

U.S. out of Iraq!

Washington fosters sectarian divisions

By MICHAEL SCHREIBER

The current conflict in Iraq gathered momentum with seemingly amazing speed as an armed coalition of secular and religious Sunni groups, spearheaded by the Islamic State (IS, formerly known as the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, or ISIS, an al-Qaeda splinter grouping), wrested about a third of the country from government control. Islamic State has proclaimed the formation of an independent caliphate, crossing the border into IS-held territory in eastern Syria, although this action has strained relations with some of its Sunni allies.

The Sunni gains have produced a profound setback for the neo-colonial efforts of the United States, which occupied Iraq for eight years, imposed a puppet government, and helped propel the corrupt and murderous Nouri al-Maliki government into power.

Maliki has accused Saudi Arabia and Qatar of funding IS. This is not at all clear, especially since in recent months both countries—with the encouragement and participation of U.S. operatives—have supplied armaments to selected Islamic rebel groups in Syria in order to fight IS. However, some of the funds that wealthy private sources, if not governments, have donated to rebels fighting the Assad dictatorship in Syria have reportedly filtered through to IS.

At the same time, Iraq's Shiite-based militias—such as the Mahdi Army, led by clerical firebrand Moqtada al-Sadr, and which the U.S. tried for years to stamp out—have been revived with a promise of bringing “terror to ISIS and al-Qaeda.” This has created a “perfect storm” in which two retrograde forces, both flush with funds and supplies furnished by U.S. imperialism and its allies, are embroiled in a showdown that threatens the stability of the entire region.

In the long run, Syria and even Jordan face dismemberment along with Iraq, as Sunni, Shiites, Kurds, and other ethnic groupings fight for territory and power. The spectrum of client states that the colonial powers first carved out of the oil-rich Middle East following World War I, and the artificial borders that they erected, are now threatened with disintegration.

The current military stand off in Iraq has brought to the forefront the long-sought cause of independence for the Kurdish minority in the north of the country. As the Kurdish semi-autonomous government ponders whether to secede from Iraq, it has sent some 40,000 Peshmerga soldiers to counter the incursion of IS onto its borders. The Kurdish militia has taken over the disputed city of Kirkuk, a center of the oil industry and a candidate for the capital of a future Kurdish state.

Turkey, although still wary of granting self-determination to Kurds inside its own borders, now considers the Kurds in Iraq as a buffer and as allies in the fight against IS. However, the Turkish government has stated that it is resolutely opposed to outright independence for Kurds in Iraq. Israel, on the other hand, has expressed itself favorable to an independent Kurdistan, perceiving it as a method to weaken and draw valuable oil resources away from its Arab



UN News Centre

opponents. The U.S., for its part, while it has long protected the semi-autonomous Kurdish region of Iraq, seems more hesitant right now toward outright independence—although that stance is apt to change as pressures mount in the region.

At the same time, Iran and the United States have seen a partial convergence of their objectives in Iraq. Both countries are offering direct military aid to Iraq's government, although top Iranian leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei insists that he opposes U.S. intervention into the country. In trying to explain U.S. interest in pursuing some sort of collaboration with the reviled Iranian government—which it has been punishing with sanctions—Republican Senator Lindsay Graham manufactured an analogy with alleged U.S. policies during World War II: “Why did we deal with Stalin? Because he's not as bad as Hitler.”

The tremendous military firepower that the U.S. has given the Shiite-dominated Maliki regime (sending more than a billion dollars' worth of equipment every year) has been interpreted by some as showing favoritism to Shiite forces over those of the Sunni—thus deepening ethnic tensions in Iraq. In the recent period, however, the Obama administration has been perturbed by Maliki's close relations with Iran and has stepped back from offering explicit political support to his government.

With the current Sunni upsurge, Obama has escalated his criticisms of Maliki, accusing him of “political opportunism” and of sowing “mistrust and sectarian

(Above) Woman and children who fled Mosul seen at refugee camp in Iraqi Kurdistan.

divisions.” On June 20, Obama gave a populist-sounding rationale for Washington's caution toward Maliki's government: “There's no doubt that there has been a suspicion for quite some time now amongst Sunnis that they have no access to using the political process to deal with their grievances, and that is in part the reason why a better-armed and larger number of Iraqi security forces melted away when an extremist group, ISIS, started rolling through the western portions of Iraq.”

Since then, the U.S. has been more and more insistent that Maliki step down from office as a step toward cobbling together a “more inclusive” coalition government. The powerful Shiite cleric, Grand Ayatollah Ali Sistani, and Middle Eastern leaders such as Saudi Arabian King Abdullah, have added their voices in calling for the selection of an Iraqi government that is acceptable to all major political blocs.

Yet, despite the wariness that Washington has displayed toward the Maliki regime, Obama has made it clear that at this point the U.S. is willing to help defend the Baghdad government by military means. The U.S. recently delivered a large shipment of laser-guided Hellfire missiles, and is sending up to 300 “advisors” in order to “train” the Iraqi army—as well as increas-

(continued on page 8)

**INSIDE
SOCIALIST
ACTION**

Portland \$15 Now — 2
Obama & immigrants — 3
Clinton at Haiti gala — 4

Veterans — 5
Minn. Teamsters — 6
Sami Al-Arian — 8

Canada news — 10
Books: *On fashion* — 11
Supreme Court — 12



Portland fights for \$15 Now

By ANN MONTAGUE

PORTLAND, Ore.—On June 11 the activists from the recently formed “\$15 Now PDX” group entered the city council meeting. They had been rallying outside Portland City Hall prior to the 9:30 a.m. meeting, and when an official saw them enter the building he told them they would have to sit upstairs. But he quickly backed off as he was told there was clearly room on the main floor, and they filed in with their signs.

The activists were there to give testimony and to present the council with 1000 names of Portland residents who wanted them to raise the minimum wage to \$15 an hour. The current minimum wage in Oregon is \$9.10.

The activism in Portland started when Nick Caleb decided to run against a long-time incumbent city council member, Dan Saltzman. Caleb is a professor at Concordia College and an environmental activist who also picked up the banner of \$15 minimum wage. While he lost the election, his activist campaign left behind energized workers to continue the fight for \$15. During his campaign they started weekly rallies called “Living Wage Wednesdays” outside City Hall.

On June 11, Justin Norton Kersten, co-founder of \$15 Now in Portland, presented the council with 1000 signatures of people who want them to raise the minimum wage. In his testimony he noted the escalating cost of living in Portland. Rent and groceries up 4.5% and 3.5% respectively last year. This fol-

lowed rent hikes of 4.9% in 2012.

He cited the Oregon Center for Public Policy report that says a two-parent, one-child family in Portland needs to earn \$63,978 per year to have a basic level of economic security. If both parents work full-time at minimum-wage jobs without taking any time off, they will still be \$26,000 shy of that basic level. However, as Norton-Kertson told the council, with a \$15 minimum wage, that family will earn close to \$63,000, bringing them right up to the cusp of economic security.

Oregon’s minimum-wage law preempts local governments, with some exceptions, from creating their own minimum wages. Among those exceptions are jobs in and through city government. Norton-Kertson called on the council to “raise the minimum wage for all city workers to \$15 per hour” and “require that all contractors working with the city pay their employees a \$15 minimum wage.”

While none of the City Council members would commit to this proposal they all did agree that they are against the preemption law. Portland Mayor Charlie Hales stated, “We don’t like preemptions in general, and we don’t like this one either.” They agreed to lobby the state to get rid of the preemption law, but made no commitment to raise city workers’ pay.

The \$15 Now group is working to broaden their coalition as they continue to get names of supporters. They have been active in solidarity work with the Laborer’s International Union (LiUNA) local 483, which represents city workers.

The workers at the Portland Zoo are working to raise the minimum wage in Portland, and they have put it on the bargaining table for workers at the zoo. They recently had a solidarity action at the zoo called “Zooladarity.” Advocates of a \$15 minimum wage helped give out thousands of stickers, which were worn by zoo staff and patrons.

In addition, the SEIU 503 Lavender Caucus, who had created a leaflet about why \$15 minimum wage is an LGBT issue, invited \$15 Now to join and march in the Pride At Work contingent. Their presence energized the march, and they got some new members. They know that they must build a broad coalition to win this fight, and they seem to be up to the task. ■

Socialist Action: Where we stand

Socialist Action is a national organization of activists committed to the emancipation of workers and the oppressed. We strive to revitalize the antiwar, environmental, labor, anti-racist, feminist, student, and other social movements with a mass-action perspective. In the process we hope to bring activists together from different backgrounds into a revolutionary workers’ party that can successfully challenge the wealthy elite—whose profit-driven system is driving down living standards and threatens all life on this planet.

Our ultimate goal is a truly democratic, environmentally sustainable, and egalitarian society organized to satisfy human needs rather than corporate greed. We invite you to join us in the struggle to make the world a better place!

We are active partisans of the working class and believe in the need for independent working-class politics—not alliances with the bosses’ parties. That is why we call for workers in the U.S. to break from the Democratic and Republican parties to build a Labor Party based on the trade unions.

We support the struggles of those who are specially oppressed under capitalism—women,

queers, national minorities, etc. We support the right of self-determination for oppressed nationalities, including Blacks, Chicanos, and Puerto Ricans. We are internationalists, and hold that workers of one country have more in common with workers of another than with their own nation’s capitalist class. We seek to link struggles across national boundaries, and to build an international revolutionary movement that will facilitate the sharing of experiences and political lessons. That is why we maintain fraternal relations with the Fourth International

Recognizing the divisions that exist on the left and within the workers’ movement, we seek to form united front type organizations around specific issues where various groups have agreement. In this way we seek to maximize our impact and demonstrate the power and effectiveness of mass action.

Socialist Action believes that the capitalist state and its institutions are instruments of the ruling class, and that therefore they cannot be used as tools of the working class but have to be smashed. That is why we fight for revolution, instead of seeking to merely reform or work within the system. When we fight for specific reforms, we do so with the understanding that in the final analysis real social change can only come about with the overthrow of capitalism, the establishment of a workers’ government, and the fight for socialism.

SOCIALIST ACTION Closing news date: July 5, 2014
 Editor: Michael Schreiber Canada Editor: Barry Weisleder

Socialist Action (ISSN 0747-4237) is published monthly by Socialist Action Publishing Association, P.O. Box 10328, Oakland, CA 94610. Postmaster: Send address changes to: Socialist Action, P.O. Box 10328, Oakland, CA 94610. RATES: For one year (12 issues, 1st-class mail): U.S., Canada, Mexico — \$20. All other countries — \$30. Money orders and checks should be in U.S. dollars.

Signed articles do not necessarily represent the views of Socialist Action. These are expressed in editorials. Socialist Action is edited, designed, and laid out entirely by volunteer labor.



For info about Socialist Action and how to join: Socialist Action National Office, P.O. Box 10328, Oakland, CA 94610, (510) 268-9429, socialistaction@imi.net

Socialist Action newspaper editorial offices: socialistactionnews@yahoo.com
 Website: www.socialistaction.org

WHERE TO FIND US

- ASHLAND, Ore.: damonjure@earthlink.net
- CHICAGO: P.O. Box 578428 Chicago, IL 60657, chisocialistaction@yahoo.com
- CONNECTICUT: (860) 478-5300
- DULUTH, MINN.: adamritscher@yahoo.com. www.thenorthernworker.blogspot.com
- KANSAS CITY: kcsa@workernet.org (816) 221-3638
- LOUISVILLE, KY: redlotus51@yahoo.com, (502) 451-2193
- MADISON, Wis.: Northlandiguana@gmail.com
- MINNEAPOLIS/St. PAUL: (612) 802-1482, socialistaction@visi.com
- NEW YORK CITY: (212) 781-5157
- PHILADELPHIA: philly.socialistaction@gmail.com

- PORTLAND, ORE.: (503) 233-1629 gary1917@aol.com
- PROVIDENCE: ADGAGNERI@GMAIL.COM (401) 592-5385
- SALEM, ORE.: ANNMONTAGUE@COMCAST.NET
- SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA: P.O. Box 10328, OAKLAND, CA 94610 (510) 268-9429, sfsocialistaction@gmail.com
- WASHINGTON, DC: christopher.towne@gmail.com, (202) 286-5493

SOCIALIST ACTION CANADA

NATIONAL OFFICE
 526 Roxton Road, Toronto, Ont. M6G 3R4, (416) 535-8779
<http://socialistaction.ca/>

Subscribe to Socialist Action Don't miss an issue!

