

“War on Terror” Targets Everyone



National Defence

Canadian troops in Afghanistan enforce racist “war on terror” abroad.

Canada Out of Afghanistan! U.S./Britain Out of Iraq!

The criminal terror bombings in the London transit system have been seized on by the capitalist rulers in Britain, the U.S., Canada and elsewhere as an opportunity to expand their murderous “war on terror.” British cops are rampaging through Muslim immigrant neighbourhoods armed with submachine guns. Their official “shoot to kill” policy has already led to the racist execution of Brazilian electrician Jean Charles de Menezes. For the capitalists, who continue to grind away at the living standards of working people domestically while extending their military reach against oppressed peoples abroad, each terror bombing is another excuse to push forward pre-existing plans to increase their powers of repression. They want the populace to accept as “normal” what only a few years ago would have been seen as gross violations of people’s rights.

In Canada, the government is implementing yet more sweep-

ing measures targeting immigrants and curtailing democratic rights. The “war on terror” is in the first instance a racist witchhunt of the Muslim population, already so discriminated against that its unemployment level is twice the national average. But, as we have warned repeatedly, this “war” ultimately targets the entire population, not least the organized labour movement. Whipping up panic and fear while attacking Near Eastern and North African immigrants as an “enemy within,” the rulers aim to divide the workers against each other while strengthening their arsenal of state repression.

The Martin Liberals are ramping up their agenda of attacks on workers’ jobs and benefits, heightened surveillance in the name of “law and order” and a vast increase in military spending. Earlier, the minority Liberals had to put

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**Britain: Defend Muslims Against
Labour’s Racist Witchhunt**

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Down With Telus Union-Busting!

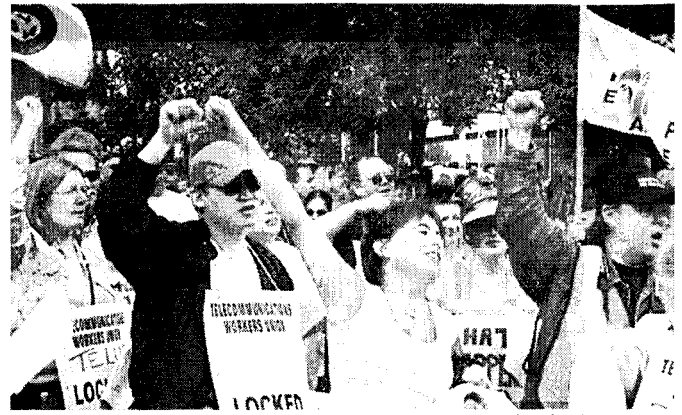
Victory to the TWU!

VANCOUVER—On July 21, 13,700 members of the Telecommunications Workers Union (TWU) in B.C. and Alberta walked off the job when Telus arrogantly tried to impose a take-back contract. Telus then declared a lockout. The TWU has been without a contract for nearly *five years*. That's five years of no pay increases, forced overtime and shredded union rights. Telus has axed 6,000 jobs since 2000. Now they want to gut the union in order to increase their already vast profits, which in the last three months doubled to \$242 million.

This is a serious battle against a foe that is marshalling all its weapons against the union. A job in the phone industry used to be somewhat secure, but 20 years of deregulation, cut-throat competition and the growth of non-union outfits like Primus has resulted in huge job losses. Now Telus is demanding even greater "flexibility," meaning untrammelled freedom to contract out union jobs and destroy working conditions.

TWU picket lines have been bolstered by CUPE public sector workers, Hospital Employees Union (HEU) members and many others. Hydro workers blocked scab trucks in northern B.C., while postal and other government workers have vowed to honour TWU pickets. On the picket lines in Vancouver, TWU members told *Spartacist Canada* salesmen that it would have been better if they had struck last year with the HEU. That's for sure! In spring 2004, B.C. was on the brink of a general strike in solidarity with the HEU, who faced a union-busting, wage-slashing attack from the Campbell Liberals. The TWU had already voted massively for strike action in February; there was the basis for some hard class struggle that could have scored a win for the workers. Instead the TWU was chained to the job as the union tops pursued fruitless negotiations. In the end, the hospital workers were betrayed by their leaders, who called off the strike and pushed through a sellout deal while channelling workers' anger into electing more NDP MLAs in the 2005 election.

Today, the main obstacle facing phone workers is a union leadership that pledges allegiance to the NDP "friends of labour" and puts its faith in supposedly "neutral" arbitrators and government boards. This political outlook has brought only defeats for the working class. B.C. NDP leader Carole James helped to knife the HEU strike last year. The NDP's base may be in the unions, but when in power this pro-capitalist party



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Calgary, July 28: TWU strikers' rally.

necessarily rules in the interests of the bosses. In B.C., it has a long and ugly record of breaking strikes, fomenting anti-immigrant racism and unleashing massive police repression against Native protesters.

The Bosses' Weapons Against the Workers

Telus's chief weapon against the union is the capitalist state: the cops, courts, prisons, etc., whose purpose is to protect the filthy rich owners of industry and commerce against workers and the oppressed. On July 22 the company won a sweeping anti-union injunction that bans picketing if it "blocks, obstructs or impedes" access to company property and bars flying pickets from following unidentified vehicles, i.e., scabs. Pro-strike websites were even shut down! To supplement the long arm of the law, Telus hired AFI International, a "security" company of professional strikebreakers. AFI is scabherding and framing up TWU flying pickets for arrest.

After the 1999 merger of B.C. Tel and the Alberta-based Telus, phone workers voted to be represented by the TWU. Yet the courts ruled that the stronger B.C. contract would not apply in Alberta, where wages stayed low and contracting-out provisions were much weaker. Work once done by highly skilled unionized workers in B.C. was shipped to managers in Alberta. Today Telus is aggressively scabherding there, offering lower-paid Alberta workers inducements like free food, transport and \$400 iPods. A core union demand is for wage parity at the higher B.C. level.

In response to Telus's plan to establish call centers in the Philippines, the TWU leadership decried the "destruction of Canadian jobs and the economy of many communities" and "the movement of our work offshore to the Philippines and possibly India, China, Taiwan" (TWU Information Bulletin, 11 August). The utterly false underlying message is that Canadian workers have interests counterposed to workers in other countries. This in turn provoked a racist anti-Asian outburst on an online union bulletin board. The poison of racism and nationalist chauvinism, which sets workers against each other, will defeat a strike as surely as an army of scabs—it is in the interests of *all* labour to combat it. Nationalist protectionism doesn't save jobs. The capitalists will always go where they will make the biggest profits, and they will always try to drive down wages and conditions. The answer is

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Ipperwash Inquiry: Whitewashing the Capitalist State **The Racist Killing of Dudley George**

Nine years after the brutal killing of Native activist Anthony “Dudley” George by Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) riot cops, the Ontario government launched a public commission of inquiry last July. George’s family has fought for hearings since his death on 6 September 1995, hoping that the full truth would finally come out. Smelling an electoral opportunity, the Ontario Liberal Party quickly seized on this demand in their campaign against the then ruling Conservative government of Mike Harris. Predictably, the NDP and the reformist left have saluted the Liberals’ cynical maneuver as some form of “justice.”

Whatever the information revealed or token rectification offered, such public inquiries always serve a political purpose—to refurbish the image of the racist, capitalist state. Writing about U.S. congressional hearings on the FBI’s COINTELPRO program (which targeted black and leftist radicals during the 60s and 70s for surveillance, frame-up and assassination), former Black Panther and political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal explains:

“While they provided a riveting show, a thrilling political performance, a scripted pantomime of the workings of democracy, they remained, after all was said and done, mere performance. When the curtain came down on the show, the real world, with its painful ambiguities and chilling truths about power, race, and violent white supremacy, remained unchanged. Revelation is not transformation—it only looks like it.”

—*We Want Freedom: A Life in the Black Panther Party* (2004)

Over 350 years of history lie behind the bullet that ended Dudley George’s life. Beginning with colonial conquest, Canadian capitalism was founded on the destruction of the pre-existing aboriginal societies and terror against Native peoples—from the bloody pacification campaigns by the Northwest Mounted Police and innumerable broken treaties, to the kidnapping and imprisonment of aboriginal youth in “residential schools” and the forced sterilization of Native women. Only revolutionary struggle against the capitalist system, led by the working class, can open up the possibility for the emancipation of Native peoples and all of the oppressed. But such a struggle is impossible so long as the majority of working people and the downtrodden still see the capitalist state as a potential ally, or believe that it can be made “accountable” through mass pressure and public exposure.

Racist State Terror and Government Lies: We Will Not Forget!

The events at Ipperwash were the legacy of one of the numerous racist atrocities committed by the federal Liberal government of Mackenzie King over a half century ago. In 1942, invoking the War Measures Act, the King government seized the Chippewa reserve at Stony Point near Ipperwash to build a military base. Native houses were destroyed in a few hours, their occupants forcibly displaced without warning. Other houses in the area were untouched. It was only in 1995, following a determined two-year occupation by Native militants, that the army finally withdrew from the base.



**Anthony “Dudley” George:
killed by police, 6 September 1995.**

On 4 September 1995, the day after the end of tourist season and the closing of Ipperwash Park, some 30 Native activists occupied land that had once been part of their reserve, demanding the return and protection of an ancestral burial ground that had been seized by the government. After a three-day standoff, a phalanx of riot cops marched down a darkened road, opening fire on the unarmed protesters, killing George and wounding two others. One protester was beaten until his heart literally stopped. OPP sergeant Kenneth Deane later received a slap on the wrist—a conviction of “criminal negligence” and two years community service—for pumping a bullet into the young Native activist.

Now in power, the Liberals in Queen’s Park are hanging full responsibility on the flagrantly right-wing and racist Harris regime. Indeed, Harris’ cries for Native blood took even the OPP trigger men running the operation aback. In a conversation recorded hours before George was killed, OPP inspector Ron Fox ranted: “We’re dealing with a real red-neck government. They are f---ing barrel suckers. They are just in love with guns.”

But the Ipperwash siege involved every level of the state apparatus, from the federal Department of National Defence on down to the local cops. If tapes played at the inquiry show that orders for a brutal assault came directly from Queen’s Park, it was the Liberal federal government who equipped the OPP with armoured personnel carriers and machine guns capable of firing 800 rounds a minute. The Feds knew that the protesters were unarmed and peaceful because *they had a CSIS plant among them the entire time posing as a Native activist* (Hansard No. 126, 2001). The Department of Indian Affairs and the provincial government both had evidence that the activists’ claims

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From the Barricades to the Parti Québécois Lessons of the 1972 Quebec General Strike

For Quebec Independence!

The general strike that engulfed Quebec in the spring of 1972 was the most deep-going class battle North America had seen in many decades—or has seen since. Yet even the basic facts of the strike, let alone its lessons, are little known to militant workers or leftist youth today, including in Quebec.

The general strike came on the heels of the “Quiet Revolution” of the 1960s, which saw French-speaking Quebec transformed from a church-dominated backwater to a modern, self-conscious and largely secular society. While a new francophone bourgeoisie began to displace the English overlords, layers of the working class and student youth underwent a significant radicalization. This was fueled in large part by opposition to national oppression, which saw workers told to “speak white” if they did not address the foreman in English.

These developments produced a chauvinist reaction in English Canada, leading to the October 1970 “October Crisis” when Liberal prime minister Pierre Trudeau sent the army to occupy Quebec and arrest hundreds of leftist and union militants. Trudeau claimed he was crushing an “insurrection” by the left-nationalist Front de Libération du Québec (FLQ), which had kidnapped two government representatives, but his real purpose was to put an end to the widespread social turmoil in Quebec. He was seconded in this by provincial Liberal premier Robert Bourassa, whose government provoked the general strike a year and a half later by jailing Quebec’s top union leaders.

The following article on the general strike was first published in *SC* No. 57 (March 1983). It documents how the misleaders of English Canadian labour lined up behind the Canadian capitalists to denounce the militant Quebec workers and, more generally, struggles in Quebec against national oppression. Following the defeat of the strike, the already significant divisions between English-speaking and Québécois workers became deeper. Trudeau maintained his hard line against Quebec nationalism, seconded by the social-democratic NDP and the English Canadian labour tops, who either supported him or tacitly accepted Quebec’s forced retention within Canada. In Quebec, workers were increasingly driven into the arms of their own francophone capitalists, leading to the election, with significant labour support, of the bourgeois-nationalist Parti Québécois four years later. The PQ government repaid the workers by launching its own sweeping anti-union attacks in 1982-83, when our article was first published.

The 1972 general strike was a watershed, demonstrating that national animosities had poisoned relations between English Canadian and Québécois workers, undermining the



Montreal: *La Presse* workers confront police during strike in 1971. no credit

prospects for united working-class struggle. This divide is very real: for example, the vast majority of unions in Quebec are either separate or highly autonomous. From the 1980 and 1995 referendums through various “constitutional” crises to today’s sponsorship scandal, Quebec workers have felt only arrogance and indifference coming from English Canada.

