by arming Israeli apartheid and Arab dictatorships; it has denounced Palestinian resistance while preaching “peace process” negotiations with an increasingly complicit Palestinian Authority. But the Arab Spring is throwing this imperial structure into crisis.

Solidarity with Palestine has been an important part of the ongoing Egyptian Revolution, like September’s storming of the Israeli Embassy in Cairo. The revolution is threatening a key pillar of US control in the region, and exposing how much Israel relies on regional dictatorships.

The Arab Spring has also challenged the subservience of the Palestinian Authority (PA), which the Palestine Papers revealed has been a willing participant in Israeli apartheid. In order to salvage legitimacy and reassert its strategy of negotiating, the PA has symbolically stood up for Palestine with a UN bid for statehood.

In practice, the proposed state would be a disaster for most Palestinians, which is why many oppose it: it would cede to Israel majority control over historic Palestine, and ignore the majority of Palestinians who live outside Gaza and the West bank—either under apartheid conditions inside Israel, or in the global diaspora denied the right of return. This is the reality of the two-state solution, which will never bring peace and justice.

But even this minimal statehood bid has called the West’s bluff, revealing the “peace process” negotiated by imperial powers to be a sham. This has rallied many more to the Palestinian cause, further isolated Israel and exposed its Western backers. This could add fuel to the fire of the Arab Spring, which is the real peace process: a revolutionary wave with the potential to create a Middle East free of dictatorship and apartheid.

TORY SCAPEGOATING

The real threat is Harper-icism

Prime Minister Stephen Harper declared that “the major threat [to Canada] is still Islamicism” while Jason Kenney, Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism, and Vic Toews, Minister of Public Safety, were hard at work over the summer months padding the Conservative’s shameful record of attacking immigrants. They went on a witch-hunt for ‘war criminals’ by releasing the names and photographs of thirty men residing in Canada. None of these men had ever faced trial for crimes against humanity or war crimes; however, their applications for asylum had been denied because of suspicions they had engaged in such crimes. These allegations were the pretext for deportation of at least four of the men and even caused a foreign ambassador to express surprise that one of his countrymen was wanted for such crimes. Meanwhile Kenney allowed real war criminal Dick Cheney—partly responsible for the Iraq War that killed a million people—to freely enter and leave Canada.

Kenney’s office then announced the creation of a tip line for members of the public to report any immigrants they suspect of “false representation, fraud or knowingly concealing material circumstances in the citizenship process.” We already know the kind of people who are going to be ratted out by racist busybodies for ‘jumping the queue’—those who would look out of place at a Conservative Cabinet photo-op.

And with Kenney’s and Toews’ re-introduction of ‘Human Smuggling’ Bill C-4, which among other things proposes the mandatory detention of migrants for twelve months, the message the Canadian government is sending to newcomers is clear: you’re not welcome in ‘our’ country.

Resources are being squandered on detention, investigation and policing at a time when the immigration waiting list is already sitting at 900,000 cases and citizens can wait years to be allowed to sponsor their spouses back home, and even longer to sponsor their parents, to join them.

But once they do make it here, racialized immigrants will be facing many of the same problems Canada’s Indigenous people currently face, including disproportionate surveillance and incarceration. And with the Conservative’s omnibus crime bill, things aren’t going to get any better. The bill will double the budget for policing, expand prisons, enforce mandatory minimum sentences, and focus on punishment instead of rehabilitative programs—all at a time when crime rates have been declining steadily.

This bill is based on a bankrupt US model which both crime victims and legislators in that country admit doesn’t work and will not meet any of the Harper government’s dubious claims to prevent crime or help victims. What it will do is waste billions of dollars on the construction of new state-of-the-art prisons, and the employment of more police, lawyers, prison guards etc., with most of the costs being downloaded onto the provincial and territorial governments.

While increasing the Corrections budget, Harper’s Conservatives will also continue throwing away billions of dollars on their imperialist interventions in Afghanistan, all under the guise of ridding that war-torn nation of ‘Islamicism.’

The anti-war movement responded with the slogan “Islam is not the enemy, war is not the answer.” Solidarity is essential to fight the real “major threat”: war, racism austerity and the climate change.

OPINION



Pipeline ethics: profit is god

*John Bell takes on the myth of ‘ethical oil’ and looks at the growing movement against the Keystone XL pipeline and Canada’s Tar Sands.*

The movement on both sides of the Canada/US border to stop the construction of the Keystone XL pipeline can measure its strength by the massive, multi-million dollar corporate ad campaign designed to sell the public on the project.

The pipeline would run from Alberta’s Tar Sands to Texas refineries through some of the most environmentally sensitive regions of the US, particularly the Ogallala Aquifer, fresh water source for most of the western states.

A powerful grass-roots coalition of First Nations, environmentalists and western ranchers and farmers in the US staged the largest demonstration of peaceful civil disobedience in decades to expose the dangers of the project. Several thousands of activists were arrested sitting-in at the White House.

In Canada, several hundred people were arrested on Parliament Hill, at a demonstration designed not only in solidarity with the pipeline activists in the US, but also to raise the demand to shut down the Tar Sands entirely.

They also oppose the Gateway pipeline. Energy giant Enbridge, along with Chinese financial backers, proposes to build the Gateway pipe through unceded First Nations territories to new deepwater ports in BC. The route covers fragile mountain and river ecosystems. And the super-tankers carrying the oil abroad would have to traverse some of the riskiest coastal waters in the world—an accident that would dwarf the Exxon Valdez disaster would be a constant threat.

Unethical oil

If we have activism and numbers on our side, those pushing the Keystone XL and Tar Sands development have bags of money, political connections and outright lies.

In Canada, a highly promoted blogger named Alykhan Velshi is the chief tout of “ethical oil.” Velshi was parliamentary aide to Jason Kenney and a key insider with the Harper government. He is alleged to have

illegally used his influence to bar British parliamentarian and anti-war activist George Galloway from entering Canada, and is now, along with Kenney, subject of a lawsuit from Galloway.