— \$10 for six months — \$20 for 12 months — \$37 for two years

Name _____ Address _____
 City _____ State _____ Zip _____
 Phone _____ E-mail _____

— I want to join the Socialist Action Newspaper Supporters Club.
 I enclose an extra contribution of: — \$100 — \$200 — Other

Clip and mail to: Socialist Action newspaper, P.O. Box 10328, Oakland, CA 94610.

Obama to deport immigrant children

By LISA LUINENBURG

President Obama responded to reports of a recent influx into the U.S. of over 52,000 undocumented children from Central America by asking Congress for an additional \$2 billion to speed up their deportation proceedings. While a law enacted under President George W. Bush classifies these children as refugees, and requires that they be placed with relatives or in long-term housing while their cases are being heard in immigration courts, Obama wants to remove these protections.

Under the new proceedings, these children would have one chance to prove that they have migrated because of a fear of violence or trafficking in their home countries. They would be given a single interview with a Border Patrol agent immediately after they are apprehended.

According to Wendy Young, the president of Kids in Need of Defense, a group that offers legal assistance to migrant children, "Children will arrive traumatized, hungry, unable to speak the language, and yet they will be expected to articulate some fear of return if they're to be allowed to come in to the U.S. That is grossly unfair and fails to recognize their capacities as children to negotiate these processes."

"These children will have no access to counsel—nobody to advise them. It takes [Young's office] hours and even days to understand the proceedings they're facing, but to do this at the border with no assistance is simply impossible."

This shift in policy advocated by President Obama would serve to "roll back the due process rights of the most vulnerable members of our society," said Marielena Hincapie, executive director of the National Immigration Law Center. The United Nations Refugee Agency recently found that 58% of children migrating from El Salvador, Honduras, and Guatemala cited violence in their home countries as one of their key reasons for leaving.

Many of these children are being targeted by organized crime networks and drug lords in their homes. That is not to mention that decades of U.S. military intervention and interference in Central American countries, including the use of U.S.-backed death squads, has caused untold violence and devastating poverty in these countries.

Central American parents who send their children to the United States, hoping they can find a better life, do so out of desperation and at the greatest risk. In



(Above) Immigrant children, awaiting possible deportation, sleep at Texas detention center.

order to get to the U.S. border, these children must undertake a journey thousands of miles long, known as El Salto de la Muerte (the Leap of Death). About 400,000 Central American migrants ride a freight train known as La Bestia (the Beast) through Mexico on their way to the border each year, but only 15-20% of those who attempt the journey will succeed.

On the way, these migrants face a myriad of dangers—being apprehended by Mexican immigration agents, falling off the train and being mutilated or killed on the tracks, being kidnapped by drug gangs, being raped, or being robbed. According to a 2012 article by Joseph Sorrentino, 80% of migrants will be assaulted or robbed, and 60% of women will be raped along the way. Between April and September 2010, Mexico's National Human Rights Commission reported 214 mass kidnappings, involving 11,333 people.

Far from acknowledging this reality, Obama is now asking children who have survived these horrors to prove to an immigration agent their status as a refugee fleeing violence. In a recent letter to Congress, Obama stated that the United States would take "aggressive steps to ... deter both adults and children from making this dangerous journey, increase capacity for enforcement and removal proceedings, and quickly return unlawful migrants to their home countries."

And it's clear why Obama is so keen to deport these Central American children—they are too young to fit into his plan for a "comprehensive immigration reform," which includes the legalized exploitation of undocumented workers through the use of Bracero-style guest-worker programs. In fact, the U.S. government is already "employing" thousands of undocumented immigrants trapped in the detention system as they await their deportation.

Last year, 60,000 immigrants worked in this system for an average of 13 cents an hour, saving the government \$40 million dollars that they would have had to pay to federal contractors at the minimum wage of \$7.25 an hour. That makes the U.S. government the largest employer of undocumented workers in the United States. It's clear where Obama's priorities lie.

There is no easy solution to this problem. The flow of migrants from Mexico and from Central and South America who are seeking a better life in the U.S. will not stop anytime soon. In the meantime, we must do all we can to defend the immigrants that are already here and push the government to grant an unconditional legalization for all immigrants. At the same time, we must demand: U.S. Hands off Latin America! An Injury to One is an Injury to All! ■

Queer liberation through socialist revolution!

Tens of thousands marched, and millions partied, as World Pride Week uplifted and animated Toronto in late June. To mark the occasion, the following statement was widely distributed by Socialist Action / Ligue pour l'Action socialiste.

Warmest solidarity greetings from Socialist Action/Ligue pour l'Action socialiste for World Pride 2014. While we justifiably celebrate the growth of queer liberation internationally, and its victories and gains, let's remember that there are vast areas of our world where things are actually getting worse, notably in some African countries and now-capitalist Russia.

Queer members of SA/LAS participated in the planning committee for the Feb. 6 rally and march in Toronto against the Putin regime's anti-gay law. Our speaker at the rally noted that the early Soviet Republic was the first state in the world to decriminalize homosexuality and abortion. Sadly these gains were reversed in the 1930s with the consolidation in power of the privileged, self-serving party-state bureaucracy headed by Joseph Stalin and his murderous security apparatus—of which Vladimir Putin is a direct descendant.

While acknowledging its repressive past on queer issues, it is no accident that today, among "less developed" countries, revolutionary Cuba leads the way.

(Right) August 2013 Toronto protest against anti-gay law in Russia.

In Canada and Quebec, we have made significant gains through decades of struggle, but there is far to go.

Look at Ontario. Last year the furor over Blue Jays baseball player Yuliel Escobar's anti-gay slur demonstrated an increased awareness of homophobia. This increased awareness has several sources. At its heart is the determined struggle by queer rights activists and their allies resulting in victories on two fronts. The passage of "Toby's Law" mandated inclusion in the Human Rights Code of gender identity and gender expression. The Accepting Schools Act addressed the issue of anti-gay bullying in the schools, particularly in Catholic schools.

However, a federal law regarding transgender rights remains stalled in the unelected Senate. And reactionary Catholic school boards continue to delay and obstruct the formation of Gay-Straight Alliances (GSA's). As with all human rights "protections," enforcement is key. We call on all human rights supporters to de-



mand dissolution of Catholic schools into a single, secular school system. Not only would this advance the interests of LGBT students and other minorities. It would save up to \$1 billion a year that could be better spent in classrooms.

The scandalous rise of homelessness is another issue that particularly affects queer communities and other minorities. We demand that Kathleen Wynne's Liberal provincial government, and municipal governments, provide safe spaces for all the homeless, especially street kids, among whom queer youth are heavily over-represented. Lives are at stake.

The health system is another issue. The government's priority is ever more cuts and privatization (including the no-

torious P3's) while the system remains largely unresponsive to the needs of LGBT people and other minorities. We have to stop this.

While our struggle on these issues and many other fronts continues, we also need to look at what kind of society we want, and what we actually have.

Queer rights will never be safely enshrined in the capitalist system. "Divide and rule" remains the practice of the tiny, obscenely rich minority who call the shots in the economy and the state. The massive income inequality gap continues to grow, and won't be reversed until we take mass action.

Bay Street governments have done nothing, and will do nothing, to address this, despite uttering hypocritical "anti-poverty" mantras. The present provincial government does not even support a liveable minimum wage. It has offered only miniscule increases in the abysmally low "welfare" rates, while pretending to prepare people for jobs that don't exist.

In a socialist society housing, food, education (at all levels!) and health care will be human rights, as they are today in Cuba, despite the U.S. blockade and very limited resources. Public ownership and workers' democratic control of the commanding heights of the economy are essential for production to be for human needs, not for private profit. We invite you to join us in this fight. Contact SA/LAS at www.socialistaction.ca. ■



NY awards gala mocks misery of Haitians

By MARTY GOODMAN

On June 19, a quickly called protest was organized against a glitzy awards gala in Manhattan that featured a “Leadership in Education” award for the corrupt and repressive Haitian president, Michel “Sweet Mickey” Martelly. On the same program, a “Lifetime Achievement Award” went to Martelly’s political patron, former U.S. President Bill Clinton, a prominent so-called “friend of Haiti.” Since the Jan. 12, 2010 earthquake, which killed as many as 230,000 and made 1.5 million homeless, Clinton has played a high profile role in the scandalously mismanaged international relief effort in Haiti.

Ray Laforest, a New York-based Haitian activist and member of the International Haiti Support Network, told the weekly *Haiti Liberté*, “Teachers are striking and students are marching to denounce how the Martelly government is strangling education in Haiti. Now the clueless glitterati are going to toast him for supposedly supporting education. It’s an outrage and a disgrace.” Protesters also called for the US/UN military occupation, begun under Bill Clinton in 1994, to “Get out of Haiti!”

Sponsors of the protest included Dessalines Coordination (KOD), *Haiti Liberté* newspaper, the International Support Haiti Network, the International Action Center, Socialist Action, and the Party of Socialism and Liberation.

The ruling-class shindig was sponsored by supermodel Petra Nemacova’s “Happy Hearts Fund” at the Cipriani Restaurant. Nemacova had narrowly escaped death in the Indian Ocean tsunami of 10 years ago. She is the girlfriend of Haitian Premier Laurent Lamothe, who also attended, and is a long-time business partner of Martelly. The “non-profit” raised over \$2.5 million through ticket sales and auction objects.

The egoistic strutting and posing for cameras by Manhattan’s power couples and the fashionista elite made a surreal contrast with the \$2 a day average income of Haitians—who are shackled with an 80% unemployment rate, according to the World Bank.

The several dozen Haitian and other protesters hit Martelly’s corruption, which includes a \$20,000 a day



Haitian Premier Martelly (left) at table with Clinton and other notables at lavish awards event.

spending allowance and financial perks for his family. Martelly is well known for his close relations with former supporters of ex-dictator “Baby Doc” Duvalier and has increased arrests, harassment, and spying in Haiti. Frequent protests there have called for Martelly’s resignation.

Wikileaks documents revealed crude U.S. government and corporate interference in the 2011 Haitian presidential election, which excluded the Fanmi Lavalas Party of the former elected president, Jean-Bertrand Aristide. An interview with Brazilian OAS insider Ricardo Seintenfus, published by *Dissent* magazine (Feb. 24, 2014), reveals how Jude Celestin, a leading run-off candidate of the governing party of President Rene Preval, was eliminated by intense international, mostly U.S., pressure. Martelly was elected—Haitians say “selected”—with less than a 17% eligible voter turnout.

Martelly’s real education policies merit no award—except for arrogance. A Feb. 13, 2013, report by Haiti Grassroots Watch, a non-profit research organization in Haiti, found that Martelly’s promise to “educate a million students a year” for five years was a sham.

The two-month study found that “in addition to suspicions of corruption, the amount paid to the schools is clearly inadequate, the payments don’t arrive on time, and the professors are underpaid. Also, most of the schools visited by journalists had not received the promised manuals and school supplies, items crucial for assuring a minimally acceptable standard of education.”

Moreover, the report discovered that government figures given for the total number of students attending classes as well as the amount the government said it spent on schools was contradictory (see www.Haitigrassrootswatch.org).

Bill Clinton’s sordid role in Haiti

Protestors also chanted “Clinton, where’s the money?” The reference was to Clinton’s role as co-chair of the Interim Haiti Recovery Commission (IHRC), which coordinated international pledges of \$11 billion in governmental and private donations over a period of five years. Clinton, who is also the UN special envoy to Haiti and Obama’s key advisor on Haiti, aggressively promoted a development model relying on the socially corrosive tourism industry and neo-liberal sweatshops.

The theme of the aid was to “Build Back Better,” which has come to mean very limited and haphazard housing construction. The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) estimated in the summer of 2011 that over a million Haitians lived in damaged homes, and nearly half of them in “buildings that might collapse at any moment.” Yet by September 2013, only 7500 units had been built, despite billions in aid.

It is estimated that 60 percent of the \$1.3 billion in USAID funds in Haiti goes to U.S. corporations, according to a February 2014 report by the Center for Economic and Policy Research in Washington, D.C., a liberal think tank. Seven out of the 10 largest USAID-funded projects went to Chemonics, a big U.S. Washington Beltway corporation. The report noted, however, that it is impossible to know exactly how the money was spent because of the lack of detailed reporting.

A mere 1 percent of international aid went to the Haitians themselves—that is, to the Haitian government, and Haitian businesses and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Most of the aid went to international corporations and NGOs—often with lucrative salaries and little transparency.

Four and one-half years after the earthquake, 170,000 Haitians are still in “temporary” tents or shelters in miserable, unsanitary, and dangerous conditions in and around the Port au Prince capital.