This year’s Canadian Labour Congress convention, held in Montreal in June, provided a telling example of the depth of national antagonisms in the working class. When Gilles Duceppe, leader of the nationalist Bloc Québécois, addressed the delegates, he denounced the NDP’s recent pact with the federal Liberals, including party leader Jack Layton’s grotesque chauvinist comments against “getting into bed with the separatists” in Quebec. As Duceppe motivated Quebec independence, nearly a hundred delegates from English Canada walked out holding Maple Leaf flags and singing O Canada.

From our inception in 1975, the Trotskyist League/Ligue trotskyste has strongly opposed Anglo chauvinism and defended Quebec’s right to self-determination—i.e., to independence—including in the unions. However we did not take a position *advocating* independence until 1995, following an intense re-examination of the question (see “For Quebec Independence,” *SC* No. 105, September/October 1995). While the article below aptly motivates the need for a proletarian internationalist perspective against the dead end of bourgeois nationalism, it is a weakness that it does not draw the logical conclusion from the evidence presented, that support to Quebec independence is an essential component of a program of class struggle against Canadian capitalism.



Demonstration during Common Front public sector workers strike, April 1972. Jailing of union leaders by Liberal government sparked general strike one month later.

In advocating independence for Quebec, we seek to lay the basis for the workers in both English Canada and Quebec to see that the enemy is their own exploiters, not “the French” or “*les anglais*.” In English Canada, that means a fight to break the working class from the chauvinist labour tops and New Democrats who push deadly illusions in Canadian capitalism. In Quebec, it means breaking the workers from the PQ and Bloc, capitalist parties promoted by the nationalist Quebec union bureaucracy. While Quebec labour is today battling against yet another right-wing Liberal government, under Jean Charest, the PQ has shown during its repeated terms in office that it is equally a class enemy of the workers. As we emphasize below, the national and social liberation of the working people of Quebec requires a perspective of revolutionary internationalism embodied in a Marxist vanguard party.

“We must assume that what has been happening these past few days in Quebec is not representative of public feeling generally, for if it were a major part of Canada would be on the verge of revolution.”

—*Globe and Mail*, 13 May 1972

For eleven days in May 1972 the ruling class and their media mouthpieces throughout North America quaked in their boots in the face of the near-insurrectionary general strike that rocked Quebec. Enraged at the imprisonment of the leaders of Quebec’s three major union federations by the provincial Liberal government of Robert Bourassa, thousands of workers across Quebec downed their tools and staged spontaneous walkouts. As town after town fell to the control of striking workers a state of virtual dual power was created.

The Bourassa government was thrown into a state of desperate hysteria to preserve its rule, prime minister Pierre Trudeau screamed that Quebec union leaders were out to “destroy the country” and then-Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) head Donald McDonald chimed in, “they’re not strikes, they’re revolutions.” The 1972 general strike in Quebec did raise the question of political power. But in the absence of a revolutionary proletarian leadership the combativity dissipated. Hatred for the Liberal regimes both in Quebec and Ottawa (where Trudeau had imposed the War

Measures Act in 1970) combined with mounting resentment over the national oppression by arrogant and chauvinist English-speaking Canada was channeled, especially by the union leadership, into votes for the bourgeois-nationalist Parti Québécois (PQ).

In 1972 speaking from the opposition bench in the National Assembly PQ leader René Lévesque commented:

“Of course, if one is not to be narrow-minded, one must be sympathetic to the cause of the workers in our society, but...we must not forget that the PQ will perhaps find itself as the boss at the negotiating table.... We must strike a balance between the demands of the workers and the possibility that the PQ might be in power during the next negotiations.”

—*Labor Challenge*, 8 May 1972

Today that is right where the PQ is, pushing a massive PATCO-style union-busting attack against the militant and combative Quebec labour movement.

From the opposite side of the bargaining table Quebec Federation of Labour (FTQ) president Louis Laberge has recently been mouthing off about calling all of Quebec labour out in a general strike against the PQ union-busters with the invocation, “Just remember what happened in 1972.” Indeed everyone from Laberge to Lévesque remembers all too well what happened then, and to a man—from the labour misleaders to the labour haters—all have been desperately trying to avoid a repeat of this massive proletarian uprising, unprecedented in North American history.

“By Authority of the Workers of Quebec”

In late 1971 the FTQ, the Quebec Federation of Teachers (CEQ) and the Confederation of National Trade Unions (CSN) formed the Common Front of Quebec’s public sector workers to negotiate with the Bourassa government. On April 11, 1972 after months of government stonewalling and hardlining, Common Front workers walked out in an “unlimited general strike.” But ten days later the union tops caved in to strikebreaking legislation and ordered the ranks—*who had voted to stay out*—back to work. This did not placate the government, which sentenced the three Common Front leaders—Laberge of the FTQ and CEQ president Yvon Charbonneau (both today in the same positions) as

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TWU...

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to fight for internationalist solidarity with workers abroad, and the unity of the multiracial working class at home.

The recent Vancouver port truckers strike showed the strategic weight of immigrant labour in B.C., and demonstrated that even a small number of workers can have a huge impact when they act collectively. Some 1,200 mainly Punjabi truck drivers—"independent" owner-operators gouged by the big trucking companies—set up pickets and shut down much of the port. With 25,000 containers piled up on the docks, their strike cost the capitalists \$75 million a day. Just a third of the drivers are union members, mainly organized by the Teamsters. Organizing all the port truckers into the labour movement would strengthen all the waterfront unions and undercut divisions between immigrant and Canadian-born workers.

The chief strength of the unions lies in their numbers, organization, discipline and militancy and their relation to the decisive means of production in capitalist society. It is the exploitation of workers' labour that produces the capitalists' profits. American Trotskyist leader James P. Cannon wrote at the time of a huge California maritime strike in 1936:

"...when you get down to cases this strike, like any other strike, is simply a bullheaded struggle between two forces whose interests are in constant and irreconcilable conflict. The partnership of capital and labor is a lie. The immediate issue in every case is decided by the relative strength of the opposing forces at the moment. The only strike strategy worth a tinker's dam is the strategy that begins with this conception."

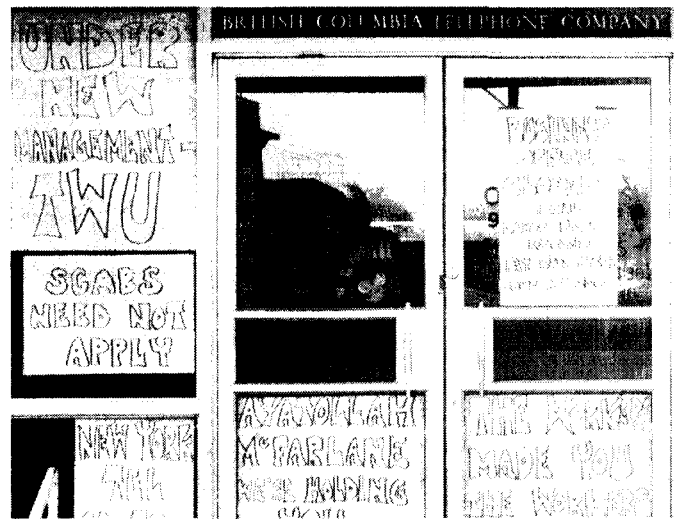
—"The Maritime Strike," November 1936, *Notebook of an Agitator* (1958)

To wage the kind of hard fight needed to win against Telus means knowing where your power lies and identifying the obstacles to using it. Telecommunications are central to the capitalist economy, from the banks to the stock exchanges. If the financiers can't get their stock quotations or use their phones and computers, the howls of capitalist anguish will be heard the length of the country. Highly technologically advanced, the phone system can be run for weeks, perhaps months, by supervisors. Telus has an army of those—a bit more than half of its workforce—and they are all scabbing.

Mass picket lines backed by the entire labour movement can keep out the scabs. In 1981—the last time the TWU struck—the union went further, holding the bosses' sacred private property hostage for five days by occupying major B.C. Tel centers. The union leadership, under pressure from the B.C. Federation of Labour tops, eventually called off the occupation and accepted a rotten deal. Today many of the TWU's flying picket squad leaders are veterans of 1981. By occupying property of Telus—hated for its lousy, price-gouging service—the union could cut the flow of profits to the bosses by preventing them from routing the billing system to a remote location. From inside, the TWU would win millions of allies among working people by making the technical adjustments required to provide free phone service.

For a Class-Struggle Leadership of the Unions!

Strike strategy is inseparable from political program and leadership. The union leaders look to the bosses' state to act in the interests of the workers, and invoke its power as an excuse for limiting workers' struggles to what is acceptable to the capitalists. TWU leaders have already bowed to the



SC photo

TWU strikers occupy B.C. Tel during 1981 strike.

court's strikebreaking orders, as union president Bruce Bell made clear: "You can still hold people up, you can't blockade. It's like waiting for a train to go by." Instead of mounting mass pickets to keep out scabs, TWU picketers are reduced to traffic cops.

The reformist left promotes the politics of the union bureaucracy, politically identifying the workers with their misleaders. With the TWU in a pitched battle for its existence, *Fire This Time* (July 2005) published, without comment, a long interview with TWU president Bell in which he retailed the union tops' perspective of relying on negotiations and arbitration. Touting the labour bureaucrats is consistent with *Fire This Time's* sub-reformist goal, "to build a broad based movement to defeat the BC Liberal Government." By definition this means pimping for the social-democratic traitors of the NDP.

For its part, the Fightback group calls to "Nationalize Telus!", fatuously declaring: "Without the hindrance of the profit motive, a nationalized telecommunications company would be able to put quality first. It would be completely illogical to make decisions that hurt the workers or the customers" (*Fightback*, August 2005). Try telling that to CUPW unionists at Canada Post, or for that matter the HEU, whose members work in public-sector hospitals. The idea that nationalized industry under capitalism can be free of the "profit motive" and friendly to the workers (and consumers) is a demented social-democratic fantasy. *Fightback* claims to be a "Marxist Voice of Labour and Youth," but they are in reality hard-core reformists, as shown by their perennial call to elect NDP governments, which they claim against all evidence can enact a "socialist program."

In bringing our revolutionary program to TWU strikers in 1981, we wrote in *SC* No. 46 (January/February 1981): "We need a *class-struggle* workers party that fights for a workers government. We need a party that would be in the forefront of the battle against union busting, a beacon for labor militants throughout North America." That requires a political break from the pro-capitalist labour tops and their NDP political partners. Only in this way can working people go forward to their own class rule, ripping the means of production from the exploiters and placing them in the hands of those whose labour makes this society run. *Defeat Telus union-busting—Victory to the TWU!* ■

War on Terror...

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up a phony “progressive” façade to shore up their immigrant vote base, marginalize the Tories and squirm out of the sponsorship scandal in Quebec. Now the gloves are off. Having dropped their fraudulent “antiwar” posture, the Liberals are more openly embracing the military adventures of the U.S. abroad. Some 1,500 Canadian troops are being redeployed to the Kandahar area of Afghanistan to reinforce Washington’s colonial occupation of that country. Canadian military spokesmen openly project that this occupation will last **20 years**.

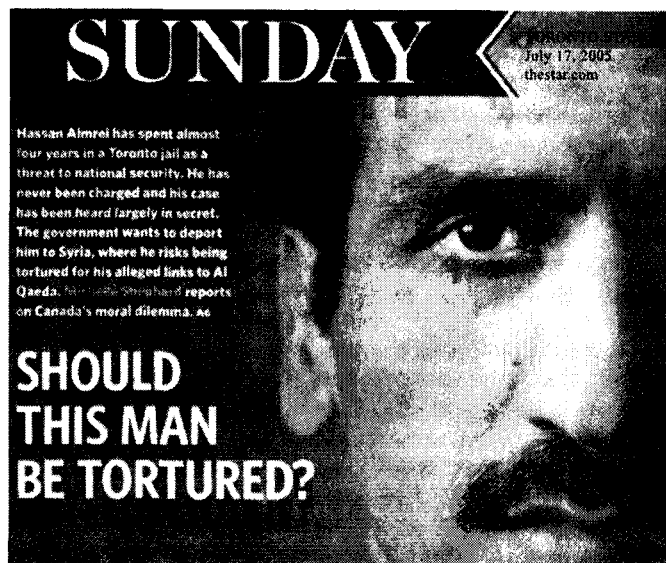
Ottawa’s more flagrantly bellicose posture was underlined by new chief of defence staff Rick Hillier at a July 13 press conference on the Afghanistan deployment. Railing against “detestable murderers and scumbags,” Hillier vowed, “We are the Canadian Forces and our job is to be able to kill people” (*Globe and Mail*, 14 July). This won him immediate praise from both Martin and the capitalist media. The days when Canada masked its diplomatic and military assistance to the U.S. behind a “peacekeeping” guise are long gone.