His slavish devotion to the Tar Sands, and all things Tory, has landed Velshi a new job. He has been appointed to the board of the Toronto Atmospheric Fund by Toronto Mayor Rob Ford. The TAF has been pushing the city to reduce its oil dependence, and is one of the legacies of Jack Layton’s tenure at City Hall.

Bogus environmental assessment In the US, a key lobbyist for the pipeline project is Paul Elliot, former press secretary for Secretary of State Hillary Clinton. Clinton is on record supporting the Keystone project and a State Department “environmental assessment” has given the thumbs up to the pipe.

That assessment is worthless. The State Department allowed TransCanada, lead corporation in the Keystone project, to choose the agency to perform the assessment. TransCanada picked Houston-based Cardno Entrix. The New York Times has revealed that Cardno Entrix lists TransCanada as describes the pipeline company as a “major client” in its marketing materials.

Now Clinton is working furiously to sweep this gross conflict of interest back under the rug.

She isn’t the only liar on the corporate side. Koch Industries (leading funders of the Tea Party movement), told Congress that their companies were not involved in the pipeline in any way. They lied. Their subsidiary, First Hills Resources Canada, is a major backer of the Canadian portion of the pipe.

The corporate campaign rests on two main pillars: the Tar Sands and associated pipelines will create jobs, and the Canadian sourced oil is more “ethical” than oil coming from oppressive countries like Saudi Arabia.

The promise of jobs is feeble. Capital intensive industries like oil

production and pipelines produce fewer jobs than other sectors. The province of Alberta’s own statistics show that oil extraction ranks dead last in job creation out of 58 industrial sectors.

For each million dollars invested, three person-years of employment are created in Tar Sands extraction and pipelines. The same amount invested in transit and ground passenger transportation produces about 25 person-years; in healthcare and social assistance about 20 person-years; in education about 18 person-years; in construction about 11 person-years.

In short, any other economic endeavour under the sun would produce more jobs, and greener jobs, than the oil industry.

The “ethical oil” argument is equally farcical. Are we to rely on slimy characters like Velshi and Elliot for ethical judgments of any kind?

Pitting Canadian Tar Sands oil (which requires massive amounts of energy to extract and process, and produces an equally massive amount of greenhouse gas emissions) against oil from Saudi Arabia or Nigeria is pure rhetoric. It ignores the fact that the oil extraction in oppressive regimes like Saudi Arabia is controlled by corporations based in the US, Britain or France.

There is plenty of investment from Saudi Arabia and China (another favourite “ethical oil” bogeyman) in the Tar Sands and in the pipeline projects. Saudi Arabian money is heavily invested in the Texas-based refineries at the end of the Keystone pipe.

It is likely that Obama will okay the Keystone project. That will not be the end of the story. Opposition to the Tar Sands has been mobilized and will continue to grow despite the millions spent on misleading corporate advertisements.

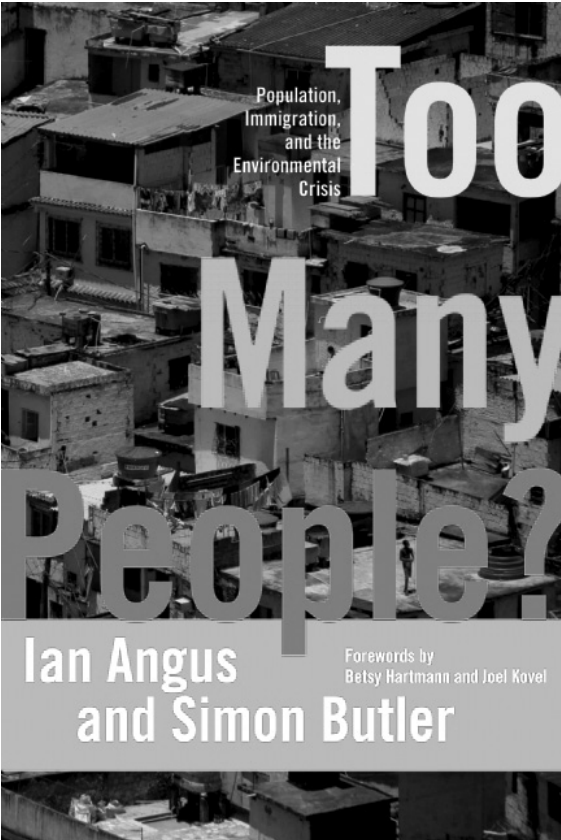
The only ones who stand to gain from the Tar Sands and the pipelines are a handful of massive corporations. They put their profits ahead of our welfare and our world. There’s nothing ethical about that.

Socialist Worker fighting fund

Thanks to the generous support of our readers, we have reached our goal of \$20,000 for the Socialist Worker Fighting Fund! Thank you to all of you who made this possible!



REVIEWS



Resistance Press Bookroom presents the launch of Ian Angus and Simon Butler’s new book

Too Many People  
Population,  
Immigration and the  
Environmental Crisis

Featuring co-authour Ian Angus

Toronto:  
Sunday, November 6  
3:00pm  
Trinity-St. Paul’s Centre  
427 Bloor St W  
info: torontosocialists1@gmail.com

Ottawa:  
  
  
TBD  
  
info: gosocialists@gmail.com

The reality of catastrophic climate change

Book • *Tropic of Chaos* • By Christian Parenti • Reviewed by *Ian Beeching*

IMAGINE LIVING in a community where bodies turn up in your back yard and a drink of water can land a bullet in your head. This is the story of Ekaru Loruman, a pastoralist in Kenya and one of thousands of victims of climate violence.

In *Tropic of Chaos*, Christian Parenti takes us on a vividly illustrated journey around the world showing the catastrophic convergence of climate change fuelling the violence and war of the 21st century. This brilliantly researched book takes us from tribal raiding in Africa fuelled by Cold War arms proliferation and changing weather patterns, to the walls of fear and reaction at home that meet the increasing numbers of climate refugees.