Mary O’Grady, writing in *The Wall Street Journal* of May 18, said, “Four years after a magnitude 7.0 earthquake toppled the capital city of Port au Prince and heavily damaged other parts of the country, hundreds of millions of dollars from the State Department’s U.S. Agency for International Development (US-AID), allocated to the IRHC, are gone. Hundreds of millions more to the IRHC from international donors have also been spent. Left behind is a mish-mash of low quality, poorly thought out development experiments and half-finished projects.”

A revealing new film by Raoul Peck entitled “Fatal Assistance” exposes the betrayal of promises made to the Haitian people by the imperialist governments, which includes a blatant racist disregard for Haitian initiative and input (see www.velvet-film.com).

The US/UN military occupation of Haiti, scientific studies have shown, was responsible for a cholera epidemic that has killed over 8500 Haitians. Cholera, a preventable disease, is expected to take 2000 more lives in 2014. The UN has, once again, arrogantly refused responsibility after two amicus curiae briefs were filed on May 15 by international law scholars and practitioners from Europe and North America.

Sweatshop bill backed by occupation

In Haiti today, textile sweatshop workers earn a mere \$4.89 a day, in violation of Haiti’s own minimum wage of about \$6.50 a day.

Violators include the bosses in the Caracol Industrial Park in the north, a sweatshop park promoted by Bill and Hillary Clinton. Caracol was subsidized by \$124 million in U.S. tax dollars out of the \$300 million total. Bill Clinton and Obama’s Secretary of State Hillary Clinton attended its opening ceremonies in October 2012, at which time President Martelly declared to the affluent guests, “Haiti is open for business, and we mean it!”

Wikileaks exposed U.S. corporate interference and political pressure on Haiti’s legislature to lower any new minimum wage proposals in 2009, despite mass protests for a meaningful increase. This took place in a country where the average daily income is \$2 a day! The sinister plan worked. In August 2008, workers mobilized in the thousands for passage of a new minimum wage, only to be met with gunfire from the U.S./

(continued on page 5)

Dominican discrimination against Haitians protested

On June 11, some two-dozen Haitians and community activists picketed an election debate at Lehman College in the Bronx, which featured three Democratic 13th Congressional candidates.

Two of the candidates, Harlem-based Congressman Charlie Rangel and State Senator Adriano Espaillat, had praised Dominican Republic President Danilo Medina for his role in the passage of a May 15, 2014, law that white-washed a racist Dec. 23, 2013, Dominican court ruling. The court decision stripped citizenship rights from 210,000 people of Haitian descent living in the Dominican Republic between the years of 1929-2007. Denied their rights as Dominicans are even those who were born in the DR and who have never set foot in Haiti, its neighbor on the island.

The law passed in May was an attempt to deflect international criticism of the court ruling and will impact only 13,000 persons of Haitian descent, according to the Dominican government’s own estimate. A statement released by New York rally organizers condemned the praise showered on President Medina by the two Democratic candidates as “an outrage [that] must be opposed.” Organizers called conditions for those of Haitian descent living in the Dominican Republic as “apartheid.”

Haitians in the DR have been subject to decades of racist harassment, murder, rape, and mass deportations. In 1937, up to 30,000 Haitians in the DR were slaughtered by the U.S. Marine-trained Dominican dictator, Rafael Trujillo, who saw Haitians as a threat to Dominican “whiteness.” — M.G.

No to war; Yes to needs of vets!

American socialists, in the tradition of the great Eugene V. Debs, oppose wars fought to advance the corporate and financial agenda of the American ruling capitalist class. That's all of them since the last just war—the Civil War that eliminated slavery.

But while we object to the way they are used, we don't view the ranks of the armed forces as part of our class enemy. They are mainly sons and daughters of the working class. In past wars they were mostly drafted. Today they are all volunteers.

They sign up for various reasons. In tough economic times, many young people are attracted by the security of "three hots and a cot" while earning the prospect of financial assistance for education. Some immigrants, and children of undocumented immigrants, volunteer in return for vague promises of citizenship as a reward.

But there was also a palpable surge of patriotic outrage after the 9-11 attacks that Washington blamed on the government of Afghanistan. Later, many initially volunteered to stop Iraq's Saddam Hussein from using "weapons of mass destruction." Both of these claims leading to two bloody wars, as well as attacks on civil liberties at home and squandering trillions of dollars, have since been proved to be lies.

Socialists have centered our opposition on the deceitful policy of the politicians and brass hats—not the ranks of the military who think they are serving their country. Because we genuinely care about these sisters and brothers, we try to get them out of harm's way by demanding they all be brought home now—where they belong. And we further demand that society accept responsibility for assisting those re-entering civilian life, who did what they perceived to be their duty.

After World War II, the GI Bill did a good job in not only assuring health care for returning vets but also education and even loan guarantees for buying a house. These benefits played a crucial role in avoiding a return to economic depression as the war-time mobilization wound down.

Vietnam vets did not fare as well. For decades, the military resisted recognizing environmental disabilities caused by practices such as the widespread use of Agent Orange defoliants. And little was done to help the many who became ad-



dicted to drugs and alcohol "in country."

Vets today are having a tougher time yet. The politicians and many in the media call them heroes. But these heroes have a much higher unemployment rate than the general population—over 20 percent for the 18-24 age group, 9.5 percent for 24-35. Ten percent of those who have jobs earn less than \$10 an hour. On any given night, about 60,000 vets are homeless and 140,000 are incarcerated.

Advances in medical science have greatly lowered fatality rates among wounded and injured troops on the battlefield. Saving lives is a good thing, but one result is many more being left with varying degrees of debilitation that will require medical attention for life. Many of the 51,000 wounded in Iraq and Afghanistan fall into that category.

In addition to these physical wounds, hundreds of thousands more suffer from psychological afflictions such as PTSD. Active-duty soldiers with such disorders, which can lead to behavioral problems even in initial stages of treatment, are

often given bad-conduct dishonorable discharges to deny them any VA benefits. There's been little public attention given to this outrage.

As the VA faced record numbers needing their health services, bureaucrats issued directives that sounded great in press releases but were unrealizable in the real world. One was a commitment that no first-time patient needing to see a doctor would have to wait more than two weeks for an appointment—an impossible objective with present resources. Some local administrators started cooking the books to hide normal waits of as long as four months.

When CNN broke the story about this scandal in May, there was loud reaction in Congress. But it wasn't to provide urgently needed resources for the VA to do their job. First was a proposal to make it easier for the top bureaucrats to fire subordinates. This fits into their broader blame-the-worker campaign, which is also being used to deny tenure to "bad" teachers.

But the main reason we are finally hearing about some chronic problems in veterans' health care is that privateers of both parties see recent scandals in record keeping as an opportunity to shift VA patients and tax-payer subsidies to the private sector. Those of us who must deal with for-profit care providers would conclude that if what we have would be an upgrade, the VA system must be rotten to the core.

The truth is that the VA system is the best performing and most cost-efficient component of the shameful general state of health care in the USA. A recent article in the prestigious *New England Journal of Medicine* revealed, "Beyond access to care, health system performance should be evaluated on the basis of health outcomes, the quality and safety of the care delivered, patient satisfaction, and costs."

"In many of these domains, the VA has kept pace with or surpassed private-sector health systems. A 2010 systematic review comparing the quality of care in VA and non-VA settings found that the VA generally performed better on quality measures for medical conditions (e.g., blood-pressure control and diabetes management)."

The VA held their own in interventional procedures compared to the much more costly private sector. But what about patient satisfaction?

"On a 2013 patient survey, the American Customer Satisfaction Index, VA health care earned overall satisfaction indexes of 84 (out of 100) for inpatient services and 82 for outpatient care, while the U.S. hospital industry scored 80 and 83 in those categories, respectively. When asked how likely they would be to return to a VA medical center for outpatient care, veterans responded with a score of 95 out of 100, indicating strong likelihood of return for care."

The core problem with VA services is that their resources have not kept pace with the growing numbers they must serve. The indicated solution is to provide the VA with the resources they need—not to dump Vets into a private sector that has the worst outcome/cost performance record of any industrialized country.

This is not just a veterans' problem. It is a solidarity issue for the working class, and the workers' movement should be their advocate. ■

... Haiti gala

(continued from page 4)

UN occupation force known as MINUSTAH.

Clinton proposed a World Bank economic starvation plan on Haiti's poor in exchange for returning its deposed elected President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, accompanied by a U.S.-led UN military occupation. Aristide accepted the terms.

Before Aristide's return, on Oct. 15, 1994, Clinton had increased a U.S. naval blockade around Haiti to intercept refugees in international waters fleeing a military junta, violating U.S. and international asylum law. In campaign speeches, Clinton called his predecessor, Bush I, "racist" for pursuing the same policy.

Clinton's U.S./UN military occupation was reinforced in 2004 by Bush II's support of yet another CIA-backed coup against Aristide by military and paramilitary thugs. In 2010, it was cynically reinforced yet again by President Barack Obama in the immediate earthquake aftermath, dispatching 20,000 U.S. troops bristling with weapons. It continues to this day, with Brazil now the largest force.

The failure of aid from the imperialist countries reflects the pro-corporate, neoliberal strategy of the major donors, and not merely poor planning. This is a direct result of the anarchy of a privatized relief, which seeks to generate corporate profits, as well as generating the competition among NGOs to obtain funds from well-heeled donors.

Haiti's misery cries out for a socialist revolution. Haiti needs its own workers' party—apart from the corrupt Martelly elite and the middle-class misleadership of Aristide's "Lavalas" movement or its remnants. A genuine workers' movement, with Haiti's peasant class as allies, can sweep away corruption, poverty, and imperialism. ■

French socialist Jean Jaures Assassinated July 31, 1914

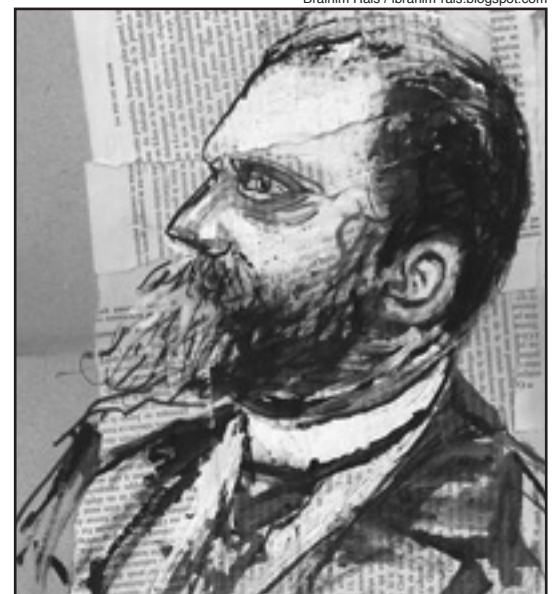
Jean Jaures, a popular and charismatic leader of the French Socialist Party, was a fervent believer in the working class and its ability to change history. He was a radical reformer and an active champion of the labor movement although he never fully accepted Marxist perspectives.

Above all, Jaures was a strong anti-imperialist and was killed for his beliefs. He tried to stop the First World War.

The Socialist Party grew under his leadership but eventually split on the issue of the war. He struggled within the Second International (an association of Socialist and Labor Parties), believing that the working class of France and the working class of Germany had no reason to kill each other for the benefit of the imperialist powers.

A supporter of international working-class solidarity, he advocated that French and German workers both engage in general strikes to oppose a war in which they would be forced to shoot at each other. However, especially because of conservatism and "social-patriotism" among union and Second International leaders in both countries, no practical moves were taken toward such antiwar action.

On July 31, 1914, Jaures was assassinated in a Parisian cafe, Le Croissant, 146 rue Montmartre,



by Raol Villain, who was a French Nationalist who wanted France to go to war with Germany. After the war, Villain was tried and acquitted; he was killed in 1936 by Spanish Republicans.

Many people have conjectured about how different history might have been if Jaures' vision of international working-class solidarity had come to fruition. But none have expressed it as poignantly as Belgian Jacques Brel in his most popular song, "Jaures." The song contains the plaintive cry, "Pourquoi ont-ils tué Jaures? Pourquoi ont-ils tué Jaures?" "Why did they kill Jaures? Why did they kill Jaures?"

— ANN MONTAGUE



July 1934



Teamsters victory in Minneapolis

By LISA LUINENBURG

This is the third installment of a series of articles marking the 80th anniversary of the historic Minneapolis Teamster strikes of 1934. The first part appeared in our March 2014 issue, and the second in our May 2014 issue.