At home, the four years since September 11, 2001 have seen a tremendous escalation in police-state measures against Arabs and Muslims. This is on top of earlier repressive edicts, such as the “security certificates” under which immigrants, chiefly Muslims, have been harassed and detained by the Chrétien/Martin governments since the 1990s. The Anti-Terrorism Act, passed in the wake of September 11, has brought yet more arbitrary arrests and detentions. It was used in the brutal arrest of Momin Khawaja, an Ottawa software developer, who was dragged from his workplace at the Department of Foreign Affairs last year while RCMP officers armed with machine guns rammaged down his family’s front door and hauled relatives in for interrogation. Unknown numbers of other detainees remain in jail without charges. Neither they nor their lawyers can even see the government’s files of purported “evidence.”

The public inquiry into the deportation and torture of Canadian citizen Maher Arar in Syria has uncovered a small part of the evident truth that CSIS, the RCMP and Canadian government and diplomatic officials were accomplices not only in this outrage, but in countless others. Abdullah Almalki, Ahmad Abou El-Maati, Muayyed Nureddin, Kassim Mohamed are only some of the victims. Just how many more people have been tortured abroad with the active complicity of the Canadian authorities is a well-kept secret. Meanwhile CSIS itself has been illegally interrogating prisoners at the U.S. concentration camp in Guantánamo Bay.

The Canadian rulers are now debating whether to drop their hypocritical denials and give deportation to torture the official stamp of approval. On July 17, the liberal *Toronto Star* ran a front page headlined “Should This Man Be Tortured?,” discussing the pros and cons of deporting detainees to countries like Syria. Britain’s recent deal to do just that with Jordan, based on a “pledge” by the latter not to use torture, was hailed by a *Globe and Mail* editorial (25 July) as holding “great promise for Canada.” Anyone who believes such a pledge—from the imperialist rulers or their neocolonial lackeys—is living in a fantasy world. **Free the detainees! Down with the racist “war on terror”!**

The ruling class is attempting to rope the workers into agreeing to the very measures of repression that will ultimately be used against them. Days after the London bomb-



Toronto Star front page grotesquely poses deporting detainees to be tortured in countries like Syria.

ings, Ottawa released a “cost-cutting” plan to slash **41,000 jobs** from the federal civil service. At the same time, the federal government is throwing billions at “border security” and high-tech surveillance in the transportation systems and instituting a secretive “no-fly” list at the airports.

Sections of the working class have already been directly targeted by the crackdown. “Port security” measures proposed last year would subject workers there to CSIS background checks, including into their ethnic/religious background and the travel histories of themselves, their spouses, parents and in-laws. With its attacks on democratic rights and Big Brother snooping, the government is positioning itself to nip social unrest in the bud. This is the true meaning of the “war on terror”: it is a war on all of us.

Infused through immigration with workers from all over the world, the Canadian labour movement has tremendous potential power to defend beleaguered minorities and throw back the rulers’ onslaught. With their hands directly on the means of production—the factories, mines, transport and other industries that make society run—workers have the power to cut off the flow of profits and services to the capitalists by withholding their labour.

Workers can only defend their class interests through joint struggle with their brothers and sisters of all national backgrounds. But the labour movement is saddled with a pro-capitalist leadership—the trade-union bureaucracy and the NDP—that pushes deadly illusions in a supposed common “national interest” with the exploiters of Ottawa and Bay Street. For all their occasional talk about defending Muslim immigrants, the labour tops and NDP have *embraced* key aspects of the racist “war on terror.”

While objecting to the invasive background checks, maritime union leaders have backed the “security” crackdown at the ports. In an April 5 press release, Tom Dufresne, president of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union of Canada, urged the government to “enhance policing and address other security gaps at the ports like the absence of waterside security and inadequate container screening.” On the East Coast, the president of International Longshoremen’s Association Local 269 called on Ottawa to institute

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“enhanced policing for 24/7 coverage and intelligence gathering” at all commercial ports. Such endorsement of the bosses’ “security” crusade directly feeds the anti-Muslim scare campaign. It is poison to workers’ struggle.

Meanwhile, Jack Layton’s NDP is actively promoting imperialist militarism. The New Democrats just helped push through a Liberal budget that increases military spending by more than **\$12 billion** over the next five years. This will cover, among other things, 8,000 additional troops and more than \$2.5 billion in equipment for the elite Joint Task Force 2 commandos that have been operating in Afghanistan and Haiti. To make abundantly clear where he stands on the Afghanistan occupation, Layton *praised* military chief Hillier’s “murderers and scumbags” rant, saying, “We have a very committed, level-headed head of our armed forces, who isn’t afraid to express the passion that underlines the mission that front-line personnel are going to be taking on” (*Globe and Mail*, 16 July). This “mission” is to uphold the predatory interests of U.S. imperialism and its Canadian junior partner by wreaking death and destruction against the oppressed worldwide.

So much for the NDP “party of peace” fraudulently packaged by all manner of pseudo-socialists during the protests against the Iraq war two years ago! Groups like the International Socialists and Communist Party built platforms for Layton and other NDP honchos to buff up their fake “antiwar” credentials, and claimed that the peace parades won a great victory by “keeping Canada out of the war.” In fact, Canada gave military backing to the U.S. before, during and after the Iraq war. It already had 1,000 troops in the region, with 3,000 about to land in Afghanistan. Canadian maritime patrol aircraft were attached to U.S. carrier groups, while Canadian officers linked to U.S. Central Command were directly involved in planning the attack.

From the start of the military build-up against Iraq, we Trotskyists insisted that this was a war of imperialist plunder on the part of the U.S. and its allies, and a just war of defense on the Iraqi side. At the same time, we gave absolutely no political support to the butcher Saddam Hussein,



SC photo

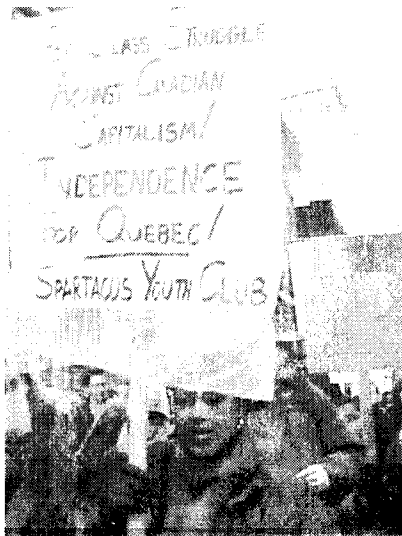
Protest against detention of immigrants at Toronto’s Celebrity Inn, February 2002.

himself a former ally of Washington.

Against the calls for “unity” of all those opposed to the war, we explained that capitalist society is divided into classes: the working class which produces the wealth on one side, and its enemy—the capitalists who appropriate this wealth—on the other. We exposed the myth of “Canada the good” and the United Nations as “peaceful” alternatives to the U.S. We built contingents on antiwar protests centered on the calls: *For class struggle against Canadian capitalism! Defend Iraq against imperialist attack!* We highlighted the need to defend immigrants against Ottawa’s racist crack-down. At campus speakouts, rallies and among the organized labour movement, we exposed the pernicious role of the NDP and its left tails in derailing antiwar activists into the dead end of pro-capitalist politics.

Today we repeat: labour needs a new, revolutionary leadership that will mobilize workers in active defense of their immigrant brother and sisters. This is a crucial component of building a revolutionary workers party that can rip power from the capitalists and, through socialist revolution, establish a truly egalitarian society. *Canadian and all imperialist troops get out of Afghanistan and Haiti! All U.S./British troops out of Iraq now!* ■

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SC146

Following Criminal London Terror Bombings:

Defend Muslims Against Labour's Racist Witchhunt!

Down With U.S./British Imperialist Occupation of Iraq!

The following statement was issued by the Spartacist League/Britain on July 21.

Within hours of the horrific London bombings that killed over 50 people and injured hundreds, Tony Blair seized on this atrocity as a pretext to escalate the "war on terror." Let's be clear: these bombings were a criminal act of indefensible terror. Like the attack on the World Trade Center and the bombing of commuter trains in Madrid last year, the perpetrators share the same mindset as the imperialist rulers, identifying the working class and the whole population with the policies of the capitalist exploiters and oppressors. The bombs were aimed not at Bush or Blair, who were in Scotland for the G8 summit, but at the multiethnic working people of London: areas such as Edgware Road, which is overwhelmingly Arab; Aldgate, the heart of the Bangladeshi community; Kings Cross and Russell Square, through which hundreds of thousands of ordinary people of every race and ethnicity travel every day.

Bush and Blair, whose savage occupation of Iraq has cost the lives of an estimated 100,000 people, self-righteously condemned the terrorists for taking innocent lives. Behind their crocodile tears for those killed and wounded in the London bombings they seek to deflect the justified outrage and sympathy of the population for the victims and their families in order to reinforce their rule at home and abroad. As *Guardian* journalist Seumas Milne noted, even to link the bombings to Britain's role in Iraq or Afghanistan, which is obvious to millions, can get you denounced as a "traitor"; to question Blair's assertion that the bombings were an attack "on our way of life" is to be branded "an apologist for terror."

For millions around the globe, British imperialism's "way of life" has meant untold terror. Kurds in what is now Iraq, a country manufactured by British imperialism, were bombed from the air while Arabs were shelled by the British colonial overlords in 1919-20. The 1917 Balfour Declaration set the scene for carving the state of Israel out of the homeland of the Palestinians. The bloody partition of India under the Labour government of Clement Attlee ushered in communalist slaughter on an unprecedented scale. This laid the basis for murderous religious and ethnic conflicts that persist to this day, as well as the poverty, destitution and desperation of countless people from the Indian subcontinent to the Near East to Africa.

Millions in this country took to the streets in protest against the impending imperialist slaughter of Iraq in 2003 and Britain's role in the brutal occupation of Iraq cost Blair in the last elections. In that context, London Mayor Ken Livingstone's prominence in the demonstrations protesting the

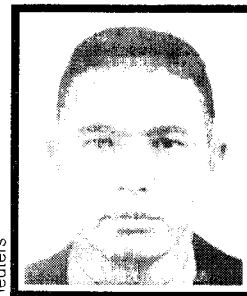
war on Iraq made him an ideal candidate to lead a patriotic "unity" crusade against "terrorism." Addressing the crowd at a 14 July vigil for the victims, flanked by leaders of all the main religions, Livingstone intoned "you see the world gathered in one city, living in harmony, as an example to all." Livingstone's speech could have been written by the Socialist Workers Party (SWP), who was in the vanguard of this "unity" chorus. Their 7 July statement on the bombings proclaimed: "London is a centre of peace, the most multiracial city in Europe and a global centre of opposition to the war and occupation of Iraq and Afghanistan."

This is a shameless and grotesque denial of the reality of



Indymedia

London, July 25: Hundreds protest killing of Brazilian immigrant Jean Charles de Menezes (inset) by British cops, part of Labour government's brutal and racist crackdown on immigrants.



Reuters

life for London's working class and poor, especially immigrants and minorities whose daily grind means long hours and pitiful pay while being routinely vilified by the racist press, the government and police. Since September 11, police dragnets have rounded up more than 600 foreign nationals under "anti-terrorism" legislation, the overwhelming majority of whom were later released. The handful detained, on no

(continued on page 10)

Defend Muslims...

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charges other than being “terrorist suspects,” are confined in Britain’s own Guantánamo—Belmarsh prison—or else electronically monitored under “house arrest.”

To be Muslim is to be suspect. No sooner had bombs ripped through the Underground than a further wave of racist attacks was unleashed. Muslim organisations received 30,000 hate-filled e-mails; mosques had windows smashed and one was firebombed. In Nottingham a Muslim man, Kamal Raza Butt, was murdered by a gang who shouted “Taliban” before beating him to death. In London, the putative “city of peace,” the fascist BNP put out a leaflet with a picture of the bombed bus, declaring that people should now “start listening to the BNP.” Muslims fear an even more severe racist backlash now that the police say the bombings were supposedly carried out by British Muslims.

The government is planning more round-ups, more deportations and more sweeping police-state measures. A range of new offences will be created for what are essentially “thought crimes,” such as “acts preparatory to terrorism,” which might mean visiting “terrorist” Web sites; “indirect incitement,” which includes “glorifying the acts of suicide bombers” as well as “attacking the values of the West”! While aimed most immediately at Muslims, the “war on terror” is designed to strengthen the capitalist state’s machinery of repression, to be imposed with a vengeance against anyone the government perceives as an opponent as most recently demonstrated by the mass arrests outside the G8 summit. But the ultimate target is the multiethnic working class.

Today, Blair and Livingstone have the audacity to salute the heroism of the Tube workers, firefighters, ambulance drivers and others who put their bodies on the line to help the victims of the bombings. But, for years the government has savaged the living, working and safety conditions for these and other workers. And when the unions have fought back, like the firefighters did on the eve of the Iraq war, they were branded the “enemy within” and threatened with the full force of capitalist state repression. Last summer, Livingstone—the boss of transport workers in the capital—called on London Underground workers to scab on their own

strike. And greed for profit and the policies of the government pose the biggest threat to the lives of passengers. The 1987 Kings Cross fire, the 1999 Paddington rail crash and other rail disasters have claimed far more lives than any terrorists. Now, the government is trying to scrap the legislation—introduced after the inferno in Kings Cross took 31 lives—which mandated stricter fire regulations!