Through first-hand experience, Parenti brings together the legacy of colonialism, neoliberalism, climate change and imperialist wars. Parenti’s book starts with a bleak look at the reality of the science be-

hind climate change and the absurdity of its deniers. Even if we stop every green house gas emission today, climate change will still happen. The issue then becomes one of adapting to and mitigating the effects of climate change. Parenti brings to light the slew of government reports discussing the social and military challenges of climate change. These reports paint a future where countries that can afford to do so build “fortresses” around themselves as the rest of the world starves and where “warfare defines human life.” Parenti shows us how planning for war can in fact lead to it. **Hope** But there is hope! The final chapter brings us to the challenges facing the movement for climate justice. Drawing on the inspirational struggle in Bolivia where poor predominantly indigenous farmers and workers overthrew hundreds of years of

racism and exploitation throwing out a government bent on privatizing Bolivia’s water and replacing it with one that puts its peoples needs first. The severity of climate change has led Parenti to focus on reforming capitalism. Although he believes capitalism does not have a solution for the environmental crisis, it may be possible for capitalism to overcome the specific challenge of climate change. Western governments already have the resources and technology needed to slow and adapt to climate change, but greed gets in the way. My only critique of the book is that Parenti mistakes the fight for an alternative to capitalism as exclusive to fighting for reforms within it. Socialists around the world have thrown themselves into the struggle for climate justice. Yes reforms are essential but, until we have a system that puts humans relationship with our environment first, there will always be an Ekaru Loruman.

Clap hands for the meltdown

Music • *Pull up some dust and sit down* • By Ry Cooder • Reviewed by *John Bell*

IF ANYBODY was going to write the soundtrack for the new depression, it was bound to be Ry Cooder. Cooder has been equal parts slide guitar virtuoso and musical historian since the mid 1960s. Through the 1970s he released a string of recordings featuring sly and satirical reinventions of gems from blues, gospel and the Latino tradition of his native Los Angeles—roots music before there was a term for it. From the start he was drawn to music created by and for the working class. His takes on tunes like “How Can You Keep On Moving (Unless You Migrate Too),” “Ballad of Billy the Kid,” Leadbelly’s “Bourgeois Blues” and Woody Guthrie’s “Vigilante Man” rediscovered and celebrated the spirit of rebellion that grew in America through the Great Depression.

In 2007 he produced *My Name is Buddy*, an original homage to the struggles of the Great Depression, told by Buddy Red Cat, Lefty Mouse and Reverend Tom Toad. It was (according to the album artwork which featured an illustration of the Communist Manifesto) a “Journey through time and space in days of labor, big bosses, farm failures, strikes, company cops, sundown towns, hobos, and trains... the America of yesteryear.” The music was a glorious blend of bluegrass, jazz, polka, Tex-Mex, blues and rock and roll. That brings us to *Pull Up Some Dust and Sit Down*, Cooder’s response to today’s imperial wars and Wall Street greed. From the raucous opening strains of “No Banker Left Behind,” you know you’re in for smart ideas wrapped in eclectic but always appropriate musical styles.

“Christmas Time This Year” and “Baby Joined the Army” are unflinching anti-war songs. “Dirty Chateau” details the abuse of migrant workers. “Dreamer” returns to the disappointments and dignity of life in the LA barrios. “I Want My Crown” savages a legal system stacked against the working class, as Cooder growls “The working man has been cast down” to a solid rock beat. “Lord Tell Me Why (a white man ain’t worth nothing in the world today)” is Cooder’s take on the Tea Party movement, at once satirical and sympathetic. While this all sounds pretty down, the whole is fired up, just like the best work of the Depression troubadours Cooder admires. It is as if he is nominating himself as the Woody Guthrie of the new depression. He just might be.

LEFT JAB  
John Bell

Canada  
rebranded

CANADIAN TROOPS have been in Afghanistan for more than a decade, and I have never heard an honest and convincing reason why. To bring democracy to Afghans? To bring security at home? To bring liberation to women? None of those excuses hold water. Now, at last, Stephen Harper has provided a believable reason for the loss of 157 Canadian soldiers and a cost of \$1,500 per household (according to the government’s spectacularly underestimated total). We are occupying Afghanistan so Defence Minister Peter McKay can go to the Lobster Festival.

**Gravy plane** MacKay was vacationing in Labrador, salmon fishing on the Gander River, and wanted to round out the good times with some lobster. Plus he had a little government business to do in London, Ontario. So he summoned a search-and-rescue helicopter to pick him up in the wilds, dubbed it a “training exercise,” had a government executive Challenger jet (price tag \$10,000 per hour) pick him up at Gander Airport, flew to London, announced the Tories are investing money in building armoured personnel carriers, hopped back in the Challenger and made it to Nova Scotia in time to tie on the bib. MacKay likes to fly in style. He racked up 471 hours in the Challenger between January 2009 and June of this year. Harper defends MacKay, insisting the flights are for “important government business.” In particular, Harper cited MacKay’s regular attendance at ceremonies “repatriating” Canadian soldiers in Trenton, Ontario. He suggested that anyone that criticized his minister was less than patriotic.

NDP MP Jack Harris points out that just nine of 35 flights taken by MacKay were for such ceremonies. On one such occasion the Challenger flew to Tofino to pick up a vacationing MacKay, flew him to Trenton for the brief ceremony, flew him back to BC and then returned to Ottawa: price tag \$205,111.20. On another occasion the Challenger picked up MacKay after an Ottawa Senators game hyped as “Canadian Forces Appreciation Night,” flew him to his home riding where he announced spending for a local infrastructure project, then whisked him off to Toronto: price tag \$49,509.60. MacKay is a flying fool, and takes a lot of vacations in remote and beautiful corners of Canada. The son of power and privilege as well as a Tory power broker, he no doubt feels entitled to such treatment. As annoying as all that is, there is something else lurking behind all the boarding passes and dollar signs that bothers me. There is a purpose to MacKay’s jet setting ways: he is a central figure in the relentless Tory public relations campaign to rebrand Canada as a military power for the new millennium.