We rejoin our brother and sister workers in the Minneapolis trucking industry in July 1934, as they are preparing to go back on strike. When we last left them, they had just concluded a successful strike at the end of May, the second in a series of strikes that would prove the power of the working class and make Minneapolis a union town.

Although the workers had won an important victory against the Citizen's Alliance, the bosses' organization that ruled the city by breaking strikes, the employers were already violating the freshly signed contract.

One of the most important battles during the May strike was to gain the right of Local 574, which represented the trucking industry in Minneapolis, to represent not just drivers but also employees who worked inside the warehouses. But soon after the new contract was signed, the employers said that their interpretation of the contract did not cover inside workers—thus excluding thousands of workers who had recently joined the union. The dispute quickly reached the boiling point, and the stage was set for the final battle of the historic strike to take place.

As a third strike became imminent, Local 574 worked to solidify relations with its allies in the movement. The union cemented its alliances with three different farmers' associations, which allowed small farmers who had a pass from the union to bring their goods into the market to sell to small businesses. The union also organized a union conference on unemployment to discuss ways to increase welfare benefits for workers who were without a job. By the spring of 1934, the unemployed and their dependents made up almost a third of the population of the city—an important layer of the working class. The Minneapolis Central Council of Workers (MCCW) supplied volunteers for unemployed pickets during the strike, who played a central supportive role throughout.

Local 574 also organized a campaign to win support from other unions, culminating in a mass conference of all local unions, called by the AFL. The march to the hall filled 18 city blocks, while 12,000 workers attended the rally, with thousands more waiting outside. The march included two airplanes with "574" painted on their bodies zooming over the crowd.

This massive attendance of workers showed the true strength of the union movement in Minneapolis at that time, and the respect that Local 574 had won from its use of militant tactics in the previous two strikes. Miles Dunne, a central strike leader and mem-



ber of the Communist League (the name of the U.S. Trotskyist organization at the time), said at the meeting: "... when a social system exists which permits the bosses in Minneapolis to grow fat off the misery, hunger, and degradation of the majority, it's time that this system changes. The hour has come that the workers ... take at the very least a just portion of all the riches that they produce."

The meeting unanimously approved the demands that Local 574 had the right to represent all its members, that all union members receive an increase in salary, and that the employers sign a written agreement to this effect; they were given the deadline of July 11 to respond. The meeting ended under the call, "Make Minneapolis a Union Town!" which would become the rallying cry of the union in the weeks to come.

The employers, however, refused to increase workers' salaries or to improve their working conditions, and they refused to recognize the right of the union to represent all of its members. They also launched personal attacks against the union leadership, attempting to split the union through red baiting. Even Danel J. Tobin, the president of the bureaucratic International Brotherhood of Teamsters (IBT), who had been against the militant tactics of Local 574 from the beginning, joined in, claiming that the May strike was in "violation of all its laws." Tobin called the Dunne brothers "radicals" and "wolves in sheep's clothing."

On July 16, a mass union meeting voted to put their confidence in the tried and trusted central union leadership—including three of the Dunne brothers (Vincent Ray, Grant, and Miles), Carl Skoglund, Farrell Dobbs, and other members of the Trotskyist Communist League—who had led the previous two strikes. The vote to immediately go on strike was unanimous.

The strikers set up their headquarters in a two-story garage at 215 S. 8th Street in Minneapolis, complete with a commissary, picket dispatchers, and its own hospital. The rank and file had elected a Committee of 100 to lead the strike, with Ray Dunne and Farrell

(Above right) Mass memorial for a worker killed by police on Bloody Friday.

(Left) Strikers battle scabs and deputies.

Dobbs elected as representatives who were authorized to meet with the bosses during negotiations.

The strike operated on the principles of democratic centralism; the union representatives were not allowed to make any decisions without first taking them to the rank and file for approval, inspiring internal unity and trust in the leadership, which were essential elements in the ultimate success of the strike.

The Organizer, the first daily strike paper ever published by a union in the U.S., was also essential to the success of the strike, keeping workers up to pace with rapidly changing events, and breaking the monopoly of the capitalist press by exposing the tricks of the bosses as they took place.

Local 574 immediately deployed pickets all over Minneapolis, soon controlling all traffic in the city by granting or denying passes for the circulation of trucks on city streets. Governor Floyd B. Olson, a member of the Democratic Farmer-Labor Party, attempted to remain neutral by playing both sides of the struggle, but soon agreed to mobilize the National Guard to "maintain law and order."

Mike Johannes, the chief of police, requested more money for the police force and began to arm them in preparation for the use of violence and repression against the strikers. His budget included money for 400 additional men, \$1000 worth of machine guns, 800 rifles with bayonets, 800 steel helmets, and 800 riot clubs. "The police must be trained just like an army to handle riots," he proclaimed.

And violence soon broke out in the form of a terrible attack against the strikers, which came to be known as the infamous Bloody Friday. Two federal mediators had recently arrived in Minneapolis, E.H. Dunnigan and the Reverend Francis J. Haas, but the employers weren't interested in negotiating with the workers. Instead, they laid a trap for the strikers and invited the media to record the spectacle. Their intent was to send a clear message to the strikers—go back to work, or we'll replace you with scabs. If you fight the scabs, you could lose your lives.

As word spread that a truck was going to be moved, a group of peaceful, unarmed pickets began to amass in the market area of the warehouse district of Minneapolis. A truck was loaded with a few boxes at the Slocum-Bergren loading dock and pulled into the street, guarded by 100 armed cops. When an open truck carrying 10 pickets followed the scab truck into the street, the cops suddenly opened fire on it, shooting to kill. As strikers rushed in to assist the wounded, cops continued shooting at them, in a massacre that earned Police Chief Johannes the nickname "Bloody Mike."

Meridel Le Sueur, a strike supporter, described the scene as the wounded arrived at strike headquarters in her powerful memoir, "I Was Marching." "The cars were coming back. The announcer cried, 'This is murder.' Cars were coming in. I don't know how we got to the stairs. Everyone seemed to be converging at a menaced point. I saw below the crowd stirring, uncoiling. I saw them taking men out of cars and putting them on the hospital cots, on the floor. At first I felt frightened, the close black area of the barn, the blood the heavy movement, the sense of myself lost, gone.

(continued on page 7)

(continued from page 6)

But I couldn't have turned away now.

"A woman clung to my hand. I was pressed against the body of another. If you are to understand anything you must understand it in the muscular event, in actions we have not been trained for. Something broke all my surfaces in something that was beyond horror and I was dabbing alcohol on the gaping wounds that buckshot makes, hanging open like crying mouths. Buckshot wounds splay in the body and then swell like a blow. Ness, who died, had thirty-eight slugs in his body, in the chest and in the back. ... We have living blood on our skirts."

In all, 67 workers were shot, mostly in the back as they attempted to run away or to help their fallen comrades. Newspaper reporters recounted immediately after leaving the scene that police had opened fire on the strikers without warning; they later changed their story to say that the shots broke out only after a policeman had been brutally attacked by a striker.

An official investigation ordered by Governor Olson later found that the police had shot to kill the strikers, even though their own physical safety was not at any time endangered, as there were no weapons in the possession of the strikers, who were unprepared for such an attack. Furthermore, the movement of the truck was a direct plant, in which the police did not act impartially, but as a strikebreaking force, hoping to discredit the union in the public's eyes.

Following the attack, *The Organizer* declared, "You thought you would shoot Local 574 into oblivion. But you only succeeded in making Local 574 a battle cry on the lips of all self-respecting working men and women in Minneapolis." That night, 15,000 workers attended a mass meeting. Far from breaking the will of the workers, the attack on Bloody Friday injected new energy into the strike, as thousands of workers chose sides in the battle on class lines, including a large section of the middle class who now supported the strike.

Forty-eight hours later, Henry Ness died from the 38 bullet wounds he had received in the attack, when police shot him in the back as he lay under a car, attempting to escape the gunfire. He left behind his wife and four children. Over 40,000 workers attended his mass funeral, held on July 27.

Albert Goldman, the lawyer representing the strikers, delivered a moving funeral speech, stating, "The life of our murdered brother is representative of the lives of all workers. The social system never gave him an opportunity. At a young age he was forced to work to earn a living and produce profits for his employer. Along with other workers, he was sent to kill or be killed in the world war. For what? For liberty? No. For the sake of profits and imperialist markets for the bosses. Underline these words! There only exists one path, one fight in which the worker has a true interest. It is the fight of Labor against Capital."

On Aug. 1, John Belor, an unemployed worker supporting the strike, also died of his wounds. Although his family requested not to hold a mass demonstration, thousands of union members attended his funeral, honoring his sacrifice for the struggle.

After the attack, Governor Olson quickly declared martial law in the city, asking the strikers and employers to approve a settlement known as the Haas-Dunnigan plan, or risk military action. Although the union voted to accept the plan, the employers rejected it. Under the rule of martial law, 4000 soldiers were deployed, all pickets and movement of trucks were prohibited, and the National Guard took charge of issuing permission to operate trucks to companies that agreed to the Haas-Dunnigan plan.

The primary role of the police as agents protecting private property and as a repressive force against threats to the ruling class had now become imminently clear, and the role of martial law and the National Guard was the same. They were gradually breaking the strike as their control over the operation of trucks in the city loosened. Within a few days, 6000 trucks were operating on the streets of Minneapolis, with or without permits.

Despite Olson's ongoing attempts to appear as a "neutral" force in the conflict, he was ultimately acting on the side of the Citizen's Alliance. Bill Brown declared in a mass meeting attended by 25,000 workers on July 31, "The Farmer-Laborer government is the best strikebreaking force our union has ever gone up against."

In the early morning of Aug. 1, around 1000 National Guard soldiers surrounded strike headquarters, arresting V.R. and Miles Dunne, Bill Brown, and other strike leaders, and holding them in deplorable conditions at an improvised military prison on the state fairgrounds in St. Paul. Grant, Dobbs, and Skoglund managed to escape by a stroke of luck.

Later that day, Olson met with Jack Maloney, Ray Rainbolt, Kelly Postal, Grant Dunne, and Farrell Dobbs. They demanded an immediate release of the strike leaders, the return of strike headquarters, and



'The triumph of this strike has changed Minneapolis so that ... it has become a city of hope for all workers.'

— *Minneapolis Labor Review*

the withdrawal of soldiers from the streets so pickets could resume their duties without interference. Olson justified the raid by saying the strikers had not had permission to hold their mass meeting, but was unable to respond when they produced their permit. He was forced to return strike headquarters to the workers at 11 p.m. that night.

In an attempt to recuperate from the political damage he had sustained from the raid on strike headquarters, Olson sent a few soldiers to raid the offices of the Citizen's Alliance a few days later, but to little effect.

As the strike dragged on, the employers tried many tricks to break the strike, including offering a new strike deal with worse conditions and pushing for scab elections, but without avail. Throughout the duration of the strike, Local 574 maintained a line of independent class action and the rank and file proved their loyalty to their leaders, whom they trusted through long experience, despite the continued attacks and attempts at red-baiting.

Daily life ground on for the strikers, and many were becoming demoralized. Many families had had their lights shut off or had been kicked out of their homes as their funds dwindled, and the strike was costing the union \$1000 a day to maintain. They knew they would have to find a resolution to the conflict soon, or risk defeat.

In the meantime, a new federal mediator, P.A. Donoghue, had arrived. He soon produced a new proposal, which included the following conditions: (1) a Labor Board election would be held within 10 days to establish collective bargaining rights wherever the union won a majority; (2) gains in representation of inside workers would be made in 22 companies; (3) wages would increase to 50 cents an hour for drivers and 40 cents for helpers, with the ability to negotiate further increases; and (4) all employees would be returned to their jobs without discrimination.

On Aug. 21, a general meeting of the strikers approved the new plan. They knew it was the best they could get at the time, and would give them a solid base from which to continue organizing efforts in the future.

The next step was to prepare for the elections, which took place on Aug. 28. After the votes came in, Local 574 became the representative of 61% of the trucking industry, gaining the right to represent all workers in 62 companies where they had the majority vote, and half the workers in an additional 15 companies where the vote had tied. The union immediately submitted for arbitration a petition for a wage increase to 52 ½ cents an hour for drivers and 42 ½ cents for helpers, which the employers did not dare to refuse. The new

wage scale also included inside workers' a resounding victory for the union.

After the strike, the strike leaders were elected as the new leadership of Local 574. A Committee of 100 was elected as union delegates, whose primary job was to make sure that employers were complying with the new contract. The MCCW, which represented unemployed workers, agreed to dissolve into Local 574, who created a special organization for them to continue fighting for their own demands from within the union.