For Class Unity of the Multiethnic Working Class!

It is a sign of the times that we have to point out today that London is a class-divided city, not to mention the seat of power of the blood-soaked British ruling class. Despite Britain’s industrial decline, the City is still a hub for international capital. Share prices tumbled the day of the bombs, which in its own way shows that the workforce in the Underground and buses has tremendous social power—the City banks and stock exchange are dependent on the transport system. It is this social power that must be brought to bear in a class-struggle fight in defence of immigrants, minorities and the unions themselves against the racist “war on terror.” As revolutionary internationalists we took a side in the war, calling for defence of Iraq, without giving any political support to the Saddam Hussein regime. So too must the proletariat be mobilised in defence of the Iraqi peoples against the savage British and U.S. occupation forces through class struggle against the British imperialist rulers at home! *All U.S./British troops out of Iraq now! Down with the racist “war on terror”! Full citizenship rights for all immigrants! No deportations! For trade union/minority mobilisations against fascist terror!*

We vehemently oppose the appeals for the “unity” of all classes, which only serves to strengthen the hand of the imperialist rulers by-binding the working class and oppressed to their very exploiters and oppressors. Not so the Socialist Party which blatantly appeals to mobilise the proletariat behind the so-called “war on terror,” calling on the unions and the Stop the War Coalition to organise a mass protest on the slogan “no to terrorism, no to war.” This dovetails with the politics of “antiwar” Labour MPs like Alice Mahon who opposes Blair’s invasion of Iraq, from the standpoint that it is not in the best interests of British imperialism at present, while arguing that it’s a diversion from the “war on terror” at home.

As Marxists we oppose terrorism as a strategy, even when it derives from real, if misguided, anti-imperialist impulses and targets genuine institutions of state repression—which the London bombing clearly did not. Substituting individual acts against the symbols of imperialist exploitation and oppression is directly counterposed to the task of mobilising the working class for the revolutionary overthrow of the capitalist system. But the Socialist Party’s declared opposition to “terrorism” is nothing more than an appeal to mobilise the proletariat behind the government’s “war on terror.” Placing an equals sign between the imperialist powers and the Islamic terrorists, the Socialist Party is in fact capitulating to British and U.S. imperialism, who constitute the mightiest and most dangerous terrorist forces on this planet. This is not particularly



Criminal terror bombings in London provide yet another pretext for capitalist rulers in Britain and elsewhere to expand their murderous “war on terror.”

surprising coming from an organisation which prides itself on *not* calling for British troops out of Northern Ireland now—a call which is the most elementary act of opposition to British imperialism.

Class independence of the working class is the precondition for any genuine socialist opposition to imperialism—both against imperialist war and attacks on the working class and minorities at home. But the whole premise of the SWP-built antiwar protests is based on peddling another version of “national unity”—between the working class and oppressed who oppose the occupation of Iraq, and a more “rational” wing of the ruling class that believes British imperialism’s interests are being damaged by acting simply as a “pillion passenger” behind the Bush White House. For the reformist SWP, the solution lies not in the overthrow of capitalism but in persuading the British government to break with Bush. An SWP statement (13 July) argues: “There has to be a dramatic reverse in policy, at home and abroad. Pulling the troops out of Iraq will begin to drain the swamp of bitterness that nurtures terrorism,” adding that “the majority of people in the US have turned against Bush’s war—we must intensify the pressure on the British government to break from him as well.”

It is ludicrous to suggest that Britain can somehow “opt out” of the world system of imperialism, short of workers revolution and the establishment of a workers state that expropriates the capitalist class. It is downright grotesque to blame the alliance with the U.S. for British imperialism’s brutality. Although today reduced to a decrepit junior partner of the U.S., when they did have the economic and military clout the British imperialists wrote the book on racist divide-and-rule and ruthless exploitation of their colonial “subjects.” The “spirit of the Blitz” in World War II that has been invoked almost daily since the terrorist bombings in London is a persistent Labourite myth that all classes were united behind King and country in a common defence of British “democracy.” Far from a war for “democracy,” for the British imperialists this was a scramble to protect their imperialist “interests”—among which India was a prized possession. Thus they denied India its right to independence and even caused a famine in Bengal, while the Labour Party played a vital role in whipping up patriotic “unity” at home. And contrary to the main myth propagated about the “democratic” allies, it was the Soviet Red Army that smashed Hitler’s fascism, at a cost of well over 20 million Soviet citizens’ lives.

Moreover, the British imperialists hardly need any lessons from the Americans on police-state repression, having inflicted it for many years on the oppressed Catholics in Northern Ireland. Similar to today’s anti-Muslim hysteria, “anti-terrorism” campaigns of the 1970s led to outrageous frame-ups of innocent people such as the Birmingham Six, the Maguire Seven and the Guildford Four, who were wrongly convicted in a wave of anti-Irish hysteria following civilian bombing atrocities in British city centres.

Imperialist Hypocrisy and Islamic Fundamentalism

The British press is in a lather about the fact that this “democratic” country could produce “home grown” Islamic terrorists. Ken Livingstone stated the obvious when he said: “I suspect the real problem was that we funded these people as long as they were killing Russians. We gave no thought to the fact that when they stopped killing Russians they might start killing us” (*Daily Telegraph*, 20 July). For “we,”

read the British imperialists who, together with the U.S. and the Pakistan authorities, pulled off the largest covert operation in the CIA’s history throughout the 1980s to boost the most extreme Islamic reactionaries, including Bin Laden, for a *jihād* in Afghanistan against the Soviet Union. The SWP, the Socialist Party and most of the so-called socialist left were in the camp of the imperialists against the USSR. We hailed the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan, noting that this was a progressive act by the Stalinist bureaucracy that offered the possibility of extending the gains of the 1917 Russian Revolution to the Afghan peoples, particularly to the hideously oppressed women. Following counterrevolution in the Soviet Union, when imperialist funding to the Islamists dried up, the latter turned on their erstwhile backers, most dramatically in the criminal attack on the World Trade Center. Counterrevolution in the former Soviet Union gave an enormous boost to the forces of religious reaction around the globe, while also leading to a “one superpower world” in which U.S. imperialism and its allies feel they have free rein to ravage the semicolonial world.

The perpetrators of acts such as the London bombing, whoever they may be, demonstrate the mindset typical of religious zealots who believe they have a God-given right to exterminate all non-believers. Islam has no monopoly on this outlook: it parallels that of Christian fundamentalists who bomb abortion clinics in the U.S.; the Protestant bigots who justify “ethnic cleansing” against Catholics in Northern Ireland; and the Zionists who seek to “cleanse” the Palestinians from what they deem to be the Jewish “holy land.” Terrorist attacks in the name of nationalist or religious forces tend to be aimed at the indiscriminate slaughter of as many of the ordinary, multi-ethnic working-class people as possible. It is unlikely you would find the remotest representative of the upper classes of this country on the London Underground or buses. Moreover, two of the bombings were in heavily Muslim areas. So whoever perpetrated these attacks, the message can only be that Muslims should go back to their “own” countries.

In Britain Islamic fundamentalism has grown, nurtured by international factors as well as the prevalence of Islamophobia and economic decline. In 2001, Asian youth in Oldham, Bradford and Leeds had to fight pitched battles to defend their homes from fascists who, backed by the police, laid siege to neighbourhoods. In these former textile towns, the factories once provided a degree of racial integration, but economic decline and factory closures have increased the polarisation between rich and poor and led to a level of racial segregation which has been compared to the American South before the civil rights movement.

For the imperialist rulers “Islamic terrorism” has become the surrogate for the war against “Godless communism,” the new enemy against which they seek to rally the population in support of imperialist terror abroad and increased state repression at home. Our purpose is to fight to infuse the working class with the consciousness that it has the class interests and the social power to eradicate the system of capitalist imperialism. The 1984-85 British miners strike, among whose most stalwart supporters were blacks and Asians, gave a palpable sense of how class struggle can unite all of the oppressed behind the power of the proletariat. We seek to forge a multiethnic revolutionary workers party which can take this power forward to victory through proletarian socialist revolution which alone can lay the material basis for ending racism, oppression, exploitation and war. ■

Quebec General Strike...

(continued from page 5)

well as then-CSN president Marcel Pepin—to a year's imprisonment.

The powerful industrial proletariat was the first to respond to the jailings. On May 9 a motorcade of unionists taking Laberge, Charbonneau and Pepin to Quebec City to turn themselves in had barely left Montreal when thousands of International Longshoremen's Association (ILA) members from Montreal, Trois Rivières and Quebec City staged a spontaneous walkout.

The same night in Sept-Iles, a mining town in northern Quebec run by the Iron Ore Co. of Canada, a cop attack on a demonstration of angry unionists sparked massive meetings where workers voted overwhelmingly to strike. By the next day this town of 27,000 was being run by striking longshoremen, railway workers and miners—the roads were barricaded, the airport shut down and the occupied radio station broadcast union bulletins.

In the following days workers in other company towns across Quebec followed suit. Asbestos miners in Thetford Mines walked off the job followed by the town's public sector workers—together on May 11 they staged a 10,000-strong demonstration. In St-Jérôme 23 factories were shut down as well as hospitals, schools and other public services. At the request of the United Auto Workers union in the nearby town of Ste-Thérèse, strikers from St-Jérôme picketed the GM plant there. Over 2,000 auto workers who usually stayed in the plant for lunch poured out the gates, refusing to cross the St-Jérôme workers' picket when they returned. A GM executive who attempted to enter the plant was told "No one goes in. There's no work today." When he asked "By what authority?" he was told "By the authority of the workers of Quebec" (*Globe and Mail*, 13 May 1972).

In Chibougamau the walkout was sparked by angry wives, some of them teachers and hospital workers, who marched to one of the mines to pull their husbands off the job. By May 12, the fourth day of the strike, nine towns had been occupied by striking workers, over 80,000 construction workers were out across the province, teachers and hospital workers continued to walk out (occupying one Montreal hospital), transit mechanics and 8,000 municipal workers had struck in Montreal. And this was only the tip of the iceberg; the number of factories, hospitals, schools and towns shut down was impossible to keep track of as wave after wave of angry workers stormed out.

Several radio stations were taken over. From Sorel, Quebec came the following broadcast:

"This is CJSO, the voice of the workers. The next song we are going to play is called 'Adieu.' We dedicate it to all the workers who for the past two days have said 'adieu' to their bosses and the unjust policies of the government."

—*The Gazette*, 13 May 1972

Meantime the bourgeois press churned out article after article denouncing the "lawlessness" and "violence" being fomented by a supposed "radical minority." But on May 12 the media's anti-labour diatribes were stopped for the day as workers from



CP
Trudeau sent army to occupy Quebec in 1970 under the War Measures Act, arresting hundreds of leftists and union militants.

Le Devoir and *La Presse* walked off the job. Together with workers from Montreal's other two French-language papers they visited the *Gazette* and the *Star* "requesting" that they shut down production—a request that management couldn't refuse.

The next day the *Gazette* (13 May 1972) hysterically editorialized:

"We were forcibly closed by that minority of the labor movement which has been driving workers off the job in various other parts of the province, seizing radio stations, committing acts of vandalism and generally attempting to impose their will with violence and threats of violence."

But everyone from the Liberal regimes in Quebec and Ottawa to the capitalist media to the bosses' labour lieutenants in Quebec and English Canada knew that this was no action by some "lawless minority" but a largely spontaneous and well-disciplined working-class uprising that fundamentally challenged the capitalists' class rule. (The most violent incident throughout the strike happened in Sept-Iles when a Liberal Party organizer drove his car into a picket line killing one picketer.) For the most part the cops were unable to quell the walkouts and occupations as was pointed out in this account of the 1972 strike: "...actions were so widespread that police adopted a policy of non-intervention. Their power was too thinly spread. If they provoked a confrontation in one area, they wouldn't be able to contain the snowballing effect. For once, the police were too weak to provoke violence" (quoted in *Quebec: A Chronicle 1968-1972*).

Coming to the desperate realization that *it* was quickly becoming the "minority" the Bourassa government increasingly tried to impose its "will with violence." Liberal president Lise Bacon sent out a secret telex ordering local party associations to recruit town thugs and hoodlums to vigilante squads (called "law-abiding citizens committees") to attempt to break the strikes and occupations. A phony anti-strike meet-



CSN-CEQ

Montreal protest during 1972 general strike. Massive labour struggle posed the question of power—who shall rule: the bosses or the workers?

ing of a minority of construction workers (most of whom were in fact small-time contractors) was held under the leadership of at least two Liberal Party organizers in an arena rented by the Montreal Association of General Contractors.