**Militarism** Chief of Defence Staff General Walter Natynczyk also racks up hundreds of hours in the Challenger. Natynczyk also uses the executive jet to go to fundraisers, and to football and hockey games. Stephen Harper and his ilk want to remake us in their own image. They are willing to spend as many of our tax dollars as it takes to do the job. Hockey games must become military pageants, with Don Cherry no doubt sporting his camo tuxedo for the occasion. The return of every body bag becomes an opportunity for military pomp and posturing. Who would dare criticize? Only a traitor. My militaristic country: love it or leave it.

**Move to the right** Harper is right in a sense: MacKay is doing important Tory business. Their mission is to drag Canadians to the right. This is not just about militarism, although war making and war spending are central to the project. Foreign Affairs Minister John Baird so hates walking into the Lester Pearson Building where his offices reside, he had the name removed from his gold-embossed business cards, along with the standard “Canada” logo. While I’m not a fan of Pearson or his autocratic successor, Pierre Trudeau, both men tower over the Tory mediocrity John Diefenbaker, the epitome of the grey, sexist, racist 1950s. Yet Dief’s name is being (in the words of a Canadian Press report) “slapped on awards, ships and public buildings as the Harper Conservatives work to paint a little Tory blue into the country’s political memory.”

**Abortion rights** When Tory MPs Brad Trost and Maurice Vellacott attack abortion rights and funding for Planned Parenthood, they are portrayed as “mavericks”. Yet both Harper’s right-hand man, Immigration Minister and Deputy Prime Minister Jason Kenny, and his Chief of Staff Nigel Wright, are dyed-in-the-wool anti-abortion crusaders. Trost and Vellacott surely have the blessing of their leaders as they attempt to reinvigorate the anti-choice minority and lead the charge against women’s rights.

**The rest of us** In September Jason Kenney took time out from his crusade against multi-culturalism to tell an Edmonton audience: “We have changed our perception of what it means to be Canadian.” Well, they haven’t yet. Most of us still oppose the war, support public health care, and embrace human rights. If they haven’t succeeded, it isn’t for lack of trying. Get ready to watch Harper et al spend the next four years, and an immense fortune, to drag us back to the Diefenbaker Stone Age. Now we’ll learn how cattle feel when they are rebranded. These Tories give me a searing pain in the ass.



## WHERE WE STAND

### The dead-end of capitalism

The capitalist system is based on violence, oppression and brutal exploitation. It creates hunger beside plenty. It kills the earth itself with pollution and unsustainable extraction of natural resources. Capitalism leads to imperialism and war. Saving ourselves and the planet depends on finding an alternative.

### Socialism and workers' power

Any alternative to capitalism must involve replacing the system from the bottom up through radical collective action. Central to that struggle is the workplace, where capitalism reaps its profits off our backs.

Capitalist monopolies control the earth's resources, but workers everywhere actually create the wealth. A new socialist society can only be constructed when workers collectively seize control of that wealth and plan its production and distribution to satisfy human needs, not corporate profits—to respect the environment, not pollute and destroy it.

### Reform and revolution

Every day, there are battles between exploited and exploiter, oppressor and oppressed, to reform the system—to improve living conditions. These struggles are crucial in the fight for a new world. To further these struggles, we work within the trade unions and orient to building a rank and file movement that strengthens workers' unity and solidarity.

But the fight for reforms will not, in itself, bring about fundamental social change. The present system cannot be fixed or reformed as NDP and many trade union leaders say. It has to be overthrown. That will require the mass action of workers themselves.

### Elections and democracy

Elections can be an opportunity to give voice to the struggle for social change. But under capitalism, they can't change the system. The structures of the present parliament, army, police and judiciary developed under capitalism and are designed to protect the ruling class against the workers. These structures cannot be simply taken over and used by the working class. The working class needs real democracy, and that requires an entirely different kind of state—a workers' state based upon councils of workers' delegates.

### Internationalism

The struggle for socialism is part of a worldwide struggle. We campaign for solidarity with workers in other countries. We oppose everything which turns workers from one country against those from other countries. We support all genuine national liberation movements.

The 1917 revolution in Russia was an inspiration for the oppressed everywhere. But it was defeated when workers' revolutions elsewhere were defeated. A Stalinist counter-revolution which killed millions created a new form of capitalist exploitation based on state ownership and control. In Eastern Europe, China and other countries a similar system was later established by Stalinist, not socialist parties. We support the struggle of workers in these countries against both private and state capitalism.

### Canada, Quebec, Aboriginal Peoples

Canada is not a "colony" of the United States, but an imperialist country in its own right that participates in the exploitation of much of the world. The Canadian state was founded through the repression of the Aboriginal peoples and the people of Quebec.

We support the struggles for self-determination of Quebec and Aboriginal peoples up to and including the right to independence. Socialists in Quebec, and in all oppressed nations, work towards giving the struggle against national oppression an internationalist and working class content.

### Oppression

Within capitalist society different groups suffer from specific forms of oppression. Attacks on oppressed groups are used to divide workers and weaken solidarity. We oppose racism and imperialism. We oppose all immigration controls. We support the right of people of colour and other oppressed groups to organize in their own defence. We are for real social, economic and political equality for women. We are for an end to all forms of discrimination and homophobia against lesbians, gays, bisexuals and transgendered people. We oppose discrimination on the basis of religion, ability and age.

### The Revolutionary Party

To achieve socialism the leading activists in the working class have to be organized into a revolutionary socialist party. The party must be a party of action, and it must be democratic. We are an organization of activists committed to helping in the construction of such a party through ongoing activity in the mass organizations of the working class and in the daily struggles of workers and the oppressed.

If these ideas make sense to you, help us in this project, and join the International Socialists.



# The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples: 15 years on

by VALERIE LANNON

**It is now 15 years since the release of the report by the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP). The Commission was established in 1991 in the wake of at least two key events: the so-called "Oka Crisis" and the failure of the Meech Lake Accord.**

The first event, the confrontation in Oka, Quebec in 1990 lasted 78 days, and saw the resistance of the Kanehsatake Mohawk people to encroachments on their territory proposed by the town of Oka, encroachments intended for a golf course. This struggle culminated in a stand-off with the Sûreté du Québec (the Quebec police), the RCMP and the Canadian Army. (This history has been brilliantly captured in a number of documentaries, including one produced by the National Film Board entitled *Kanehsatake: 270 years of Resistance* by filmmaker Alanis Obomsawin.)