In the meantime, the Minneapolis branch of the Communist League had consolidated an important victory as well, doubling its membership to 100 and gaining important new members and supporters, such as Marvel Scholl, Bill Brown, and Harry DeBoer, who later remarked on the success of the strike, "We wouldn't have been able to do it without a disciplined revolutionary party."

The 1934 Teamster's strike also had national implications that reached beyond the borders of Minneapolis. This strike, along with the Toledo Auto-Lite strike and the Longshore strike in San Francisco, which also took place in 1934, led to a revitalization of the labor movement at the height of the Great Depression. All three of these strikes were led by radicals against the union bureaucracy and faced significant police repression, but were ultimately successful, showing the massive potential power of the rank and file. They contributed to a huge boost of morale among workers across the country, and opened up the wave of industrial unionization in the 1930s that led to the formation of the Committee for Industrial Organization (CIO).

The *Minneapolis Labor Review* remarked of the strike on Aug. 24, "The triumph of this strike represents the largest victory in the annals of the local union movement. ... It has changed Minneapolis, so that it is no longer known as a paradise for scabs, but has become a city of hope for all workers." Indeed, this victory of the truckers' strike truly opened up all of Minneapolis to become a union town, inspiring many more strikes that looked to Local 574 for guidance as they fought to maintain and improve upon rights for workers across many industries in the city.

This year, 2014, marks the 80th anniversary of the Minneapolis Teamster Strikes. The Remember 1934 Committee—made up of labor activists, descendants of the strikers, and community organizers—is planning a commemoration of this decisive event.

On July 19, a street festival for the working class will be held in the warehouse district of Minneapolis, at the site of Bloody Friday. Teamsters Local 120 will also march to the site, where they will place a funeral wreath to honor the workers who were injured and killed on that terrible day. The activities for the day will include bands, speakers, historical speeches, participatory art, and much more to commemorate the strike and connect people to local labor struggles that are taking place today.

On the following day, July 20, a union and family-friendly picnic will take place at Minnehaha Park, which will include free food, recognition of the descendants of the strikers, speeches, and kids' games. To find out more information or to support the Remember 1934 committee, visit their Facebook page at www.facebook.com/Remember1934. ■



(Left) During the “Arab Spring,” people throughout Iraq rose up against unemployment and the Maliki regime’s corruption. Here protesters in Mosul are attacked by police in March 2011.

... U.S. out of Iraq

(continued from page 1)

ing U.S. surveillance and intelligence “assets” in the country. These forces will augment some 600 U.S. soldiers and an unspecified number of armed “private contractors” who are already in Iraq. At the same time, the U.S. has increased military aid to so-called “moderate” rebel forces fighting in Syria, in order to counter the power of the Islamic State in that country.

While calling for the military build-up, the White House and Democratic Party members of Congress have been forced to respond to the fact that U.S. public opinion (by a 74 percent majority in a June 17 poll) has expressed itself strongly against the reintroduction of U.S. combat soldiers into Iraq. Thus, Democratic House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi urged “caution” in the U.S. military escalation, while observing: “You have to be careful sending special forces, because it’s a number that has a tendency to grow.”

Obama did not rule out U.S. air strikes in the future, but stressed that they would be “targeted and precise.” By the use of such phrasing, the administration obviously intends to assuage fears of the civilian casualties that inevitably accompany the use of air strikes. A high number of civilian deaths could prove highly embarrassing for the White House.

While lobbying the U.S. Congress for air support, the Iraqi ambassador to the United States, Lukman Faily, raised the alarm that IS would commit “ethnic cleansing” in the cities that it has captured. Faily’s warning, of course, probably elicited knowing winks among some U.S. officials—who are well aware that U.S. occupation forces and their client governments in Iraq commonly and effectively employed ethnic cleansing as part of their strategy. In fact, the current Sunni rebellion is a direct consequence of the sectarian warfare unleashed by the U.S. invasion over a decade ago.

When the U.S. toppled the Saddam Hussein regime in 2003, the ruling echelons and their representatives in Washington estimated that risks would be minimal. They knew that working-class and left Arab nationalist forces had already been crushed by Hussein’s autocratic regime. Likewise, the fall of the Soviet Union and the smothering of the Iranian Revolution had diminished the possibility of opposition in the international arena.

Washington and its allies counted, moreover, on the hysterical climate of the “war on terror,” together with the charade over Saddam’s having authorized “weapons of mass destruction,” as the means to quell any significant antiwar opposition from arising against the Iraq adventure.

It’s difficult to say how many U.S. politicians at the time really believed the rosy rhetoric of ideologues like Dick Cheney, who insisted that U.S. troops “will, in fact, be greeted as liberators” in Iraq. Yet most U.S. policy makers no doubt believed that feuding ethnic and religious groupings in the shattered country—the legacy of imperialism’s longstanding divide-and-rule policies throughout the Arab world—could be quickly knitted together within a regime that was completely subservient to U.S. dictates.

With that outcome in mind, they expected that the United States would soon have sufficient peace and comfort to reap the great reward of its military victory—Iraq’s vast oil wealth, which was quickly pieced out to U.S. corporations.

But Iraq turned into a quagmire for the imperialists. As resistance to the U.S. invasion solidified, Washington saw fit to pour more and more troops and armaments into Iraq, utterly destroying Fallujah and other cities. At least half a million Iraqis have been killed in the war (some sources report many more deaths), with several million displaced from their homes.

The U.S. invasion and war left Iraq, once one of the

wealthiest nations in the Middle East, marooned in a state of economic and social collapse. Unemployment today is officially 18 percent, and illiteracy is 60 percent. Billions of dollars in oil wealth have disappeared into the bank accounts of favored businessmen, while much of the urban population survives on merely four hours of electricity a day.

As social conditions steadily worsened during the early months and years of the occupation, they further enflamed resistance to the U.S. and allied forces and to their puppet Iraqi armies.

Early in the war, signs began to appear that ethnic groupings might work together to defy the occupiers. For example, after the first U.S. attack on Fallujah, in April 2004, Sunnis and Shiites mounted a joint convoy to provide aid to civilians. That same month, 200,000 Sunnis and Shiites demonstrated in Baghdad against the U.S. occupation. To forestall any such attempts at unity in the future, the U.S. looked to the tactic that imperialism had successfully employed many times in the past—fanning the flames of nationalist and religious rivalries. Accordingly, the U.S. fostered the formation of religion-based militias and death squads—which its Saudi, Kuwaiti, and other “allies” helped to supply with weaponry.

In many U.S.-led offensives in the “Sunni triangle,” like the murderous assault on Fallujah, the main allied Iraqi troops were made up of Shiite and Kurd militias. Many of these forces sought to turn the tables on their Sunni opponents who had dominated the country during the Saddam Hussein years.

However, the U.S. still held an open hand toward Sunni forces who were willing to collaborate. After U.S. Marines withdrew from Falluja in 2004, they left the city under control of a group of Sunnis they had armed and equipped—the so-called Fallujah Brigade, led largely by former Baathists. In the meantime, the U.S. continued to bomb Fallujah from the air, with high civilian casualties.

Soon, it became clear to the Americans that many in the Fallujah Brigade were sympathetic to the suffering and grievances of the local Sunni population, and ineffective in carrying out U.S. directives to arrest the insurgents still in the city. The brigade was demobilized by the U.S. puppet government in Baghdad, but Fallujah remained in the hands of a coalition of Islamic fundamentalists (including al-Qaeda), former Baathists, and Sunni tribal nationalists. The U.S. military responded with an onslaught that it later described as “the heaviest urban combat Marines have been involved in since the battle of Hue City in Vietnam.” At least 800 civilians lost their lives, according to the Red Cross.

In the meantime, Sunni elements, including al-Qaeda, had undertaken a wave of jihadist attacks, including massacres, suicide bombings, and assassinations of political officials who were deemed to be collaborators. These actions further stiffened the old Shiite grudges against Sunnis. After the February 2006 bombing in Samarra of the al-Askari mosque, one of the Shiites’ holiest shrines, the country quickly descended into civil war. Well over 1000 people were killed in the days following the bombing.

Nouri al-Maliki, who took office in 2006 with a base among Shiite political forces, increasingly acted to remove Sunni politicians from their posts, and has cracked down hard on dissent. Torture has been commonplace.

The Maliki regime organized several attacks on Camp Ashraf, a refugee compound that was home to people who had been persecuted by the fundamentalist Shiite regime in Iran. In the last attack, on Sept. 1, 2013, Iraqi troops fired grenades and mortars into the camp’s sleeping quarters, and then machine-gunned people as they tried to escape. At least 52 refugees (according to UN observers) were massacred, with seven others deported to Iran, where they face the

prospect of torture and execution.

Minority nationalities and religious groups have fared no better. The Christian population of the country (now 500,000) has declined by two-thirds since the U.S. invasion; most Christians have fled to escape repression by militant Islamists. And the 2 million “Black Iraqis,” descendants of escaped African slaves, live as poverty-stricken pariahs in southern Iraq, where they are regularly denied identity documents, marriage certificates, and education.

A major flashpoint for the current insurgency was ignited when ISIS occupied the western desert region of Anbar province, near the border with Syria, at the end of last year. The Iraqi army, freshly supplied with U.S. Hellfire missiles and reconnaissance drones, attempted to expel the ISIS fighters, but met with little success. Video footage from the campaign showed Maliki’s troops raising Shiite religious banners and slogans as they operated in the Sunni-majority region.

As an outgrowth of its operations, in late December, the Iraqi army moved in to disburse the Sunni-led protest camp in Ramadi, the capital of Anbar province, situated nearly 80 miles west of Baghdad. Maliki had claimed, with little evidence, that the camp was an “al-Qaeda” (i.e., ISIS) headquarters. At the same time, the government arrested a local Sunni member of parliament, Ahmed al-Alwani, after a fire at his residence in which Alwani’s brother was killed.

As a result of these incidents, Sunni clerics and tribal leaders issued a call for Sunnis to take up arms against the Maliki government. A three-way armed struggle ensued in Anbar province between Sunni tribal militias, the mainly Shiite Iraqi army, and al-Qaeda/ISIS. “We don’t like ISIS, but we also don’t like to be treated like second-class citizens,” the deputy head of the Anbar provincial council, Falah al-Alsawi, explained at the time.

The Iraqi army was forced to withdraw from Ramadi and Fallujah in January, and in the breach, ISIS moved in to occupy those cities.

Today, IS and its allies continue to gain territory in Anbar province, having recently seized several key towns on the Euphrates River and gained control of the key highway into Jordan. In some regions, Sunni tribes, as well as former Saddam Hussein loyalists from the Baath Party and officers from Saddam’s army, have formed an alliance with ISIS, since they share the goals of creating a separate Sunni state or even overthrowing the Shiite-backed government in Baghdad. However, the insurgent coalition has not remained intact throughout the country. Both in Anbar province and in the north around Kirkuk, several Baathist and other Sunni militias have engaged in firefights against ISIS.

Working people in Iraq—whether they belong to Sunni, Shiite, Kurdish, or other ethnic groups—have nothing to gain from the sectarian mayhem. None of the current belligerents can speak to their interests and wellbeing. However odious and reactionary IS and al-Qaeda might be, it is necessary to acknowledge that the imperialist-backed Maliki regime has yielded nothing but death and misery for the Iraqi people—while the ex-collaborators of Saddam Hussein and the Baathists were even more repressive when they held power.

The only way that Iraq’s working people can eliminate the ongoing cycles of war, repression, and poverty is for them to carefully construct their own independent workers’ party, open to people of all nationalities and religious groupings, and armed with a revolutionary socialist program. Councils of democratically elected workers’ representatives can be built to organize defense of communities and workplaces from the marauding armies and death squads, while taking action to replace the present corrupt and pro-imperialist capitalist regime with one that is fully representative of working people.

Oppressed nationalities like the Kurds must be recognized as having the right of self-determination, which would include supporting their choice to separate into a new state if they wish. But they must also be given absolute assurance that they would be guaranteed equal rights and opportunities if they choose instead to help build a united socialist Iraq. Ultimately, the borders that the imperialists erected in the region a century ago must fall—replaced by a united, confederated socialist Middle East.

In the meantime, President Obama and Congress have left open the option of further escalating the U.S. intervention in Iraq, with jet and drone strikes as well as larger quantities of U.S. troops. The United National Antiwar Coalition (UNAC) has called for united, massive protests in the streets. The antiwar movement must make itself heard: “No new U.S. war in Iraq!” ■

Political prisoner Dr. Sami Al-Arian is free! Al-Arian, a computer-engineering professor at the University of South Florida and nationally known as an activist in the struggle for civil liberties for the Muslim and Palestinian American community, has been jailed for over 11 years on spurious charges related to his support for the struggle for Palestinian rights.