But in the end it was not the Liberal government, its cops, courts and vigilante squads or fake back-to-work meetings that stemmed the tide of the 1972 general strike in Quebec. It was the return-to-work orders that came from the jailed Common Front leaders in Orsainville prison on May 17. They appealed for an end to the strike in the name of a “negotiated settlement” with the government. And what a settlement it was. Late in 1972 the Liberal government passed Bill 89 outlawing all public sector strikes as well as transport, maritime, rail or air strikes and then proceeded to jail, once again, the three Common Front leaders (who had been released on appeal in May).

From the Barricades to the Parti Québécois

During the strike great play was given by the bourgeois press to a three-man split in the CSN executive. One of the three, Emile Dalpe, a former defeated Liberal candidate, charged that the unions were being taken over by “ideologists whose ideas can only lead to the dictatorship of the proletariat...” (quoted in *Labor Challenge*, 5 June 1972). But the ideas of the nationalist Quebec labour tops, for all their manifestos on “socialism,” led not to the “dictatorship of the proletariat” but to the rule of the nationalist union-busting PQ, who were swept to victory in 1976 and again in 1981 with a significant labour vote.

The flames of nationalism were only fueled by the role of the English-chauvinist misleaders of labour in

English-speaking Canada who went out of their way to isolate and denounce the 1972 general strike all the while virulently campaigning for “national unity.” At the height of the strike the executive issued the following report to the CLC convention:

“It is, therefore, essential that the Congress and its affiliated unions oppose those elements, in any part of Canada, which advocate the destruction of Confederation or a reduction of the federal powers as a means of pursuing selfish regional aims.”

—*Globe and Mail*, 15 May 1972

A token motion supporting the “bargaining aims” of the Common Front was passed unanimously but then-CLC president Donald McDonald made perfectly clear the CLC’s opposition to the general strike: “...the CLC is not interested in and will not be party to any attempt to overthrow a democratically elected government” (*Globe and Mail*, 15 May 1972). Speaking from the CLC podium in 1972 former (now dead) federal NDP leader David Lewis solidarized with the *jailing* of the Common Front leaders. If the judge had given them 30 days instead of a year, he opined, the massive labour upsurge could have been avoided.

Fake-Trotskyists Push Nationalism—Canadian and Québécois

If the CLC labor traitors used the 1972 general strike to wave the Maple Leaf and the Quebec labour tops the *fleur de lys*, the fake-Trotskyists of the League for Socialist Action/Ligue Socialiste Ouvrière (LSA/LSO—forerunner of the Revolutionary Workers League) did both. Throughout the course of the strike their paper, *Labor Challenge*, was filled with articles such as an interview with their leader Ross Dowson entitled “Will

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Quebec General Strike...

(continued from page 13)

Trudeau fight U.S. domination?" (8 May 1972). As for Quebec the LSA/LSO's minimal coverage was completely overshadowed by long-winded polemics against the "Canada firsters" of the Communist Party going under headings such as "In Defense of Québécois Nationalism" (24 April 1972).

The LSO's consistent nationalism didn't win them a whole lot of labour support but they did manage to attract the likes of one Reggie Chartrand. At the height of the general strike their youth press, *Young Socialist* (May-June 1972), ran an interview with Chartrand who said, "...I, along with members of the LJS and LSO organize demonstrations for the French language and the independence of Quebec." In 1980 Chartrand along with his ultra-nationalist thugs in the "Chevaliers de l'indépendance" confronted leftist contingents in the May Day demonstration with chants of "Long Live the Independence of Quebec" and "Death to Communism"! So much for the progressive character of Québécois nationalism.

The LSA/LSO believed that their more-nationalist-than-the-PQ program would lead to overnight growth. It didn't. Instead in the aftermath of the 1972 general strike the splits in various amorphous New Left nationalist lash-ups in Quebec gave birth to first the eclectic New Left Maoists of In Struggle! (IS!)—headed up by former FLQer Charles Gagnon—and later the more hardline anti-Soviet Maoists who became the Workers Communist Party (WCP). Both groups were *anti* Québécois nationalism—the WCP from the perspective of anti-Sovietism while the cowards of IS! even refused to defend their former comrades in the FLQ. A little more than a decade later both groups, who at one time claimed thousands of members, have bit the dust—shipwrecked on the shores of the Cold War of which both organizations were truly the "vanguard."

Not Bourgeois Nationalism but Proletarian Internationalism!

The 1972 Quebec general strike was the most explosive political event in the history of the North American labour movement. At the same time it was a dramatic example of what Trotsky called the crisis of proletarian leadership. Thousands of workers spontaneously take to the streets, occupy and run whole towns in a struggle that goes far beyond all craft and union divisions. For example the Quebec construction workers who walked out en masse were earlier deeply divided by the mutual raids of the CSN and FTQ; later they would be the target of the notorious Cliche Commission, a union-busting attack carried out in the name of fighting labour "corruption."

In 1972 the determined militancy and combativity of the Québécois proletariat was pushed to the limit, to the point that what became brutally clear was the need for a proletarian internationalist program and leadership. At the time one couldn't have found a more left-talking bureaucracy than the Quebec labour tops, who were busily turning out manifesto after manifesto calling to smash capitalism and build socialism. But for all their socialist rhetoric 1972 proved that they were as loyal lieutenants of the capitalist class as their Meanyite counter-



SC photo

Toronto, March 2004: TL banner on antiwar protest advocates independence for Quebec.

parts in the leadership of North American labour. But where the nationalist Quebec labour bureaucrats used 1972 to build labour support for the bourgeois-nationalist PQ the Maple Leaf jingoists heading up the English-Canadian labour movement attempted to keep the general strike from spilling over into their own ranks through orgies of chauvinism.

The dramatic rise of groups like the WCP and IS! in the aftermath of 1972 demonstrated that many workers, students and others looked to the left for a new leadership in opposition to Québécois nationalism. They didn't find it in these groups whose anti-nationalism was forged in anti-Sovietism. Few turned to the LSO, who summed up the 1972 Quebec general strike with the comment: "Far from contradicting the radicalization of Quebec workers, this rise in support for the PQ, a bourgeois party, simply confirms what we have said about the *nationalist* character of the workers' struggle (*Labor Challenge*, 5 June 1972). Various centrists and syndicalists who wanted to strike a more left-wing pose seized upon the 1972 strike to promote their utopian nationalist strategy for an "independent and socialist Quebec."

The Quebec labour tops channeled the labour battles of the early 1970s into votes for Lévesque's PQ, which today is attempting to trash Quebec labour with strikebreaking attacks, in particular on government workers, which would do Ronald Reagan proud. In this crucial labour showdown Quebec workers must draw the lessons of 1972. What is desperately needed is a proletarian internationalist leadership that can win this militant and combative working class to the perspective of multinational revolutionary class unity in which it is destined to play a leading role. Alone on the left the Trotskyist League of Canada has fought for this perspective, unconditionally defending Quebec's right to independence and at the same time fighting against Québécois nationalism. The road forward to the national and social liberation of the Quebec working masses lies in the united proletarian struggle for North American socialist revolution under the leadership of a Bolshevik Party. ■

Ipperwash...

(continued from page 3)

regarding the burial grounds were true, and concealed it until after the fact.

Whitewash Hearings and the Capitalist State

The capitalist rulers have a time-honoured strategy for dealing with public outrage. First, they lie through their golden teeth. Second, when anger persists, they stall. Then, if things still don't settle down, they "reluctantly" hold an "independent" public inquiry, staffed by judges, professors, priests or other loyal representatives of the ruling class, and perhaps recommending token punishment for someone involved. The more thorough the investigation appears, the better it serves its ideological purpose: to prove that the system works, that the state is accountable to the "will of the people," and that justice has been served.

The police, military, courts and prisons are at the core of the capitalist state, an institution that was created, exists and is replenished for the sole purpose of protecting the power of the racist, exploiting class. The belief that the state can be reformed through grassroots campaigns, mass protest or public exposure is a deadly illusion pushed by those who defend capitalist class rule. As Russian revolutionary V.I. Lenin writes in his classic *State and Revolution*:

"According to Marx, the state is an organ of class *domination*, an organ of *oppression* of one class by another; its aim is the creation of 'order' which legalises and perpetuates this oppression by moderating the collisions between classes."

It is possible to win limited concessions from the capitalists, such as wage increases or greater access to social services, through *hard social struggle*. However, short of a social revolution in which the working class seizes power and dismantles the capitalist state, such gains are temporary and precarious.

But public inquiries aren't even a limited gain. They are expressly designed to refurbish the state's credibility by blaming this wrong policy or that "bad cop," deflecting attention away from the underlying system of wage slavery. Over



Boston/CP

NDP government ordered RCMP and army to violently suppress Native protest at Gustafsen Lake, 1995.

the years, there have been scores of Royal Commissions and hearings documenting the brute dispossession of Native people. The ruling class knows exactly what Native people have suffered in the past, and it knows in detail the poverty and devastation they face today. The capitalists have absolutely no interest in any kind of meaningful rectification.

In fact, courts and public inquiries have let cops and racist thugs who murder Natives walk free time and again. In October 2004, an inquiry into the 1990 killing of 17-year-old Neil Stonechild (who froze to death in -28C weather after being dropped off at the edge of Saskatoon) found that there was no basis to lay criminal charges. This was despite the fact that he was last seen in police custody, despite the fact that bloody marks found on Stonechild's face were caused by handcuffs, and despite the report's acknowledgement that the cops systematically lied to cover the whole thing up. The underlying message is lethal: it's a license to murder aboriginal people.

The Reformist Left

But this is completely lost on the reformist left—from the International Socialists (I.S.) to the Ontario Coalition Against Poverty (OCAP), from the New Socialist Group (NSG) to the anarchists—all of whom called for a public inquiry into George's death. In the name of protesting the right-wing Harris government, they in effect gave a left cover to the electoral posturing of the capitalist Liberals and the maneuvers of the social-democratic NDP. These groups actually *championed* the ability of the capitalist state to deliver some kind of justice for Dudley George and other victims of police terror.

The I.S. is particularly blatant on this score. Their long-winded, academic article on "Aboriginal Rights: The Backlash and Socialist Strategy" by Valerie Lanon (*Marxism* No. 1, 2003) misquotes Lenin on "self-determination" and espouses hollow "anti-capitalist" rhetoric. But there is not a single word about the state as an instrument of bourgeois repression or the need for the working class to overthrow it. Instead, Lanon bemoans that the reforms called for by the 1996 Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples went unfulfilled and indicts the Ontario government not only for George's murder, but for then refusing to "call for an independent inquiry into police action"! Calling on the state to police its own is typical of the I.S., who recently advanced the asinine demand for a "full public inquiry" into CSIS (*Socialist Worker*, 23 March). The only reason the Liberal government in Ottawa (or any other capitalist regime) would try to reform its secret police would be to make these hired killers more efficient.

On the crucial question of the state, the politics of the "direct action" and anarchist groups are shown to be no different, whatever their lame assertions to the contrary. The first two slogans on the call for a 24 May 1997 demo at Queen's Park were: "Harris: Blood on your Hands! Full Public Inquiry Now!" Endorsers included Anti-Racist Action and OCAP. Along the same lines, the NSG presents the public inquiry as a victory: "The fight for justice in Ipperwash has been a multi-pronged one, an instructive example of combining traditional advocacy (in the courts and the legislature) with grassroots agitation (in the courts and the legislature)" ("Ipperwash 8 Years Later," *New Socialist*, November-December 2003). Instructive, indeed. As political strategies, grassroots protest/ "direct

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Ipperwash...

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action” and lobbying parliament are complementary. Both explicitly limit themselves to pressuring the powers-that-be. And neither does a damn thing toward ending Native oppression.

Canada: Racist Hell for Native Peoples

Some 30 percent of aboriginal Canadians still live in Native reserve hellholes—a system once studied as a model by the South African apartheid state. Take the condition of the Ojibway community in Pikangikum, Ontario. Most of the homes have no sewers and the suicide rate is 36 times the national average. The only buildings with indoor toilets belong to government agencies, while the third party “Indian agent” imposed by the state to control the tribe’s finances makes over \$10,000 a month. “This was deliberately done by the Department of Indian Affairs,” according to Stan Beardy, Grand Chief of the Nishnawbe Aski Nation. “They are starving them from their claim to natural resources” (*Sunday Sun*, 11 April 2004).

While half of the country’s 1.3 million Natives now reside in cities, their living conditions are generally little better. An incredible 42 percent of urban Natives live below Statistics Canada’s poverty line (as compared to 17 percent of all urban residents). Huge numbers are in prison, homeless, or ghettoized in poverty-stricken neighbourhoods like Vancouver’s notorious Downtown Eastside, which has the highest per capita rate of HIV infection in North America. A recent investigation into the Saskatchewan police just scratched the surface of the sadistic torture of Natives by cops: an elderly woman dragged from bed, jailed, and forced to walk home in her nightgown; cops breaking a ten-year-old girl’s arm because “she got in the way”; the infamous “starlight tours,” where police drop off Native men on the outskirts of towns in the deadly cold of winter.

Labour Must Defend Native Rights! We Need a Revolutionary Workers Party!