During the same period, the 1987 Meech Lake Accord was under review for ratification by Quebec and the provinces. It represented an attempt by the Canadian state to have the people of Quebec accept the Canadian Constitution by formally recognizing Quebec as one of Canada's founding nations. Aboriginal people understandably objected to their exclusion from this formulation and also feared that, through increased provincial powers, there would be even further limits on future First Nations lands claims. In 1992, through a parliamentary move in the Manitoba legislature by First Nations MLA Elijah Harper, Aboriginal people succeeded in stopping the signing of the Meech Lake Accord.

So, through militant action on the ground and in the legislature, Aboriginal people had put their concerns on the political map in ways not seen since the heyday of the Red Power movement in the early 1970s. It was within the context of this political pressure that the Canadian government established RCAP in 1991.

### The RCAP process

The Commission was chaired by Georges Erasmus (a member of the Dene Nation and former head of the Assembly of First Nations) and

René Dussault (a Quebec lawyer now with the law firm of Heenan Blaikie, where Pierre Trudeau and others of the ruling class have historically been partners). In total, there were four Aboriginal and three non-Aboriginal commissioners. They toured Canada and Quebec and held 178 public hearings, visited 96 communities, consulted individuals and reviewed relevant literature and past inquiries.

In many ways, the commissioners did not pull their punches. While the final report is 4,000 pages long, there is a much more accessible document published by RCAP entitled "People to People, Nation to Nation." Within its opening pages can be found the following statements:

"There can be no peace or harmony unless there is justice .... Successive governments have tried – sometimes intentionally, sometimes in ignorance – to absorb Aboriginal people into Canadian society, thus eliminating them as distinct peoples. Policies pursued over the decades have undermined – and almost erased – Aboriginal cultures and identities. This is assimilation. It is a denial of the principles of peace, harmony and justice for which this country stands – and it has failed. Aboriginal peoples remain proudly different... Only as restored nations can they reach their potential in the twenty-first century."

### The report's recommendations

The full report is a five-volume 4,000 page document and contains 440 recommendations covering all the key aspects of the lives of Aboriginal people. Each volume contains a theme. Volume 1, "Looking Forward, Looking Back," has a focus on the historical relationship between indigenous peoples of Canada and Quebec, and settlers. The other volumes review modern, horrific living conditions and provide a range of optional responses, within a 20-year agenda to close the socioeconomic gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people, and to recognize Aboriginal peoples as self-governing nations with a unique place in Canada. Recommendations were made to both the Canadian government and First Nations.

Key recommendations include governance – a new Royal Proclamation to establish a new Nation-to-Nation relationship, recognition of Métis self-government, and the creation of an Aboriginal parliament. There are also legislative recommendations including the termination of the Indian Act and the Department of Indian Affairs (currently known as Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada), and the creation of a new department to implement the new Nation-to-Nation relationship, and a second department to provide services for non-self-governing communities (e.g. in urban areas, where an increasing proportion of Aboriginal people live).

Other recommendations call for a public inquiry into residential school abuse, the fulfillment of existing treaties and a new framework for negotiating new treaties, recognition of the Aboriginal right to self-determination, provision of land sufficient to foster Aboriginal economic self-reliance and cultural and political autonomy, improved Aboriginal access to resource-based economies, financing of Aboriginal economic development, a 10-year initiative to employ and train Aboriginal people, authority and resources to Aboriginal communities for child welfare, a framework for Aboriginal delivery of health and social services, a commitment to train 10,000 Aboriginal people over a 10-year period in health and social services, protection of traditional healing practices, resources to upgrade water and sewage systems, development of Aboriginally controlled education systems from early education to post-secondary, and many more.

The recommendations are sweeping in their scope. None of them would have come to public attention – in fact, the commission would never have happened – without a preceding history of militant resistance by Canada's indigenous people.

The question is, fifteen years on: have any of these recommendations been implemented? That will be the topic of our next article in this series.

The National Film Board video documenting the Oka crisis, *Kanehsatake: 270 years of Resistance* by filmmaker Alanis Obomsawin, can be purchased at <http://www.nfb.ca>

## international socialist events

### TORONTO

#### York IS club meetings

Every Wednesday, 3pm  
446 Student Centre  
info: [yorkusocialists@gmail.com](mailto:yorkusocialists@gmail.com)

#### The Politics of Stieg Larsson

speaker: Faline Bobier  
Sat, Oct 22, 6-9pm  
Fund-raising dinner  
info: [torontowest.is@gmail.com](mailto:torontowest.is@gmail.com)

#### Beirut 2011: A report back from the Summer University of Palestine

speaker: Abbie Bakan  
Sun, Oct 22, 4pm  
Fund-raising dinner \$10 or pwyc  
info: [pape.danforth@gmail.com](mailto:pape.danforth@gmail.com)

#### Film screening: Kent State 1970

Wed, Oct 26, 1pm  
Sid Smith, room 1080  
100 St George st  
info: [uoftinternational-socialists@gmail.com](mailto:uoftinternational-socialists@gmail.com)

#### Book launch: Too Many People? Population, Immigration, and the Environmental Crisis

speaker: co-author Ian Angus  
Sun, Nov 6, 3pm  
Trinity-St Paul's Centre  
427 Bloor St W  
info: [torontosocialists1@gmail.com](mailto:torontosocialists1@gmail.com)

### OTTAWA

#### Book launch: Too Many People? Population, Immigration, and the Environmental Crisis

speaker: co-author Ian Angus  
TBD  
info: [gosocialists@gmail.com](mailto:gosocialists@gmail.com)

### VANCOUVER

#### Forum: What is Marxism?

Wed, Oct 19, 12:30-1:30pm  
Langara College, room A218  
info: [vancouver.socialists@gmail.com](mailto:vancouver.socialists@gmail.com)

## peace & justice events

### TORONTO

#### Resist war and militarism: Building a movement for peace and justice

Canadian Peace Alliance  
bi-annual cvention  
Fri Oct 14- Sun 16  
info: [www.acp-cpa.ca](http://www.acp-cpa.ca)