The persecution of Dr. Al-Arian had its roots in the Patriot Act as well as in the notorious Anti-Terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act, initiated and signed by President Bill Clinton. This legislation made it a crime to give “material support” to organizations that the U.S. had placed on its “terrorism” list. Among these groups was Palestinian Islamic Jihad, which Dr. Al-Arian and other activists in the U.S. were accused of supporting.

A trial jury acquitted Al-Arian on eight of the counts against him but was deadlocked on nine other counts. Because of the stress on his family, Al-Arian decided not to proceed to a re-trial and instead agreed to plead “guilty” to the count of “providing services” to “people associated with” Palestinian Islamic Jihad. On May 1, 2006, he was sentenced to 57 months in prison. Dr. Al-Arian was scheduled for deportation from the U.S. after his release from prison, despite the facts that he has lived here for 30 years and that his children were born here.

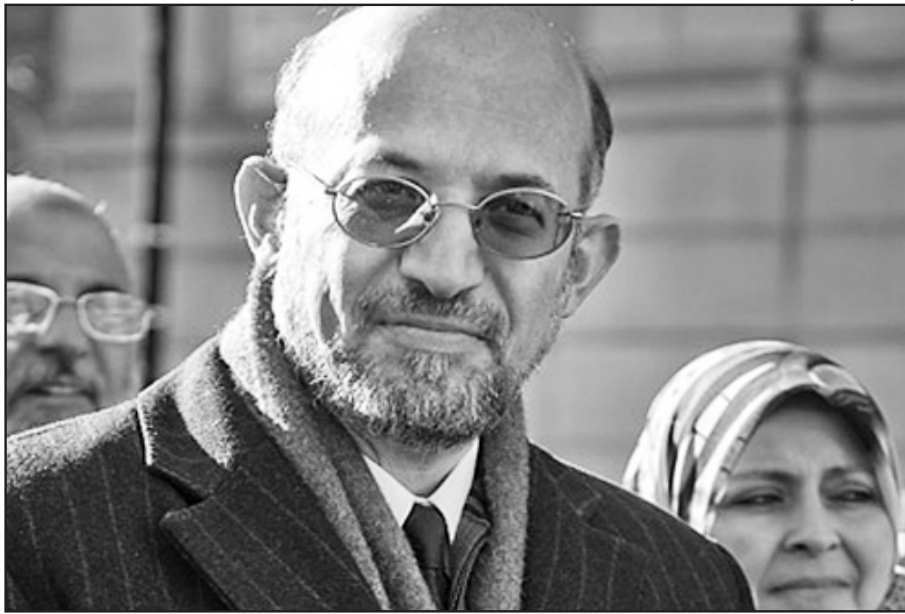
As his release date approached, a Federal District Court in Virginia extended his sentence, holding him on contempt charges for his refusal to testify before grand juries investigating “terrorism.” In January 2007, in protest against his treatment, Al-Arian began a 60-day hunger strike.

STATEMENT FROM ATTORNEY JONATHAN TURLEY

It is with a great sense of relief and thankfulness that I can now report that all charges have been dropped against my client Dr. Sami Al-Arian. Minutes ago, United States District Judge Anthony J. Trenga signed the order dismissing the indictment against Dr. Al-Arian. The case was before Judge Leonie M. Brinkema, but it was Judge Trenga who

Sami Al-Arian is free!

Samadoun: Palestinian Prisoner Solidarity Network



signed the order on Friday afternoon [June 27, 2014].

I have represented Dr. Al-Arian for roughly eight years as we fought against his deportation and the dismissal of these charges. We have litigated the case from the 11th Circuit to the 4th Circuit to the Supreme Court and back again. It has been a long and difficult road for the Al-Arian family.

In September 2004, Dr. Sami Amin Al-Arian was charged, along with various co-defendants, in a 53-count Superseding Indictment. Following a highly publicized six-month trial in 2005, Dr. Al-Arian was acquitted on eight counts and the jury was unable to reach a unanimous verdict on the remaining nine counts. There were only two jurors who voted against acquitting Dr. Al-Arian of all of the remaining counts.

As the government considered whether to bring charges against Dr. Al-Arian on the remaining counts, the parties began to negotiate a plea agreement. As a result of these negotiations, Dr. Al-Arian executed a written plea agreement on February 28, 2006. Pursuant to this agreement, Dr. Al-Arian committed to pleading guilty to Court 4 of the Superseding Indictment. The narrative of this count largely dealt with

a statement that Dr. Al-Arian made to a reporter and his support with an immigration matter for a person “associated” with the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ). The count notably did not admit to any of the core terrorism charges levied against him regarding alleged leadership in PIJ and the other terrorism acts. Dr. Al-Arian was sentenced to a 57-month term of imprisonment on May 1, 2006.

In fact, as evidence of the high-profile nature of the case, then-Attorney General Ashcroft called an unorthodox press conference to announce Dr. Al-Arian’s arrest. Ashcroft had publicly and repeatedly cited the prosecution as a major victory in his administration. See, e.g., Paul Lomartire, Professor Says Terrorism Arrest ‘All About Politics,’ Cox News Service, Feb. 20, 2003. A movie has since been made of the trial and hundreds of articles have appeared in local and national publications regarding the case.

The trial loss and plea agreement was viewed as a significant defeat for the Justice Department. In the immediate aftermath of the settlement and public criticism, prosecutors set out to call Dr. Al-Arian to a grand jury despite his prior insistence that he would not cooper-

ate in such an investigation as a condition of his plea agreement.

The result was a highly abusive incarceration of Dr. Al-Arian and eventually this indictment for criminal contempt (for refusing to testify) in 2008 by the Justice Department. He was indicted despite my producing a polygraph showing that he could offer nothing of the matters under investigation by the grand jury and a sworn detailed declaration of his lack of knowledge. We filed a series of motions contesting the indictment for selective prosecution, errors in the indictment, and a clear violation of the agreement made by the Justice Department.

A few years ago, we were able to have Dr. Al-Arian released from jail and later we were able to have his home confinement conditions lifted. He has lived with his family in Virginia.

This case remains one of the most troubling chapters in this nation’s crackdown after 9-11. Despite the jury verdict and the agreement reached to allow Dr. Al-Arian to leave the country, the Justice Department continued to fight for his incarceration and for a trial in this case. It will remain one of the most disturbing cases of my career in terms of the actions taken by our government. However, despite our often heated hearings in this case, I thank those at the Justice Department who agreed to the dismissal of the indictment. This family has been put through over a decade of grinding, unrelenting litigation. It is time to bring closure to this matter once for all.

I am very thankful to the many law students who have assisted me on this case as well as the help of the law firm of Bryan Cave as local counsel in the case. We have represented Dr. Al-Arian pro bono because of the important constitutional and ethical issues raised by his case.

The core values underlying this defense ultimately prevailed but only due to the extraordinary effort of Dr. Al-Arian, his loyal family, and a wide array of supporters. It is often said that Justice delay is Justice denied. However, despite this delay, justice did ultimately prevail for not just the Al-Arians but our legal system. ■

By GAETANA CALDWELL-SMITH

SNOWPIERCER, directed by South Korean filmmaker Joon Ho Bong (“The Host,” “Mother”), in his first English-language film, is truly an original, inventive, futuristic work—which transcends all previous apocalyptic films. He gives us a devastating concept of what might happen in the future if the outmoded and anarchistic capitalist system goes on unchecked for much longer. But the film presents a measure of hope—through revolt.

It appears that world government leaders, corporate heads, and the clueless 1% had refused to act to stop toxic emissions. Then, a “quick fix” radically affected the climate, causing the entire Earth, its oceans, and waterways to freeze. Every living thing has apparently died, except for a hundred or so humans who are passengers on a high-speed, perpetual-motion train.

The film opens to reveal that the train has been endlessly circling the frozen globe for 17 years. Third-class passengers—families, including children born on the train who know no other life—have been relegated to the last few cars. They live in squalor, like concentration camp prisoners, and ravenously gobble mass-produced, slimy black “protein bars”—their clothes now shapeless, colorless rags. They are kept in check by fascist-like, heavily armed guards lest they try to make their way to the first-class section.

The head of the guards is Mason (Tilda Swinton), at her merciless best. She lectures the lower classes on “the eternal order” in which the privileged hold sway over “ungrateful scum.” She barks out orders in a saliva-laced, strident voice, wearing the white, militaristic outfit of a high-school marching band tuba player.

Trouble begins when Mason and one of her female flunkies visits the third-class cars, wearing a scarf over their faces to ward off the smell. They’ve come to measure and recruit a young child, Tanya’s boy (the reason is revealed later). Tanya is played by Octavia Spencer in another strong, no-holds-barred role. John Hurt plays Gilliam, the wise-old sage from whom they seek advice.

Hurt’s buddy is Curtis, played by Chris Evans of superhero fame (Captain America, etc). As Robin is to Batman,

Snowpiercer — Revolution in a world of ice



so Jamie Bell’s Edgar is to Curtis. Gilliam is trusted to intervene for them with Wilford (Ed Harris, in a role not unlike the God-like figure he played in “The Truman Show”). Those in first-class live under his protection.

This is Wilford’s train. Enamored by railways as a toddler, he went on to build and own them, and to construct an empire of trains, eventually inventing the perpetual-motion engine that keeps his Snowpiercer running.

The landscape scenes are stunning—a relief to the claustrophobic interiors. We watch as the ice-encrusted train weaves its way through mountains, over icicle-draped bridges spanning frozen rivers and lakes, past awesome frozen cities, their landmark buildings barely discernible beneath icy carapaces. The passengers’ windows are iced shut so they are denied the gorgeous vision of what is just inches away.

When someone complains, the punishment is a frozen body part that guards sledgehammer into pieces while the victim is left to writhe in agony. When such an incident occurred on top of the kidnapping of Tanya’s boy, they’ve had enough. They must get to the front of the train. Gilliam selects an unwitting Curtis as leader.

They make their way from car to car, fighting the guards

with axes and makeshift weapons. To gain access to Wilford’s quarters, Curtis must get the secret code from the Inuit, Namgoong Minsoo (Korean actor Kang Ho Song), who is traveling with his daughter, Yona (Ah sung Ko). He is stoned on something called Kona, which is compounded from chemical waste. (The fact that he and Yona are Inuit and the makeup of the drug are vital elements to the film’s ultimate resolution.) He will give Curtis the code as long as he is supplied with the drug.

Curtis, Yona and the others pass from one car to the next through startling scenes of sunlight streaming through glass domes on lush gardens, greenhouses with fruit-bearing trees, vegetable patches, and domestic animals; one car is a night-club with a rave going on as trendy first classers drink and dance to techno-rock. There’s a sedate club car where patrons sit quietly drinking and reading. They react in revulsion and horror as the masses and guards hack and shoot their way through.

The film is full of surprises: There’s a scene in a typical grade school class in one of the forward cars. The pregnant teacher leads her students in a song about what happens when the engine breaks down. They repeat the chorus in unison, singing: “We all freeze and die,” with appropriate arm waving. She then pulls a gun and starts shooting at Curtis and his followers.

A bank vault-like door finally opens onto Wilford’s luxury car, as he, dressed in a long silk robe, is sautéing a steak while Curtis looks on, hungrily. Wilford babbles on with his evil, airy philosophy about his oligarchic goals and dreams, and reveals a startling clue about his relationship to Gilliam.

David Denby stated in the July 7 & 14 issue of *The New Yorker*, comparing films like “Elysium” and “Hunger Games,” “Snowpiercer presents a portrait of oligarchical rule and underclass discontent. Fueled by disgust of the decadent rich and admiration of the outraged poor.”

He then asks, “Is revolution being hatched in commercial cinema?” ■

Northern Lights

News and views from SA Canada

website: <http://socialistaction.ca>

The Ontario election and the future of the NDP

By BARRY WEISLEDER

Conservative leader Tim Hudak got exactly what he deserved. On June 12 Ontario voters rejected his plan to eliminate 100,000 public sector jobs and to gut the unions.

For the most part, labour's campaign to stop Hudak worked. The Tories were trounced at the polls, reduced to 28 seats and 31 per cent of the ballots cast. Hudak announced he'd step down when his party picks a replacement leader. But members of his caucus forced him to quit sooner. It couldn't happen to a nicer guy!