In our 1995 article “Ipperwash, Gustafsen Lake: Murderous State Terror Targets Native Peoples,” we wrote:

“Most of the Native protests this year have been in rural areas, isolated from the working class and far removed from the integrated urban centers. Yet the cops who are reliving the ‘Indian



SC photo

Aboriginals lead 2002 Vancouver labour demonstration against austerity attacks by B.C. Liberal government. Labour must defend Native rights!

wars are the same cops who bust up picket lines and wage unremitting racist war on black people in Montreal and Toronto, and Asians and others in Vancouver....

“Under capitalism, Native people face the ‘choice’ of poverty and isolation in the cities or squalor and deprivation on the reserves. The way forward lies through building a racially integrated revolutionary workers party which champions the cause of all of the oppressed.”

—SC No. 106, November/December 1995

The central obstacle to this perspective is the social-democratic NDP. In 1995, the B.C. NDP government led the largest RCMP operation in history against the Native protesters at Gustafsen Lake. More recently, the NDP and the reformist left backed Larry Campbell for mayor of Vancouver; on his election, Campbell immediately ramped up police terror against Natives and immigrants on the Downtown Eastside. A revolutionary workers party will be built in sharp political struggle against the NDP “labour lieutenants of capital” and their supporters in the trade-union bureaucracy.

In this country, Native oppression provides a litmus test for the leadership of the working class. A party that does not inscribe the defense of the most downtrodden high on its banner will never succeed in leading the proletariat against its class enemy. We seek to build a revolutionary party that would fight for measures like aggressive recruitment and training programs, run by the trade unions, as a first step toward breaking the cycle of unemployment and social marginalization for Native people in urban areas. It would defend whatever autonomy Natives with a land base are able to wrest from the racist ruling class. It would mobilize the fighting power of labour, with its key immigrant component, against acts of racist state terror to make it clear that Native people do not stand alone in their struggles. It would fight to win workers to the understanding that every act of police terror strengthens the hand of their capitalist class enemy, and that every form of racism and chauvinism serves to divide the fighting unity of all of the oppressed. We say: ***There is no justice from the capitalist state! Stop racist state terror—Defend Native rights!*** ■

Trotskyist League/Ligue trotskyste

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Marxism and the Fight Against Native Oppression

The following excerpt from the Trotskyist League/Ligue trotskyste "Programmatic Theses" summarizes our Marxist perspective for proletarian-centered struggle against the oppression of Canada's aboriginal peoples. The full document, titled "Who We Are, and What We Fight For," was adopted by the TL/LT's Eighth National Conference in 1998.

VII. Canadian capitalism was founded on the destruction of the pre-existing aboriginal societies, beginning under French and, later, English colonialism. The possibility of independent development of Indian nations was foreclosed by the expropriation of these peoples through fraud and military conquest, combined with the devastating impact of disease following European contact.

The majority of Native people today live in urban centers, where they are the targets of all-sided racism and police terror. Thus, aboriginal people are disproportionately represented both among the homeless and in the prison population. In Saskatchewan, where they make up less than 10 percent of the population, Native people constitute fully 70 percent of jail inmates. Tens of thousands of Native people continue to live on the squalid reserves established to formalize their dispossession. Others live in isolated communities where no treaties were ever signed, as in most of British Columbia.

Only the destruction of capitalism can hold out the possibility of voluntary integration, on the basis of full equality, for those aboriginal peoples who desire it, and the fullest possible regional autonomy for those who do not. The Trotskyist League/Ligue trotskyste demands that whatever residual rights Native peoples have been able to maintain, whether through treaty agreements or otherwise, be respected. In some cases, treaty rights and land claims run up against socially useful developments like railways, hydroelectric projects and oil pipelines. The aboriginal peoples should receive generous compensation for any deprivation of land or disruption of activity, based on completely consensual agreement. Only a workers government will guarantee these conditions.

The federal government currently holds out the promise of "Native self-government." We warn that in most cases this is a cover for "transforming" the reserves, with their plagues of alcoholism and early death, into apartheid-style bantustans. Nevertheless, where Native people have a land base, the Trotskyist League/Ligue trotskyste will defend whatever measure

of political autonomy they are able to wrest from governments, including the right to govern their land and control its resources. As elementary measures, we demand the immediate abolition of the racist Indian Act and the Department of Indian Affairs; and that the police, courts and state "welfare" agencies keep off the reserves and other Native land.

The Native peoples of northern Quebec have increasingly become a political football in the vicious contest between Anglo chauvinism and Quebec nationalism. We support the right of these peoples to determine their own fate. At the same time, we adamantly oppose the suggestion by some aboriginal leaders that, in the event of Quebec separation, they would call for intervention by the Canadian army. In addressing the concrete "choice" between being part of an independent Quebec or remaining in a rump Canada, our primary point of departure is that within the framework of racist capitalism, this simply means the right of the aboriginal populations to determine by whom they will be oppressed and brutalized. The unremitting proletarian defense of Native people's lives and rights as equal citizens is part of the fight of the multiracial working class to overturn this whole brutal and violent capitalist system. Only an egalitarian-socialist society under workers rule will be able to redress three centuries of abuse and degradation.

VIII. Canadian capitalism's depredations have done immeasurable environmental damage. This falls heavily on Native peoples, as in the horrific mercury poisoning (Minimata disease) of entire Ojibway communities near Kenora, Ontario in the 1950s and 60s. Meanwhile, whole industries are destroyed, throwing tens of thousands out of work. The collapse of the North Atlantic cod fishery, for example, was fundamentally the result of decades of devil-take-the-hind-most plunder by Canadian corporations.

As Marxists, we are for industrial development, and we support the introduction of useful new technologies. But we recognize that the rational exploitation of natural resources is impossible under the irrational, profit-driven capitalist system. We oppose the bourgeois "environmentalism" of groups, like Greenpeace, which push reactionary "back to nature" utopias against the interests of working people and the oppressed.

The history of our species, itself part of nature, is the struggle to master the forces of nature to provide a decent and worthwhile life. Against the spurious atavism of petty-bourgeois "environmentalists," we stand with those workers whose livelihoods depend on development of resource industries, even as we denounce their leaders' treacherous class collaboration with capitalist corporations like forestry giant Macmillan-Bloedel. The international success of "conservationist" campaigns against logging, trapping and the seal hunt has only reinforced the poverty of thousands, including Inuit and other aboriginal peoples. The right of Native peoples to control their resources includes the right to seek their development, a right we defend against the racist moralism of such "environmental activism."

The working people in power, in full control of the productive resources of society, can preserve the co-inhabitants of this planet, while putting an end to human want. Only a centrally planned, socialist economy can ensure that necessary industrial progress proceeds with a minimum of ecological damage. ■

Trotskyist League/
Ligue trotskyste

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Basic Documents of the
Trotskyist League/Ligue trotskyste

Programmatic Theses
*Who We Are, and What
We Fight For*



Organizational Rules
and Guidelines

Join the Spartacus Youth Clubs!

The SYCs intervene into social struggles armed with the revolutionary program of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Trotsky. We work to mobilize youth in struggle as partisans of the working class, championing the liberation of immigrants, women, Natives and all the oppressed. The SYCs fight to win youth to the perspective of building the Leninist vanguard party that will lead the working class in revolution, laying the basis for a world free of capitalist exploitation and imperialist slaughter.

What We Fight For

1. Mobilize students behind the social power of the working class! Picket lines mean don't cross! On strike means shut it down! For union-run job recruitment and training programs for minorities and women! For union hiring halls! Down with union-busting "workfare" schemes! Jobs for all at union wages! Organize the unorganized! Down with multi-tier wages, which pit younger and older workers against each other! Cops, prison guards, security guards out of the unions! Keep the capitalists' government and courts out of the unions!
2. Independence for Quebec! Down with English Canadian chauvinism! Down with the "Clarity Act" and Ottawa's other machinations against Quebec's national rights! Chauvinism and nationalism are poison to working-class struggle! No support to the bourgeois nationalist Bloc/PQ! Equal language rights for all! Down with chauvinist "English-only" ordinances and restrictive French language legislation!
3. Full citizenship rights for all immigrants! Down with racist anti-immigrant laws! Down with anti-immigrant, anti-Semitic and all racist bigotry! No deportations! No detention of immigrants or refugee claimants! Down with the government's "anti-terrorism" scare! For mass labour/minority mobilizations to stop the fascists and race terrorists! No reliance on the capitalist courts! Fascist terror is not a question of free speech! Stop the Nazis! Stop the KKK!
4. For free, quality education for all! For an end to streaming! For open admissions, no tuition and a state-paid living stipend for all students! Abolish the administration—the universities should be run by those who work and study there! Cops off campus! Drive army and police recruiters off campus! For a single secular school system! No prayer in the schools! For separation of church and state! Defend science against superstition and mysticism! For the right of people to be educated in the language of their choice! Defend bilingual education programs and ESL training!
5. For women's liberation through socialist revolution! For free abortion on demand! Down with parental consent laws and "squeal rules"! For free, quality 24-hour childcare! Down with attacks on medicare—for free, quality healthcare for all! For mass, labour-backed mobilizations to defend abortion clinics! Equal pay for equal work! Down with reactionary age of consent laws and all laws against consensual sex! Full democratic rights for gays! Government out of the bedroom! Down with the anti-sex witchhunt! Down with all laws against "crimes without victims" like prostitution and drugs!
6. The capitalist state—at its core consisting of the cops, courts, prisons and the standing army—is the executive

committee of the ruling class, an instrument of organized violence by the capitalists against the working class and the oppressed. The state is not neutral and cannot be reformed—it must be smashed through workers revolution! Defend victims of racist cop terror and police frame-up! Down with the "war on drugs," a racist war by the ruling class against blacks, immigrants, Natives and other minorities! For mass labour protests against cop terror! Free all class-war prisoners! There is no justice in the capitalist courts! No illusions in civilian review boards or "community control" of the police! Abolish the Senate and reactionary relics like the monarchy and governor-general! No to gun control! For the right of armed self-defense!

7. Labour must defend Native rights! Abolish the racist Indian Act and the Department of Indian Affairs! Police and courts keep off the reserves and other Native land! Only socialist revolution can end the deep-going oppression of Native people.
8. Down with Canadian nationalism! Defeat Canadian imperialism through workers revolution! For the defeat of Canadian imperialism in all its military adventures! Not one person, not one penny for the Canadian military! Beware the fraud of "human rights" imperialism! Canadian imperialist troops are not "peacekeepers" but bloody enemies of the world's workers and oppressed! The UN is a den of thieves, their victims and their lackeys! All Canadian/UN/NATO troops out of Afghanistan and the Persian Gulf! Down with the colonial occupation of Iraq! Defend the Palestinian people against Zionist terror! For a Socialist Federation of the Near East!
9. Down with anti-communist China bashing! Defend the gains of the 1949 revolution which smashed the rule of the landlords and capitalists, and collectivized property! No to imperialist penetration of China! For unconditional military defense of China and the other bureaucratically deformed workers states—Cuba, Vietnam and North Korea—against imperialism and internal capitalist counterrevolution! Defend their right to nuclear weapons! For workers political revolution to oust the Stalinist bureaucrats and establish regimes of workers democracy based on the power of workers councils and revolutionary internationalism! Workers of the world unite!
10. Break with the Anglo-chauvinist, pro-imperialist NDP—a bourgeois workers party that upholds the rule of racist capitalism! The trade union bureaucracy is an agency of the capitalist class—for a class struggle leadership of the unions! For international working-class solidarity! Smash NAFTA through united class struggle from the Yukon to the Yucatán! Down with the chauvinist poison of protectionism! For a revolutionary, multiracial, binational workers party that fights for socialist revolution! Look to the example of the heroic, Bolshevik-led workers of 1917 Russia! For new October Revolutions! For the international rule of the working class!

The Spartacus Youth Clubs are the youth groups of the Trotskyist League/Ligue trotskyste, Canadian section of the International Communist League (Fourth Internationalist).

Social Forum Con Game...

(continued from page 24)

scaremongering about "violent" anarchists attacking the G8 summit. An army of 10,000 cops has been mobilised; a five-mile-long fence has been erected around the five-star hotel in Gleneagles where the meeting will take place; and reportedly the U.S. is stationing an aircraft carrier full of Marines off the west coast of Scotland.

Here are the methods the capitalist rulers use to deal with any perceived protest against their rule—state repression on the one hand and political co-optation on the other. Foremost among the mechanisms for co-opting "anti-globalisation" protest are the World Social Forum (WSF) and European Social Forum (ESF), which are led and organised by much the same forces that are leading "Make Poverty History." Starting in 2001, these Social Forums have been used to defuse the wave of mass protests—against the G8, World Trade Organisation, IMF and other imperialist agencies—exemplified by the Seattle protest in 1999. The purpose was to draw radical youth away from pitched confrontations with the forces of the capitalist state and to corral them behind the "democratic alternative" of parliamentary reformism, while pretending that these talking shops were "non-parliamentary." Far from being met with the tear gas, water cannons and bullets of the capitalist state, as happened in Genoa in July 2001, the WSF and ESF have been backed and bankrolled by various agencies of the imperialist rulers.