#### Rally to defend reproductive rights

Sat Oct 22, 1-4pm  
Northeast corner of College and University  
Organized by the Ontario Coalition for Abortion Clinics  
info: [ocac88@gmail.com](mailto:ocac88@gmail.com)

#### Occupy Toronto

Sat, Oct 15, 10am  
info: [www.occupyto.org](http://www.occupyto.org)

### OTTAWA

#### Occupy Ottawa

Sat, Oct 15  
info: [occupyottawa.org](http://occupyottawa.org)

### VANCOUVER

#### Occupy Vancouver

Sat, Oct 15  
Vancouver Art Gallery  
info: [occupyvancouver.com](http://occupyvancouver.com)

## You can find the I.S. in:

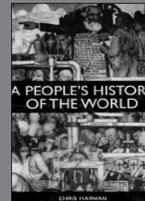
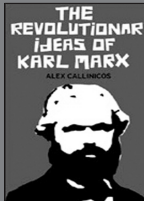
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For more event listings, visit [www.socialist.ca](http://www.socialist.ca).

## OPEN SATURDAYS, 12-3pm

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AIR CANADA  
by J.Y. HODGE

In what should be a red flag for labour negotiations in Canada, CUPE Local 4095 representing 6,800 Air Canada flight attendants secured a tentative agreement in mid-September hours before hitting the bricks. The last-minute negotiations that averted a strike happened under threat of back-to-work legislation from the federal labour minister Lisa Raitt.

The Air Canada workers flatly refused the contract and announced plans to walk off the job. However, Lisa Raitt once again intervened. As this paper was going to press, she asked the Industrial Relations Board to review the stalled contract talks. In doing so, she effectively rendered the strike illegal, leaving workers and the union open to severe fines for any strike action.

This marks the third time this year that the federal government has interfered with contract negotiations at Air Canada. Combined with the Canada Post enforced settlement (including government mandated wage rates that were below management offers) in the summer, the government message is clear: employers can count on Parliament Hill to deliver company-friendly in the face of an organized workforce. It is up to the union movement to respond with similar vigor.

WALK4JUSTICE  
by REG MCQUAID

The 2011 Walk4Justice from British Columbia to Ottawa made a stop in Toronto on September 8. The walkers are highlighting the situation of over 4,000 murdered and missing Canadian women, mostly aboriginal, whose cases remain unsolved.

Gladys Radek and Bernie Williams, two frontline social workers in Vancouver’s Lower East Side founded Walk4Justice in 2008 following the revelations of the trial of Robert Picton and in response to the many missing aboriginal women along the “Highway of Tears” in Northern BC.

The Toronto event was co-sponsored by the Aboriginal Council of CUPE Ontario.

Several hundred students and supporters from Amnesty International, KAIROS and other organizations heard the aboriginal walkers share their stories of heartbreak over missing family members. Listeners were struck by the dignity and raw courage of the speakers, embodied in their determination to hold governments accountable until justice is done, however long it may take.

The Walk4Justice arrived in Ottawa prior to the September 19 opening of Parliament. They presented their demands to government for adequate measures for protection of all women, especially aboriginal, from violence, and thorough investigation of cases of the disappeared.

For more information, visit [www.fnbc.info/walk4justice](http://www.fnbc.info/walk4justice).



TAR SANDS PROTEST COMES TO PARLIAMENT

by SHANE DAVIS-YOUNG

**The tar sands are truly the stuff of nightmares. Harper and big oil have conspired to turn vast forests in Alberta into toxic deserts that stretch as far as the eye can see.**

They’ve destroyed water systems and communities alike for the sake of profit.

But on September 26, the people fought back.

PROTEST GREETES WAR CRIMINAL DICK CHENEY IN VANCOUVER

by BRADLEY HUGHES

**Protesters rallied outside the exclusive Vancouver Club as former US Vice-President Dick Cheney arrived to promote his book to supporters who paid \$500 each.**

In the book he defends the torture his government authorized and the illegal invasion of Iraq that killed over one million people.

“Overwhelming evidence of torture by the Bush administration, including at least two cases involving

Over 2,000 people converged on Parliament Hill, protesting the government’s support for the Alberta tar sands and the Keystone pipeline XL. Two hundred people were arrested attempting to stage a sit-in in the House of Commons.

The police were kind enough to let Dennis Bevington, NDP MP from the riding of Western

Canadian citizens, obligates Canada to investigate Cheney to comply with the Convention Against Torture,” Human Rights Watch said. Despite these obligations written into Canadian law, our government allowed Cheney to freely enter and leave the country again.

This is unlike US and British peace activists who have been barred from entering Canada, and several US Iraq War resisters who have been deported.

“We’re very angry that

SOLIDARITY BUILDS FOR MCGILL SUPPORT STAFF

by DEBORAH MURRAY

**Over 1,700 clerical workers, library assistants and technicians (represented by MUNACA) at McGill university have been without a contract since November 2010 and went on strike September 1.**

McGill’s reaction has been severe. A Quebec labour board inspector found McGill using scab labour in some departments. McGill then got an injunction from the Quebec Superior Court limiting picket lines to groups of 15 and to within four metres of all McGill

property. McGill has also banned wearing t-shirts and buttons supporting the strike. A student union (SSMU) VP Finance and Operations refused to remove his button and was denied entry to a management career fair recently held at the Hotel Omni.

Shocked by McGill’s attempt to silence on-campus support for strike members, faculty and students covered their mouths with tape and marched on-campus. Support staff have been receiving widespread solidarity. Pictures of students holding “I heart MUNACA”

PRAIRIE FARMERS SEEK SOLIDARITY

by REG MCQUAID

**On September 12, the Canadian Wheat Board announced results of a producer plebiscite it had commissioned on the future of its single-desk selling agency. For wheat, 62 per cent voted to keep the single desk, while for barley, the result was 51 per cent in favor.**

Predictably, Gerry Ritz, the Conservative Minister Responsible for the Wheat Board, announced that he would ignore the results of the plebiscite. He claims that the Conservative electoral victory last May is all the mandate the government needs to fundamentally change how grain in marketed in Western Canada.