However, this anti-Hudak sentiment translated into a Liberal majority. It's hard to celebrate four more years of Bay Street's preferred party. It's hard to celebrate an electoral system that rewards a party that got less than 39 per cent of the votes cast, only about 19 per cent of the eligible electorate, with a majority of seats (58 of 107) in the Ontario Legislature.

The union-based NDP, on the other hand, lost the little power it had—despite increasing its vote share by 1 per cent (to 24 per cent) and retaining a seat total of 21. It would have done better had it pulled the plug on Liberal Premier Kathleen Wynne one year earlier. But the NDP did manage to pick up seats and consolidate its hold in the areas hardest hit by recession. In St. Catharines, in Hamilton (although NDP Leader Andrea Horwath did lose votes in her own riding), in London, Niagara, Oshawa and Windsor Essex regions, the party had seat gains or vote increases. Still, the NDP lost three seats and major ground in Toronto.

The voter turnout was barely 51 per cent, a three per cent improvement from the 2011 provincial election, but a dismal result by any standard. Key to the disappointment was the NDP's feckless effort. Worse than losing "an electoral gamble," Andrea Horwath waged the worst NDP campaign since Bob Rae attempted to defend his infamous Social Contract in 1995. Horwath had no mandate to veer to the right of the Liberal Party in a vain attempt to appeal to Conservative supporters and the business class. She had no mandate to abandon the fight for social justice in favour of a crass appeal to consumerism.

The NDP platform emphasized "making life more affordable" by removing the HST from electricity bills, reducing car insurance rates by 15%, opening up a few more child-care spaces, shortening hospital wait times, and offering a mere \$1 increase in the hourly minimum wage. At the same time, Horwath campaigned to continue the practice of bribing big private corporations to create jobs—without demanding any public ownership or democratic control of state investment.

Horwath projected a small increase in corporate taxation but no plan to conscript the hidden, un-taxed billions of dollars—what a former head of the Bank of Canada calls "dead Capital." That means the NDP proposed no way to fund a serious assault on poverty, on homelessness, or to end the deepening crises in public transit, education, and health care.

Horwath and her strategists said nothing about phasing out nuclear plants, stopping Line 9, satisfying the just claims of indigenous peoples, curtailing state surveillance, and terminating police repression of the kind that was unleashed during the G-20 Summit in Toronto. There was not even a hint that the problems faced today by the vast majority of Ontarians are rooted in the decaying and increasingly destructive capitalist system—much less that the solution is socialist democracy.

The ONDP Leader campaigned on "integrity." But she failed to reduce her own democratic deficit. She ignored a party convention decision to be tougher on



Ontario NDP Leader Andrea Horwath.

the Ontario Liberal budget of 2012/13. In fact, on her watch, party conventions provide less time for policy debate. And Horwath's Election Planning Committee undemocratically prevents leftists from being NDP candidates.

While it is gratifying that the Progressive Conservatives lost big time, it is clear that the capitalist austerity agenda continues vigorously under Premier Wynne.

Remember, Wynne bragged during the TV leaders' debate that she had implemented "80 per cent of the Drummond Report"—a harsh austerity plan. Behind Wynne's affable smile, the locomotive of the rulers' public-sector wage freeze, social cutbacks, 3Ps, and privatization remains firmly on track.

Corporate Ontario found a way to sanitize its brutal anti-working-class agenda by hiding it behind the "progressive" veneer of the province's first female premier, also Canada's first lesbian premier.

Now New Democrats, labour unionists, feminists, LGBTQ folks, environmentalists, socialists and social justice advocates must fight to take the NDP from the latter-day Blairites, and re-direct the party to lead the battle against capitalist austerity, and for socialist solutions to the mounting problems we face.

That starts with the demand that Ontario NDP Leader Andrea Horwath resign immediately. It's time for a full review of the party's leadership and political direction, leading up to its Nov. 14-16 convention in Toronto.

The question of Horwath's future as ONDP leader is posed daily in the mass media. The Socialist Caucus did not initiate this question, but it does have the opportunity to rally opinion behind a concrete propos-

al. Robin Sears and Brian Topp have written articles in defense of Horwath. Dave Cooke, former NDP Education Minister, Gerry Caplan, Paul Ferriera, Michael Prue, even Rosario Marchese have sharply criticized her. For socialists, the main issue is not personality; it is the need for a full review of the leadership and political direction of the party.

But how do we get it? This is not an abstract matter. A full review is triggered by a vote of non-confidence in the leader. A confidence vote occurs at every party convention. If even 35% of the delegates vote for a leadership review (that is, if less than 65% vote to support the current leader), in all likelihood a leadership race will ensue.

It is clear that such a vote would open up a period of intense discussion about the future of the NDP. So, what should socialists and labour activists do? Should we just wait to see what happens, and in the meantime conduct "business as usual" by submitting resolutions to the Convention, knowing full well that party officials will ensure that few of our resolutions ever make it to the floor?

This is where a bold initiative is needed—to galvanize the widespread discontent in the party and its voter base by posing a concrete course of action: **Demand that Andrea resign, and insist that a full review of the political direction of the party take place now.**

Is there a risk that such a demand may upset a section of the membership? Well, yes, but *which section* of members is likely to be offended? Will it be supporters of the openly critical letter of the 34 prominent present and former NDPers? Or that part of the labour section which openly broke with Andrea the day the election was called? Or the mass of party members who were so dissatisfied with Andrea's campaign that they did not participate in it?

Of course, there is the segment, including party staff and paid canvassers, who heartily support making the NDP the New Liberal Party—but the left has few prospects among them.

Naturally, the removal of Andrea is no guarantee that another MPP in the top job will change direction. But what are the chances if the party ranks, including the SC, do not demand this? It would only help Horwath and her team of handlers and fixers to weather the storm.

Our task is to "fan the flames of discontent." On what basis should we demand a full review of the political direction of the party, starting with the demand that the Leader resign? It should be done on the basis that there was no mandate to turn right; indeed, that to survive the NDP must turn sharply to the left. What should be said to those who argue that it's time to launch a new electoral party of the left? Stand up and fight for your principles—but fight where it really matters. Don't retreat into a fantasy world.

What is the record of new left-party initiatives in English Canada? It ranges from tragedy to farce. The Waffle movement had 10,000 NDP supporters in the early 1970s. But within three years of its departure from the NDP, it had disappeared. The Campaign for an Activist Party, and later the New Politics Initiative, led by Svend Robinson and Judy Rebick in the 1990s, were top-down, undemocratic structures that gave up the fight and disappeared.

Four years ago, a small body of dissident NDPers launched the Ginger Group. After a brief polemic, it quit the NDP and launched the Socialist Party of Ontario. In 2011 it ran three candidates. On June 12, 2014 the SPO ran only two candidates. The Communist Party of Canada ran 11 candidates on a left-reformist platform. None of those "left" candidates got more than 200 votes. The NDP got 1.1 million votes, with no support from big business. Most of its votes came from working people in heavily working-class districts.

Then there is the left-populist or anarchist perspective. It says "Just ignore the NDP." The problem with that is many-fold. It is economist. It leaves the struggle for bread and butter improvements at the front door of the legislature. It is anti-political, or at best, a stunted form of politics. Worst of all, it gives the present leadership of the working class a free hand to continue the sell-out. That includes so-called strategic voting, which favours the Liberal Party. We saw what that means when Gerry Dias, the President of UNIFOR, was shown on TV at the Liberal victory party congratulating Kathleen Wynne.

The NDP is the only mass, labour-based political party in North America. To understand the significance of that, just look at politics in the United States. The NDP remains a workers' party, which is obvious to anyone who has been to an NDP convention. But the NDP has a staunchly pro-capitalist leadership that is out of step with reality, that is, seemingly oblivious to the extremely destructive decline of late capitalism.

The struggle for a Workers' Agenda will take place

(continued on page 11)

On to Ottawa for the People's Social Forum!

Over 10,000 people will gather in Canada's capital city, Ottawa, Ontario, Aug. 21-24, for the Peoples' Social Forum. The PSF web site describes it as "a critical public space aimed at fostering activist involvement of individuals and civil society organizations that want to transform Canada as it exists today.

"It is intended as a space for social movements to meet and converge, for the free expression of alternative ideas and grassroots exchanges and for artistic manifestations reflecting a diversity of demands and aspirations."

"It seeks to stimulate practical involvement and alliances for action against neo-liberal policies in Canada. The PSF strives for social justice, Original Peoples' rights, sustainable development, international solidarity and participatory democracy."

Socialist Action/Ligue pour l'Action socialiste will host a workshop titled "The fight against capitalist austerity is also a fight against the leadership of the unions and the NDP." SA/LAS members from Hamilton, Toronto, Kingston, and Montreal will staff a literature display, demonstrate with thousands on to Parliament Hill, and participate in an assembly of labour militants aimed at launching a cross-union, cross-country labour left opposition.

The PSF is part of the global movement of social forums that have emerged at different levels since the first World Social Forum (WSF) was held in Porto Alegre (Brazil) in January 2001. The latest World Social Forum, in March 2013, was held in Tunis, which will be the site of the 2015 gathering. — B.W.

What does Karl Marx have to do with Karl Lagerfeld?

By CHRISTINE MARIE

Tansey E. Hoskins clearly loves art, understands the impulse to body modification and sartorial statement, and can imagine a socialist society where the creativity of the vast majority will be unleashed to spectacular ends in clothing and many other spheres.

She has also written the most devastating deconstruction of the fashion industry, as well as of the “ethical fashion movement,” to date. Her new book, “Stitched Up: The Anti-Capitalist Book of Fashion” (London: Pluto Press, 2014), leaves no negative impact of the fashion industry unexamined. She expertly lays out the industry record regarding class differentiation, worker exploitation, imperialist underdevelopment, racial stereotyping, female self-loathing, environmental degradation, gender oppression, and artist cooptation.

What makes Hoskin’s book more than a very radical and comprehensive look at the world of haute couture, and its impact on the rest of us, is the fact that she can be enthralled by the collection of a sophisticated designer at the same time that she shows herself to be a revolutionary socialist who has absorbed the best that Marxism and feminism have to offer on this question and can argue persuasively that nothing short of a battle for socialism can right these wrongs.

To better arm her readers for that struggle, she explains Marxist concepts like commodity fetishism, alienation, ideology, use-value, surplus value, and the reserve army of labor, and interweaves the history of garment production from the beginning of the factory system to today. In short, she effectively answers her own question, “But what does Karl Marx have to do with Karl Lagerfeld?”

The fashion industry, Hoskin’s argues, “lays out in sharp relief all the ins and outs of capitalism—the drive for profit and its resulting exploitation, the power that comes from owning society’s means of production,” and its use of ideology to assert that “there is no alternative.”

Fashion, like all art forms in capitalist society, is highly contradictory. Individual artists can create work that inspires dreams of a different kind of society, while, at the same time, the art system that abides that rebellion actually hides capitalism’s inherently destructive mode of functioning and its vulnerability to overthrow by the majority. Relentlessly examining the fashion world in its material context and refusing to let the endless contradictions resolve, Hoskins argues, is the kind of practice that makes historical agency, and ultimately liberation, possible.

Liberation from our own alienation, retail therapy, credit card debt, and body image issues, Hoskins explains, can only be won collectively and in solidarity with garment workers acting in their interest worldwide. While boycotts and consumer campaigns that accompanied the civil rights movement or farm worker organizing contributed to the morale and mobilization of many, there is no “ethical” fashion purchase that will materially reduce the evils of the fashion industry under capitalism.

No company that produces garments, no matter what their public relations or green-washing campaigns assert, can stay in business in this system unless it wins the costs of production war with its competitors. And these wars are carried out in the context of powerful militarized nation states negotiating trade rules in the interests of the ruling rich.

In the 1970s, the U.S., Europe, and Canada set self-serving quotas and tariffs under the auspices of the Multi Fibre Arrangement (MFA), an agreement whose



Marty Goodman / Socialist Action

(Above) Society women parade in high fashion as they enter gala event to honor Haitian President Martelly and Bill Clinton (see story on page 4).

terms determined where it was viable to produce garments and where it was not. Globally, countries like Bangladesh that were too poor to diversify their industry suddenly lost \$7.3 billion a year. Others, like South Korea, were set up for profit-making. Still other locations, like Saipan, part of the U.S. Commonwealth, became a giant compound housing tens of thousands of young, female, Chinese workers.

In 2005, the MFA ended, and within a few years, Saipan’s industry vanished, and the young women without the means to return to China became the base of Saipan’s sex tourism industry. This volatility is endemic to an industry that due to competition overproduces in nearly unimaginable numbers and survives on the creation of false need.