This is because the Social Forums and the so-called "anti-capitalist" movement in fact pose no fundamental threat to capitalist rule. Their organisers buy into the predominant myth of the "post-Soviet" world: that class struggle against the capitalist order is a thing of the past; the working class is irrelevant as a factor for social change and the best that can be achieved is to give the system a "human" face. The truth is that the capitalist system is as dependent as ever on the working class, which has the power to overthrow capitalism. To achieve this, the working class must become conscious that its own interests are irreconcilable with those of the capitalists. The Social Forums are an obstacle to this class-consciousness.

Social Forums and State Funding

The European and World Social Forums have all been funded by capitalist states in the countries where they were held and received official backing from either bourgeois municipal governments or mayoral offices. The list of sponsors for the WSF has included not only the government of the city of Porto Alegre, the state government of Rio Grande do Sul and the federal government of Brazil but also the Banco do Brasil and its biggest petroleum company, Petrobras! The 2002 ESF was financed by the city of Florence and the 2003 Paris ESF funded by the Chirac government. The 2004 London ESF was bankrolled and hosted by the New Labour mayoral office of Ken Livingstone, supporter of the imperialist bombing of Serbia and cheerleader for the police terror against "anti-capitalist" protesters on May Day 2000.

The Social Forums have also all been dominated by the misnamed "Non-Governmental"

Organisations (NGOs). Of course these organisations, sanctioned by and receiving much of their funding from churches and capitalist states, are hardly independent from the governments to which they are answerable. Charities have long been the "humanitarian" face of imperialist intervention and of multinational companies looking to pillage "Third World" economies. Prominent NGOs at the Social Forums have included Oxfam, War on Want and Christian Aid. The major sponsor of NGOs around the world is the United Nations, which itself was set up to give a humanitarian veneer to the depredations of imperialism, particularly American. In this tradition, the World Social Forum in Porto Alegre in January 2003 received a message of support from UN secretary general Kofi Annan.

As the old saying goes, "He who pays the piper calls the tune." And while all the Social Forums rail against the truly savage and deranged Bush administration in the U.S., among those funding the WSF are none other than foundations such as the Rockefeller Brothers Fund and the Ford Foundation. The Rockefeller foundation was used to clean up the Rockefellers' reputation following the 20 April 1914 massacre in Ludlow, Colorado in which 20 people—including children—were killed by company guards and militia during a bitter struggle by the mineworkers union. The Ford Foundation came to prominence in 1936 at the height of the industrial struggles in the car industry in the U.S. Following World War II it became a conduit for CIA funds for anti-Communist causes around the world.

While funded by some of the most notorious agencies of U.S. imperialism, the World Social Forums have not been so welcoming to those seen as potentially threatening the interests of imperialism. The statement in the WSF Charter of Principles that "neither party representatives nor military organizations shall participate in the Forum" has been used

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Chris Helgren/Reuters
Ken Livingstone (left), patron of the London ESF, hailed 1999 NATO bombing of Serbia and cheered police violence against anarchist protesters at May Day 2000 (above).

London Action Trust

Social Forum Con Game...

(continued from page 19)

to exclude the Zapatistas as well as the FARC (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Columbia). Even the Madres de Plaza de Mayo, an organisation of mothers of leftists who were “disappeared” during the 1976-1983 Argentinian military dictatorship, was excluded from the 2002 WSF. On the other hand, a warm welcome has been extended to various heads of capitalist governments—who preside over “special bodies of armed men” more commonly known as the capitalist state.

An insightful article titled “The Economics and Politics of the World Social Forum” in *Aspects of India's Economy* (September 2003) by Rajani X. Desai captured the purpose and nature of the Social Forums:

“While several political forces fighting for a change of the system [have] been excluded from the WSF meets, droves of political leaders of the imperialist countries have been attending. Not only does the WSF as a body receive funds from agencies which are tied to imperialist interests and operations, but innumerable bodies participating in the WSF too are dependent on such agencies. The implications of this can be seen from the history of one such agency, Ford Foundation, which has closely collaborated with the US Central Intelligence Agency internationally, and in India has helped to shape the government's policies in favour of American interests.”

Left Cover for Class Collaboration

The fact that the World and European Social Forums have been all but bought and paid for by various capitalist governments and agencies is no big deal for the SWP. As SWP leader (and prominent spokesman on Social Forum platforms) Alex Callinicos shamelessly put it, “we all understood that a mass Social Forum needs money and money means compromises” (*International Socialist Tendency Discussion Bulletin*, January 2005). Indeed! Such sentiments are hardly peculiar to Callinicos. The first World Social Forum in 2001 was partly organised by the fake-Trotskyist United Secretariat (USec). Here young radicals were schooled in administering fiscal austerity for the capitalist state through

mock “participatory budgets.” The capitalist benefactors who funded the WSF got their money's worth. Today the Workers Party (PT) of Brazilian president Lula—with the aid of a “comrade minister” who is a member of the USec—are administering the capitalist state in Brazil, slavishly abiding by the dictates of the IMF through pushing austerity on an impoverished population.

At the most recent WSF in January, Lula was roundly booed by many of the attendees who oppose his open pandering to and collaboration with the IMF and World Bank. But the truth is that Lula represents the politics and programme of the WSF on the level of state power. This is what is known as the popular front: a class-collaborationist political bloc of working-class organisations with capitalist agencies in which the politics of the working-class component of the bloc are subordinated to the politics of the bourgeoisie, to the defence of the bourgeois state and capitalism. Like Lula's government in Brazil, popular fronts are called upon by the rulers to sell austerity to the workers more effectively than the discredited bourgeois parties can.

With Lula now discredited due to his attacks on Brazilian workers and peasants, the new hero of the 2005 WSF was Venezuelan president Hugo Chávez. This was quite a turnaround because at the 2003 WSF, while he was fighting the attempts of the U.S. government to overthrow him, he was not invited and not given an official space when he turned up anyway. Chávez's popularity among the oppressed in Venezuela comes from the fact he has used the oil revenues to introduce reforms that have benefited the poor, and he is not seen as a lackey of the U.S. But these are not even basic structural reforms, much less a social revolution, and are subject to the fluctuations of world oil prices.

Chávez is a bourgeois nationalist who rules for capitalism in Venezuela. Nationalist populism and economic neoliberalism are merely alternative policies of the rule of the same capitalist class. It is a fact that Chávez is reviled by many of the big landowners and capitalists in Venezuela as well as the neocons in the Bush administration, who in April 2002 backed a military coup against him. But more rational repre-

Trotskyist League/Spartacus Youth Club Events

Toronto

TL Forum: War on Terror Targets Everyone
Canada Out of Afghanistan! U.S./Britain Out of Iraq!

Saturday, 1 October, 7:00 p.m.
International Student Centre, 33 St. George St. (north of College)

Meet the Marxists on U of T Campus

Thursday, 15 September, 6:30 p.m.
Sidney Smith Building, Room 1088, 100 St. George St.

SYC Class Series: The ABCs of Marxism

University of Toronto, alternate Wednesdays, 6:30 p.m.

Sept. 21: The Communist Manifesto and the Ideological Roots of Marxism

Oct. 5: The 1917 Russian Revolution: How the Working Class Took Power

Oct. 19: The Betrayal of the Russian Revolution: Causes and Consequences of Stalinism

Nov. 2: Independence for Quebec!—Marxism and the National Question

Nov. 16: The Struggle for Working Class Leadership Today: Break with the Pro-Imperialist NDP! Build a Revolutionary Party!

Class 1 at Sidney Smith Building, Room 1080, 100 St. George St.
Other locations TBA.

Vancouver

SYC Class Series

The Fight for Revolutionary Marxism

University of British Columbia, every 3rd Thursday, 5:00 p.m.

Sept. 22: The Communist Manifesto and the Ideological Roots of Marxism

Buchanan Building, Room B334

Oct. 13: Independence for Quebec!—Marxism and the National Question

Student Union Building, Room 212

Nov. 3: The Struggle for Working Class Leadership Today: Break with the Pro-Imperialist NDP!

Student Union Building, Room 211

Nov. 24: The Russian Revolution: How the Working Class Took Power

Student Union Building, Room 212

For more information and readings, contact the TL/SYC at:

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AFP



AP

Left: Lula, head of Brazilian popular-front government, spoke at WSF in Porto Alegre earlier this year. Right: Brazilian cops attack landless workers movement (MST) protesters in Brasilia, 17 May.

representatives of imperialism see Chávez, with his popular appeal, as a man who can be trusted to protect their investments. Chávez's defeat of the 2004 recall referendum against him was welcomed as a guarantor of "stability" by such mouthpieces of imperialism as the *Financial Times* and the *New York Times*. As we wrote in *Workers Vanguard* No. 831, 3 September 2004:

"The immediate perspective that is urgently posed is not only to oppose U.S. imperialist incursions into Venezuela and elsewhere, but to fight to shatter the support of the workers movement to either Chávez or the opposition, and to forge a revolutionary internationalist workers party to lead the working class to power. This requires an intransigent fight against nationalism in Venezuela, which obscures class divisions in the country. Only the victorious struggle for working-class rule, i.e., socialist revolution throughout the Americas, will ensure land to the landless and enable the oil workers and other proletarians to enjoy the wealth created by their labor."

In presenting bourgeois nationalists like Chávez as fighters against "globalisation," the Social Forums provide a service against the fight for socialist revolution, binding the working class to their "own" national capitalist class. In fact the reason why the World Social Forums have all been hosted in "Third World" countries such as Brazil and India has been to mask the class antagonism between the working class of these countries and their native bourgeois exploiters. The message has been that the bourgeoisie of the "Global South" can be relied upon to join with "the people" and fight against "globalisation." But the main concern of the capitalists of the "Third World" is to defend their profits, for which they are dependent on the imperialists and require the maximum exploitation of the working class.

With the same goal of binding the exploited to their exploiters, the ESF pushes the illusion of a humane "Social Europe" under capitalism, contrasting it to the "neoliberal" model represented by the U.S. and Britain. It is the promotion of this vision of a "Social Europe" that has attracted to the ESF the pro-capitalist trade union leaders as well as social-democratic politicians across the continent. The political perspective of the European Confederation of Trade Unions was expressed by its general secretary at the 2000 Nice EU Summit protests: "There needs to be the incorporation of the trade unions and NGOs into the decision-making

structures in Brussels.... We agree that Europe must become more competitive, yes. But the new Europe must also contain a dignified quality of life for all its citizens" (quoted in "The Economics and Politics of the World Social Forum"). Becoming "more competitive" means extracting greater profits from the sweat and toil of the working class. The bureaucrats of the British Trades Union Congress (TUC) endorsed the 2004 London ESF and used it as an opportunity to provide a platform for the Iraqi Federation of Trade Unions' (IFTU) Sobhi Al-Mashadani, a stooge of the imperialists' stooge government in Iraq. This followed the Labour Party conference where, at the behest of the union bureaucrats, another IFTU representative, Abdullah Muhsin, backed the imperialist occupation by helping to ensure the defeat of a motion calling for early withdrawal of British troops from Iraq.

Workers Power Induced by its Own Hypnosis

In its pamphlet *Anti-Capitalism: Summit Sieges and Social Forums* (2005), Workers Power's League for the Fifth (continued on page 22)

Spartacist Pamphlet

Reformist ideologues of "globalization" seek to obscure the role of the capitalist nation-state and the danger of inter-imperialist war which is inherent in capitalism, while amnestying the refusal of the labor bureaucracies to wage class struggle against their respective bourgeoisies.

Exploitation, poverty and social degradation can be eliminated only through proletarian revolutions in the imperialist centers as well as the neocolonial countries, laying the basis for an international planned socialist economy.

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Social Forum Con Game...

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International (L5I) poses as a left critic of WSF organisers like Bernard Cassen and Susan George of ATTAC, an organisation founded to campaign for a tax on international financial transactions and against “neoliberalism.” Despite the fact that its offices are staffed by French Communist Party and USec supporters, ATTAC does not pretend to oppose capitalism. It is a thoroughly bourgeois organisation which boasted of its close ties to the Lionel Jospin popular-front government. Yet regarding Cassen and George, the L5I argues: “We don’t need to arrange any artificial split from them. But neither do we need to fear a split with them. If we go forward determinedly, they will desert at once.” By an “artificial split,” the L5I means a *split along class lines*. The L5I is not opposed to class collaboration; it simply wants a more militant popular front.

Indeed, the crackpot conception of the L5I, Workers Power, and its youth group Revolution, is that they can build not only a “movement” but even a “revolutionary” party out of these cross-class, state-funded alliances: “the anticapitalist movement, the workers’ movement, the movements of the racially and nationally oppressed, youth, women, all must be brought together to create a new International—a world party of socialist revolution” (*Anti-Capitalism: Summit Sieges and Social Forums*). While crying foul against right-wing bureaucratic dominance, Workers Power seeks to gain “democratic structures” within the Social Forums to engineer the movement’s transformation. It urges the utilisation of “initiatives like the Assembly of Social Movements to propose permanent delegate-based, elected, co-ordinating bodies that can prepare the way for a structured Congress in which organisational and policy proposals can be debated out, amended and adopted.”