The Wheat Board Act of 1998 stipulates that the government must conduct a producer plebiscite before

any changes to the marketing of wheat.

Knowing full well that abolishing the single desk does not have the support of the majority of farmers, over the past five years the minority Conservative government repeatedly attempted to circumvent the law in a variety of ways, but without success.

Following the election of a Conservative majority government in May, the Wheat Board commissioned its own plebiscite.

The Friends of the Canadian Wheat Board ([www.friendsofcwb.ca](http://www.friendsofcwb.ca)) has launched a legal challenge to the government’s declared intention of abolishing single-desk marketing in contravention of the Wheat Board Act. The government plans to get around this obstacle by introducing new legislation that would remove the

Arctic, into their cordoned area so he could show his support.

Despite the seriousness of the issue at hand, the rally never once turned for the worse. But neither police nor protester ever resorted to violence and the mood was triumphant. Now it is time for us to build on this action and continue the fight for climate and social justice.

he has chosen Vancouver as the first location outside of the United States to do a book tour event, and we feel it’s important that citizens of Vancouver show that we won’t tolerate a war criminal coming and speaking in our town,” said Derrick O’Keefe, co-chair of the StopWar Coalition. “We’re going to keep protesting until we get a government that respects international law, takes a stand against torture.”

Fore more information, [www.stopwar.ca](http://www.stopwar.ca)

signs along with other support efforts can be found at [www.facebook.com/McGillStrike](http://www.facebook.com/McGillStrike).

Hundreds of unionized Quebec workers recently joined McGill students and faculty in a solidarity rally.

Other on-campus unions have issued support statements and also joined the rally. The undergrad student union and the McGill postgraduate student society have passed motions supporting the union, and the Mobilization Committee, a student committee-walked out of classes and marched to join the rally.

plebiscite requirement. This could take place the second half of October, with the government needing to complete all the legislative steps in Commons and Senate prior to the end of December, to have the changes take effect in 2012.

The Canadian Wheat Board website ([www.cwb.ca](http://www.cwb.ca)) has a link enabling individuals to send a message to Minister Ritz and their MP in support of the farmers’ position.

The National Farmers Union website ([www.nfu.ca](http://www.nfu.ca)) has a sign-on letter for organizations to support the Wheat Board.

Recent signers include UFCW Canada and the Agricultural Workers Alliance. This is a straight ideological struggle of farmers and workers versus large corporations. We can’t afford to sit on the sidelines.

STICKING WITH THE UNION  
Carolyn Egan

Torontonians defend jobs and services

**On September 26, thousands rallied outside City Hall in downtown Toronto. They came from all corners of the city—Jane and Finch, Malvern, North Etobicoke, Lawrence Heights, as well as downtown neighbourhoods. The crowd reflected the diversity of Toronto and put forward their demands for an end to the austerity agenda and the massive cuts that City Council is considering.**

Mothers brought their children supporting publically funded child care. Tenants organizations spoke out for social housing. Environmentalists put the issue of global warming and a sustainable city forward. City cleaners spoke out about the dangers of contracting-out to the private sector and turning decent jobs into poverty jobs. There were trade unionists and anti-poverty activists. Students marched from the universities and colleges and seniors demanded that long-term care facilities not be sold off to the private sector.

Services

A transit driver representing the Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU), originally from the US, shouted from the podium for “power to the people.” He was a Vietnam veteran who moved to Canada and had driven a bus for decades in this city “bringing you all to work everyday.” His speech and fist in the air harkened back to the movements of the sixties and seventies.

A woman who daily picks up the city’s garbage talked about the hard work she and her fellow CUPE members do to keep Toronto clean and sanitary. She also spoke about the pride she took in her work and why decent jobs for all had to be a priority. Residents of Scarborough and Jane-Finch talked about the importance of the services they use and that a cut in jobs means a cut in services.

The joining together of service recipients and service providers was very

powerful, and is an alliance which has the potential to actually turn back the attacks.

The United Steelworkers (USW) packed the City Council chambers for most of the day before the rally, taking over one hundred members out of their workplaces to witness the Councillors’ debate.

Mayor Ford and his supporters are ideologically driven to bring massive cuts and privatize everything possible. More progressive Councillors, who have finally found their backbone because of the strength of the movement from below, were standing up and fighting back. It was clear that this battle is going to be won in the communities where people in their majority are making it clear that the cuts are unacceptable.

Ford

Ford was elected mayor almost a year ago in a landslide victory in which he promised to cut “the gravy train.” Because of the tough times that people are experiencing, the job losses and anxiety about what the future will bring, many fell for his rhetoric. But he also said there would be no cuts in services and so many who voted for him now feel betrayed.

A significant majority in every ward is now opposed to the cuts and the mayor’s popularity has plummeted. The momentum has swung to our side and we have to continue building on the ground. Unions and community organizations must continue to work together and put the pressure on the politicians to stop the attacks.

We have to continue to make the argument that “cuts in jobs means cuts in services” and protect union jobs. Workers are under attack and the community has to defend the right to a decent job.

A major part of the austerity agenda is to drive down workers’ wages and benefits and to smash unions. We cannot allow this to happen. We must push forward the fight against neo-liberalism in all its manifestations.

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# OCCUPY EVERYTHING

by PETER HOGARTH

**ECHOES FROM Seattle 1999 to Egypt 2011 can be heard in Zuccotti park, the Manhattan site renamed Liberty Square by the Occupy Wall Street movement (OWS) participants.**

The movement, which started out on Friday September 17 with a group of largely young campaigners, artists and students occupied Wall Street in New York's financial district, has continued to grow and attract international attention as it captures the current mood of anger against austerity.

Starting September 17, hundreds camped out in Liberty Square (renamed in solidarity with Tahrir Square, where the Egyptian Revolution began) and organized daily general assemblies and demonstrations. While originally built very loosely without clear strategy or demands and instead just calling on others to "join us", the occupations have clearly touched a nerve and have drawn a lot of support. The attack by police—who beat, pepper-sprayed and arrested en masse peaceful protesters in the square and on Brooklyn Bridge—only increased support for the protest.