After 2008, when the ending of the MFA coincided with the global capitalist economic crisis and production slowed, 10 million workers in China, a third of the 30 million textile and garment workers, lost their jobs. The figure in India was one million, and in Cambodia 20 percent of that workforce. The overwhelming majority of these workers were women under the age of 40 years working in frequently deadly conditions like the Rana Plaza, where over a thousand women lost their lives last year in a building collapse and where sexual abuse is rampant.

To keep a penny ahead of the competition, the industry carries out “global scanning,” ready to move a room full of sewing machines in an instant, leaving chaos and women forced into further degradation or exploitation. Hoskins demonstrates, as well, that any claim by any name in the industry that they were unaware of any of these conditions is simply impossible.

Particularly effective is Hoskin’s depiction of the special environmental destruction of the cotton, textile, and garment industries. She describes the Aral Sea, once a home to 24 species of fish and families dependent on them, today a diseased salt-rock desert plagued by winds blowing carcinogenic pesticide dust into villages. The sea was drained to irrigate Uzbekistan’s 1.47 million hectares of cotton, as well as those in Turkmenistan, grown in unsustainable ways to feed the insatiable cheap for-profit garment industry.

China’s textile industry, which supplies most Western name brands, is considered the third worst polluter out of the country’s 39 spheres of production, due to the huge amount of water used for dyeing and

finishing. Aldicarb, the pesticide that poisoned up to 15,000 people in Bhopal in 1984, is primarily used for cotton and is still being manufactured in the U.S., though pressure may force the cessation of production by 2015.

All this human suffering and violence to the planet contributes to profit making only by the creation of false needs, resulting in the production of 80 million tons of textiles and “throwaway” garments that could clothe the world many, many times over if distributed based on need. Yet, of course, they are not, since fashion is a trend-based industry that relies on selling billions of short-life units every season at maximum profit.

The United Kingdom, she tells us, deposits 4 million tons of textiles in landfills each year. According to Hoskins, annually turning 80 million tons of textiles into short use garments every year requires 1074 billion kilowatt hours of electricity, 132 million tons of coal, up to 9 trillion liters of water, and an incalculable amount of pesticide, dye, and metallic fasteners. For every kilogram of textiles produced, an average of 10 kg of chemicals are used.

Hoskins concludes, “This spells disaster for the environment and led Marx to describe capital as having a vampiric relationship with nature, ‘a living death maintained by sucking the blood from the world.’”

While not denying the impact on nature of the current setup, the green fashion book “Eco Chic,” Hoskins tells us, urges women to “buy less, spend more,” i.e., choose more expensive but better-made clothes. As comforting as this might be to those who can afford *haute couture*, the author, explains, high priced garments with designer labels are made in the same polluting factories as cheaper garments.

There is no buying strategy that can subvert the laws of production and profit making under capitalism. Rather, Hoskins says, the labor movement, because of the strategic place of workers in the whole rotten setup, is the critical element in the journey towards a just society where human needs, which dovetail with environmental health, come first. She may be able to convince your friends and coworkers as well. ■

... NDP future

(continued from page 10)

in the NDP, as it will take place in the unions. Not exclusively there, but there too.

The battle against capitalist austerity continues. Quickly the *Toronto Star* warned Wynne to renege on her “progressive” promises and instead to reduce the deficit—“to avoid a credit-rating downgrade.” The *Star* asks, “Will Wynne play Hudak-lite and cut public service jobs or government spending?” It darkly predicts “confrontations with public sector unions.”

Let’s hope that there will be confrontations arising from resistance to the coming cuts. Let’s hope that union leaders don’t declare victory over Hudak and then go to sleep, as they did when the Bob Rae-led Ontario NDP surprisingly won a majority of seats in 1990.

One thing should be clear: for anti-austerity resistance to succeed there must be rank-and-file organization against austerity and concessions inside the NDP and

the unions.

A critical test of that idea will occur at the Ontario NDP Convention in November. To prepare for that, the Socialist Caucus will host an Ontario Conference on Saturday, Sept. 6. It will petition for a change of leadership and political direction of the party and decide on priority resolutions. It will select SC candidates for the ONDP Executive. And it will plan the next edition of *Turn Left*, the SC magazine, for which a fund appeal is presently underway.

Can the Socialist Caucus make a difference? It has proven that it can. The SC won the federal NDP in 2006 to the policy “Canada Out of Afghanistan.” The SC led the fight at the 2011 NDP convention in Vancouver to keep “socialism” in the party constitution, and again at the 2013 convention, where we won the debate on “free post-secondary education.” We forced the Ontario party leadership in 2010 to conduct a review of public funding of Catholic separate schools, and held the only large public hearing on the issue.

Clearly, socialist revolution requires more than socialist resolutions. But change starts with joining the fight

inside the main working class organizations.

Capitalism has nothing to offer workers, women, youths, seniors and the poor. The Occupy movement showed there is a hunger for change, and re-defined the notion of “majority.” The Quebec students’ movement showed what a mass “social strike” against neoliberalism looks like. The current continental campaign for a \$15/hour minimum wage inspires millions.

Opposition to Line 9, to the Northern Gateway pipeline, and the fight to save Canada’s postal services have the same potential. The global popularity of Thomas Piketty’s book “Capital in the Twenty-First Century” indicates the wide disdain for growing inequality, and the appetite for a radical new direction. The defeat of Ken Georgetti’s executive slate at the Canadian Labour Congress Convention in May is further evidence of stirrings below the surface.

In our tortured world, there is anger and suffering aplenty. What’s lacking is leadership. Leadership is born in struggle. Join the struggle for a new leadership in the workers’ movement. Join the NDP Socialist Caucus. Together we will win. ■

U.S. Supreme Court: A tool of the ruling rich



BY JEFF MACKLER

Whenever I flinch at yet another reactionary U.S. Supreme Court decision I am reminded of Anatole France's famous observation, "The law, in its majestic equality, forbids rich and poor alike to sleep under bridges, beg in the streets, or steal bread."

In late June, in the now infamous Hobby Lobby case, the Supreme Court of capitalist America applied the "personal protections" of the Religious Freedom Restoration Act to "closely held" for-profit corporations—in this instance, to the Green family-owned Hobby Lobby's 500 craft stores, with more than 13,000 employees. The medical plans afforded these low-paid workers will now, based on the Green family's religious beliefs, exclude them from contraception coverage as specified by the Affordable Care Act.

The Obama administration's response was to note that the decision was of little consequence because the government could find ways to pay for the now excluded corporate coverage. That is, what the Court has now granted to employers with regard to lesser costs would be passed on to taxpayers in higher taxes.

Some observers quickly concluded that the Court's decision might well be followed by a sudden "taking to religion" by many of America's "closely held" corporations to meet the Hobby Lobby's now "legalized" freedom to exclude contraceptive coverage.

But no, interpreters of this "narrow decision" were comforted that it was conceived by the Supreme Court as an essentially exceptional exclusion—that is, until a week or so later, when the same Court ruled similarly in a case brought by Wheaton College, another religion-based institution. Here too, contraception is now eliminated from the college's responsibility, with the cost again to be passed on to the government.

The slew of reactionary Supreme Court decisions over the past month includes exclusion from union dues check-off of thousands of home-care workers and the striking down of Massachusetts' 35-foot buffer zone around abortion clinics, which was enacted to stop the harassment, not to mention physical attacks, of patients exercising their right to choose abortion. Within days, the fetus fanatics were back at clinic entrances, supposedly exercising what the Supreme Court so liberally described as their "democratic right to free speech and assembly."

Socialists have long noted that capitalist courts, absent massive social movements fighting to defend and expand democratic rights, are not likely to champion these rights. Indeed, the same courts that today allow women to be physically and verbally affronted when entering abortion clinics, in the name of free speech and assembly, have no problem striking down these basic democratic rights when activists apply for permits to protest the never-ending U.S. imperialist wars.

The courts regularly recognize "buffer zones" to

As the transfer of wealth to the rich reaches historic levels, reactionary ideas are increasingly clothed in 'democratic' garb.

"protect" capitalist institutions, as with the present restrictions on demonstrations near the Supreme Court itself. In New York City, the courts have consistently upheld broad restrictions on the right to march and rally—excluding vast portions of the city, like the Central Park area, from demonstrations.

Restrictions in many cities include forcibly penning in demonstrators block by block with police barricades with restricted access, limiting the use of sound amplification, and more. What was taken for granted 50 years ago, having been won in mass struggles, as with the Vietnam-era and civil rights protests involving millions, must be fought for tooth and nail today.

In the case of the right to abortion, the mass protests and clinic defense of the 1980s and after, organized by the women's movement, were the only reliable way of ensuring women's basic rights under the law. Tens of thousands mobilized at that time to defend the abortion clinics from right-wing fanatics operating in the name of religion, like Operation Rescue.

Meanwhile, police mobilizations were routinely organized to protect the anti-abortion fanatics' "right to protest." The lion's share of those arrested at that time were the women who organized to defend clinics against violent attacks by anti-abortion protesters. Of the hundreds of clinic bombings, physical assaults, death threats, and murders committed by these elements, few offenders were prosecuted and convicted.

The Court's decision today will undoubtedly serve to once again convince pro-choice activists that the reliance on the courts or the twin parties of capital are no arena to protect women's basic right to choose.

Undoubtedly, the June decisions of the Supreme Court, supposedly limited to the particular instances that were litigated in Hobby Lobby and Wheaton College, will now be taken up across the nation as "similarly situated" institutions seek to press for their own exclusions.

This will undoubtedly be the case with a recent California Superior Court decision that struck down teacher tenure and seniority. In his instance, the court argued that failure by Black and poor students was a result of laws that prevent "incompetent" teachers from being fired. Citing the "democratic right" under the state's constitution to an equal education, the court ignored society's institutional racism that in-

flicts poverty and hopelessness on the nation's increasingly re-segregated and under-funded youth, and placed the blame on teachers and their union contracts that protect them from administrative abuse and discrimination.

In a matter of weeks a similar suit was filed in New York City, with the objective of eliminating teachers' tenure. No doubt the virus of capitalist injustice will spread across the country as the ruling rich seek to blame capitalism's failure on its victims.

Ruling-class hype over "democratic rights," the "right" to deepen the attacks on working people and the oppressed and exploited, is today used to line the pockets of the corporate elite, as with the present efforts to privatize public education and the U.S. Postal Service.

A July 4 *New York Times* headline proclaimed, "Hiring Is Strong and Jobless Rate Declines to 6.1%," to indicate that the economy is recovering after six devastating years of recession/depression. *The Times* neglected to note that first-quarter GDP growth declined 2.9 percent.

While pointing to Wall Street's high-flying all-time stock market records, with the Dow Jones average for the first time closing at above 17,000, it felt compelled to state: "Despite broad gains, [in the stock market] the economy is still a long way from its peak before the housing bubble burst and the recession began at the end of 2007. The broadest measure of unemployment, which includes people who are working part time because full-time positions are not available, stands at 12.1 percent. And the proportion of Americans in the labor force has been stuck for three straight months at 62.8 percent, a 36-year low, and it's down sharply from 66 percent in 2008."

In truth, the real unemployment figures are much higher, given that the government's calculations exclude millions who have dropped out of the labor market entirely and/or who are no longer eligible to receive unemployment insurance.

The above figures are important indicators of the crisis of capitalism, which has no alternative but to deepen the exploitation of the vast majority in order to rip off an increasing share of the wealth that working people produce.

This transfer of wealth to the rich has reached historic proportions in the U.S. and across the capitalist world, and with it, an ideological offensive has gained ground wherein reactionary ideas are clothed in populist or "democratic" garb.

In the name of religious protections, corporations profit by attacking women's rights, and unions lose their rights for the same reason, as "legal" technicalities are forever found to justify corporate greed. Billionaire elites form "radical-sounding" solutions to the racist and classist-induced failure of public education, with never-ending diatribes as to why private corporate-run schools are superior to public education.

In all these matters, "liberal"-sounding politicians like President Obama position themselves as defenders of the poor, while leading the U.S. and worldwide capitalist offensive that produces war, racism, and poverty for the overwhelming majority. The U.S. Supreme Court's recent string of reactionary decisions merely reflects the overall needs of the ruling elites, who require the subordination of the needs and desires of the vast majority to the private profit system.

All the hoopla attendant to the "dissenting opinions" of the Court's four Democratic Party appointees is nothing less than the veneer of democracy and debate placed over a sick social system, whose inherent evils can only be remedied by its revolutionary replacement via the conscious organization of a socialist alternative representing the 99 percent. ■