Left out of Workers Power’s equation is any political fight in opposition to the whole purpose of these Social Forums, which are premised on the *maintenance* of the capitalist system, merely trying to give it a more “democratic” and “humanitarian” face lift. But even Workers Power is forced to admit that these Assemblies lack a conception of the “capitalist system as the enemy,” “the working class as the force” and “socialism as the only possible basis for the ‘other world’ it aims to build” (*Workers Power*, March 2005).

The reality of class-collaborationism was starkly brought home at the first ESF in Florence in 2002. The L5I gushed: “The sheer intoxication of being ‘tous ensemble’ (all together) meant that even dyed-in-the-wool reformists spoke like revolutionary firebrands. Everyone was carried forward too by the urgency of doing everything possible to stop George Bush’s war on Iraq.” “Everything possible” included an explicit appeal to Europe’s imperialist rulers to oppose U.S. plans to invade Iraq, signed by a gamut of the European left including the SWP, Workers Power and Revolution at a Brussels meeting preparatory to the Florence ESF. It said: “We call on all the European heads of state to publicly stand against this war, whether it has UN backing or not, and to demand that George Bush abandon his war plans” (*Liberazione*, 13 September 2002). This wretched appeal to the “peace-loving” European capitalist rulers only serves to bind the exploited to their exploiters.

The prime movers behind the Florence ESF were mass Italian reformist parties such as Rifondazione comunista

(RC) and Democratic Left (DS). In the 1990s, DS formed part of the “Olive Tree” coalition government that administered anti-immigrant terror and severe attacks on the working class on behalf of Italian imperialism. Until late 1998, RC formed a tacit coalition with DS. The ESF provides these consummate popular frontists with a cheap way to rebuild support so that they can return to government. Likewise the Paris ESF was organised by the Communist Party (PCF) and Alain Krivine’s pseudo-Trotskyist Ligue communiste révolutionnaire (LCR). Today in France, where Chirac’s government is totally discredited with the vote against the EU constitutional treaty, these same forces are working feverishly to put together a new class-collaborationist alliance hoping to take the reins of government. That means implementing the attacks on welfare as well as the racist “war on terror.”

The Popular Front: Not a Tactic but the Greatest Crime

Breaking the working class and radical youth from the idea that they can negotiate a common progressive future with representatives of the capitalist ruling class responsible for exploitation, imperialist war, racism and women’s and sexual oppression, is the basic task of revolutionary Marxists. As the producers of capitalist society’s wealth, and the bourgeoisie’s profits, the working class is the only agent with the social power and objective interest to overthrow the capitalist system and to shatter its state. This requires socialist revolution to replace the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie with a workers state that will defend and administer a collectivised, planned economy. On an international scale, this would lay the basis to eradicate scarcity and produce for the needs of the entire human race. The only instrument that can organise the proletarian struggle for the overthrow of capitalism is a revolutionary vanguard party.

This is counterposed to the class-collaborationism of the Social Forums. Tailored to the sentiments of activists who are sick of parliamentary politics and parties, the Social Forums are popular fronts that promote the myth that a “people’s alliance” with supposedly “progressive” capitalists can end the ravages of imperialism. The popular front (or “People’s Front”) was the weapon of choice used by the Stalinists in the 1930s for the purpose of preventing workers revolution. Trotsky vehemently opposed the popular front and relentlessly warned of its dire consequences for the working class. As then-Trotskyist leader James Burnham pointed out in his 1937 pamphlet, “The People’s Front, the New Betrayal”:

“For the proletariat, through its parties, to give up its own independent program means to give up its independent functioning as a class.... By accepting the program of the People’s Front, it thereby accepts the aims of another section of society; it accepts the aim of the defense of capitalism when all history demonstrates that the interests of the proletariat can be served only by the overthrow of capitalism.”

The popular front has often had bloody repercussions for the working class and oppressed. A classic example is that of Chile in 1970-1973, where Salvador Allende and his fellow reformists led the revolutionary-minded working class into a coalition government with the capitalists. Allende vowed not to challenge the capitalist order or the state; he put an end to peasants seizing land and workers seizing factories. Aided by U.S. imperialism the Chilean bourgeoisie then turned to General Augusto Pinochet to attack the working class and its

leaders (including Allende), imposing a savage military dictatorship at the cost of 30,000 lives.

From Seattle to Social Forums

Hoping to appeal to militant youth who despise the Social Forums as endless talk shops, the LSI pleads for a return to the street demonstrations of Seattle and Genoa. Its pamphlet proclaims that "For five years our movement has besieged the summits of the rich and the powerful.... It must take to the streets again, and show through mass direct action its intent; to build a world without classes, oppression, racism, war and imperialism." But the politics of the WSF is an extension of, not counterposed to, the politics of Seattle. While attracting many youth who oppose the impact of capitalism internationally, the political shots at Seattle were called by the social democrats and trade-union bureaucrats whose anti-Communist tirades against China echo the interests of the imperialist rulers whose aim is the restoration of the system of capitalist exploitation to the Chinese deformed workers state. "Direct action" protest based on pro-imperialist, popular-front politics is just "militant" class collaborationism.

The backdrop to the proliferation of Social Forums is the counterrevolution in the former USSR and the bourgeoisie's ideological campaign that "communism is dead." Typical of the regression of consciousness brought about by the destruction of the Soviet Union is the idea, prevalent among young leftists, that the working class is irrelevant as the agency for social change, or simply one more victim of oppression. Meanwhile union bureaucrats now justify betrayals of workers' struggles by arguing that "globalisation" makes class struggle ineffective because the capitalists can easily move production to low wage economies in Asia or Eastern Europe. While there have been certain *quantitative* changes in the world economy in recent decades, "globalisation" is not a *qualitatively* new phenomenon. The fact that the capitalist market economy is "global," that banks and corporations seek out those (low wage) countries where they can get the highest return, and the internationalisation of finance capital, was explained by V.I. Lenin nearly 90 years ago:

"Imperialism is capitalism at that stage of development at which the dominance of monopolies and finance capital is established; in which the export of capital has acquired pronounced importance; in which the division of the world among the international trusts has begun, in which the division of all territories of the globe among the biggest capitalist powers has been completed."

—*Imperialism, The Highest Stage of Capitalism*

Poverty, disease, exploitation and war are not aberrations in the capitalist system but are inherent within its workings. Only through the overthrow of capitalism can the productive forces be developed to provide a decent standard of living for all of humanity.

In the face of an international witch hunt against the "direct action" anarchists of the Black Bloc, following the



Workers Hammer

Spartacist League/Britain protests occupation of Iraq/Afghanistan and Labour government's racist "war on terror."

police killing of leftist protester Carlo Giuliani in Genoa in 2001, the bulk of the social-democratic left in the anti-globalisation movement joined in violence-baiting and cop-baiting the Black Bloc. The ICL stood out for our forthright defence of the Black Bloc against the capitalist state and its lackeys. At the same time, we stressed:

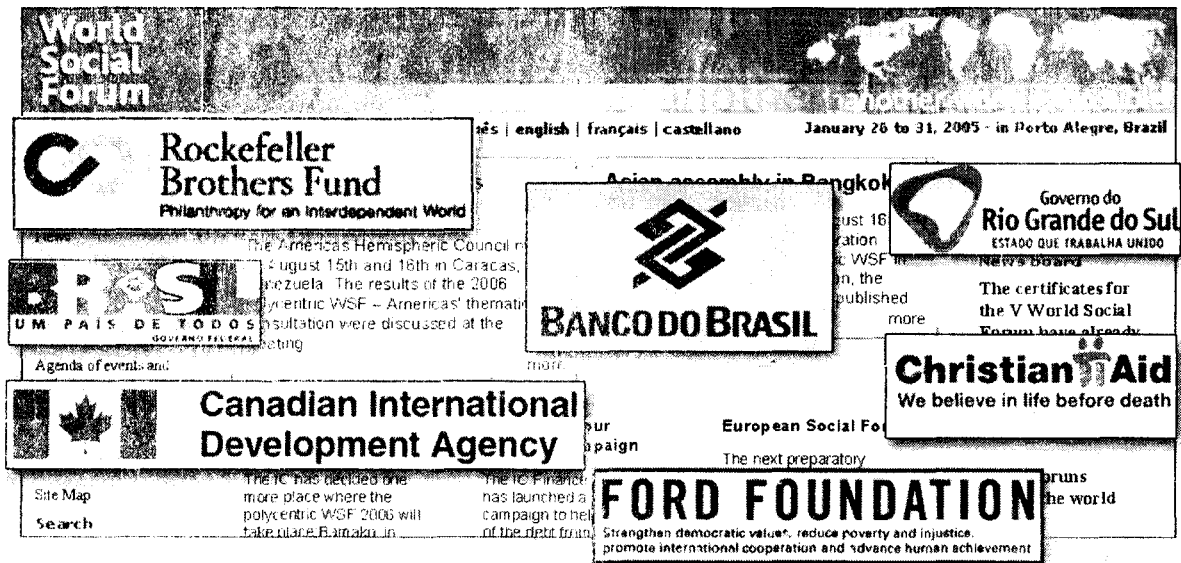
"The question before the huge numbers of young radicals who have been drawn to the 'anti-globalization' protests of recent years is: how do you change the world? While the protests have succeeded in forcing the imperialists to schedule future meetings in isolated backwaters, this does nothing to impede the workings of the capitalist system. To do away with imperialist exploitation requires a political mobilization of the proletariat in a thoroughgoing socialist revolution....

"What's needed is a new, revolutionary leadership of the working class, a tribune of the people and fighter on behalf of all the oppressed. It is necessary to break with the class-collaborationist politics pushed by those who, in the name of a 'lesser evil,' subordinate the vital interests of the proletariat to those of its capitalist exploiters and oppressors. It's necessary to forge a revolutionary workers party that fights to set up a workers government through socialist revolution against the entire capitalist system."

—"Blood and Bullets in Genoa," *Workers Vanguard* No. 762, 3 August 2001

We Marxists of the Spartacus Youth Group and International Communist League understand that the fight for the independence of the working class is the precondition for the emancipation of humanity through socialist revolution. Our attitude to the Social Forums, as with any other popular front, is to oppose them through intervening with a sharp characterisation and explanation of this deception in a bid to win those that genuinely want to fight oppression and exploitation to an internationalist, revolutionary, proletarian programme. We are proud communists and refuse to be lackeys of the social democrats, trade-union bureaucrats and their capitalist masters. If you do too—join us! ■

Churches, Charities and CIA Cash Social Forum Con Game



He Who Pays the Piper...

World Social Forum's slogan is "another world is possible." But whose world? Above are some of the capitalist governments, banks, corporations and imperialist-backed agencies that have sponsored and funded the Social Forums. SC graphic

We reprint below an article from the *Young Spartacus* pages of *Workers Hammer* (No. 191, Summer 2005), newspaper of the Spartacist League/Britain. The article was written in the build-up to the "Make Poverty History" rallies around the G8 summit in Scotland. This campaign, touted by most of the reformist left, was explicitly designed to give a "progressive" veneer to Britain's capitalist Labour Party government of prime minister Tony Blair and chancellor Gordon Brown.

Young Spartacus

If the "Make Poverty History" campaign had anything to do with actually challenging the scourge of poverty, AIDS, illiteracy and all-sided misery and destitution for the peoples of Africa, would it be endorsed by Tony Blair and Gordon Brown? These butchers of Iraq are trying to rebuild Labour's popularity with voters at home and to refurbish the image of blood-drenched British imperialism. Behind them is a whole cabal of celebrities, religious charities, NGOs, trade-union bureaucrats and reformists like the Socialist Workers Party [SWP—parent group of the Canadian International Socialists] championing the "Make Poverty History" fraud.

Not everyone is taken in by Tony Blair and Gordon Brown's new-found concern for the poor. A letter in the *Glasgow Herald* (6 June) wryly noted: "Gordon Brown's genuineness about eradicating poverty is as genuine as, and in direct proportion to, his willingness to lead a demonstration of bankers, financiers and stockbrokers along the streets of Edinburgh with a banner proclaiming 'Long live the Cuban Revolution!'" As for imperialist hypocrisy about aid to the "Third World," we endorse a characterisation of bourgeois charity written by Engels in 1845. Addressing the English bourgeoisie, he wrote it was "as though you rendered the proletarians a service in first sucking out their very life-blood and then practising your self-complacent, Pharisaic philanthropy upon them placing yourselves before the world as mighty benefactors of humanity when you give back to the plundered victims the hundredth part of what belongs to them!" (*The Condition of the Working Class in England*). "Sucking out the life blood" from the world's working masses and oppressed is what the G8 is all about.

For those who want to protest against the G8 meeting but don't want to go along with the "we are the world" roadshow, there is the iron fist of state repression. For months, the tabloids and other media have echoed police forces in

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