## Protest roots

Some see this movement as purely spontaneous but it was shaped by over a decade of struggle in the US and around the world. The anti-capitalist messages ("the system's not broken, it was built this way", as one sign read), echo the 1999 anti-globalization protests in Seattle against the World Trade Organization (WTO).

This was followed in the mid-2000s by mass movements for immigrant rights and against the war, which catapulted Barack Obama



into the presidency. But the Democrats have put a damper on much of the resistance in the US, leaving anger against the economic crisis to express itself with Tea party right-wing populism.

However, after three years of inaction, broken promises and nothing on offer but forcing workers and the poor to make sacrifices to bailout the system, people are fighting back. Inspired by a year of anti-austerity protests—from the Arab spring to general strikes across Europe—2011 has shown significant struggles by the US labour movement.

The spark was lit in Wisconsin, where workers and students, public and private sector workers organized militant strikes

and demonstrations and occupied the capital building against the austerity agenda of Tea-Party governor Scott Walker. Since then teachers have defied injunctions in Washington, thousands of Verizon workers walked off the job, California prisoners have gone on hunger strike, public sector workers in Ohio have led a campaign to repeal anti-union legislation, and dockworkers on the west coast have blocked trains filled with scab cargo and smashed equipment used by scab workers.

There was an occupation in New York last June, but it didn't connect enough to labour and community groups so it was isolated and fizzled out. But the Occupation Wall Street movement connected

to broader forces and grew.

## Strategy

Despite an alleged aversion to making concrete demands, the politics of the movement are becoming sharper as the movement grows. The clearest message coming out of the OWS is that "we are the 99 per cent"; we are in debt, out of work, and the system is hurting us; we are not the richest one per cent and we want something more.

Despite all the supposed leaderlessness and lack of demands on the part of the movement, this is the sentiment that is reaching people across America and the world and drawing support from forces beyond the angry young people who started the occupation. It is what

has drawn the support of the United Steelworkers, SEIU 1199, the National Nurses United coalition, and the train and bus drivers of Transport Workers Union local 100, who are now refusing to have their vehicles commandeered to transport those arrested at the demonstrations. This sentiment is also what has inspired solidarity marches from the United Federation of Teachers, New York Communities for Change, SEIU, TWU, walk-outs from university students, and over 700 pilots from the Air Line Pilots Association. Marines have even offered to act as protection from the police and some police are refusing to police the demonstrations.

There is also growing solidarity with First Nations. The

spreading "occupy" movement across North America is happening on unceded Native land which has been illegally occupied by the colonial governments of Canada and the US. But occupations of an opposite kind, against those governments, have also been historically important tactics for workers, students and the poor. From Boston to Vancouver the occupy movements have been conscious to distinguish the two and build solidarity with First Nations struggles, and have gained the support of aboriginal activists.

## Working class power

As the occupy movement spreads, these protests have the potential to become a pole of attraction for resistance to a broken system.

The initial declaration coming out of the OWS is promising as it challenges the racism and colonialism at home and abroad, criticizes the continued foreclosures, the ridiculous profits of executives and downloading of the crisis onto ordinary people, the declaration calls for renewable energy and collective bargaining rights and so forth.

It is these kinds of clear demands that connect to the economic crisis and the fight against austerity that can draw wider forces around the movement in New York, Toronto or elsewhere.

In Egypt the decisive moment came when the spirit of Tahrir went to the factories, fusing political and economic resistance.

By uniting the energy and anger of this new anticapitalist movement with the power of the working class, we can prevent this movement from being isolated and it can potentially be a new pole of resistance as we rediscover our capacity to fightback.

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# Mobilizing can stop the Tories

by JESSE MCLAREN

**ONTARIO TORY leader Tim Hudak threatened to channel the anger against the Liberals—who closed hospitals, raised tuition fees and cut social assistance—into a right-wing response that would continue similar policies.**

After Rob Ford became Mayor of Toronto and Stephen Harper won his federal majority, media pundits and political party leaders assumed Ontario had lurched to the right, and that a "Tory hat-trick" would be inevitable. Hudak followed this perspective, starting his campaign denouncing "foreign workers" and ending by distributing homophobic leaflets. But this bigotry and his association with Rob Ford ruined his victory—because of mobilizations from below.

Since the spring there has been sustained mobilizing against Rob Ford. In April thousands rallied against the cuts. In June Ford's boycott of Pride caused an outcry that isolated him. In July an explosive campaign to defend libraries put him on the defensive, while a marathon of deputations against the cuts revealed that "Ford Nation"—a Tea Party style army of citizens demanding austerity—was a myth. In September a poll found strong opposition to cuts in every ward, and on September 27 thousands of people rallied in defense of jobs and services.

This mobilizing in the streets shifted the terrain around the ballot box—quickly turning Ford into such a liability to Hudak that he was not allowed to openly endorse him.

## NDP misses the orange wave

In May the federal NDP achieved historic results—based on years of anger at Tory austerity and Liberal complicity. The outpouring of support after Jack Layton's death confirmed that the "orange wave" was based on people's hopes of a fighting alternative.

But much of the NDP leadership federally and provincially drew the opposite conclusion, that their electoral victories are based on pushing the party to the centre.

Ontario NDP leader Andrea Horwath refused to challenge Hudak on his racism, declared a "buy Ontario" campaign based on hostility to Quebec, avoided environmental issues, and spent much of her time providing reassurances

that she would balance the budget. The main message was that Horwath would freeze tuition fees and transit fares at the inaccessible levels to which the Liberals had raised them, and that she wore high heels.

As a result, the NDP missed the wave of resistance and only increased their vote by 5 per cent (from 17 to 23 per cent), which came from the Green Party (which dropped from 8 to 3 per cent). While the concentration of the progressive vote in the labour party is positive, there was no overall increase in this vote. Conversely there was no significant drop in the combined corporate vote, which went from 74 to 73 per cent—as a 3 per cent gain for the Tories (from 32 to 35 per cent) came from a

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