

The Main Enemy is the Capitalist Class at Home!



Workers protest job losses in Niagara region (left). Above, state repression against anti-globalization protesters in Windsor last spring.

Tens of thousands of youth, trade unionists and others from across Canada, the U.S. and Latin America plan to demonstrate in Quebec City this April at the Summit of the Americas, called to discuss a proposed Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA). Behind a veneer of "solidarity" with the world's oppressed, the organizers of the main protests—trade-union leaders, Canadian nationalists, the New Democratic Party, as well as various self-styled "socialist" groupings—simply aim to refurbish the "democratic" credentials of Canadian imperialism.

A leaflet for a March 2 teach-in at Toronto's York University bears this out. Issued by Mobilization for Global Justice, a coalition which prominently includes reformist left groups

like the International Socialists (I.S.), it begins: "The FTAA is a trade agreement that will overrule our democratic power, and will eliminate many of the things that make this country one of the best places to live in the world." Tell that to Native people or refugees! The capitalist Canadian "democracy" which these types defend against "corporate globalization" is simply a disguise for the naked dictatorship of the capitalist class.

That dictatorship will be on full display in Quebec City. The Canadian state is organizing the biggest police mobilization in its history. A "security perimeter" will enclose most of Old Quebec, the RCMP will be equipped with

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For Socialist Revolution Throughout the Americas!

Independence for Quebec!

National Chauvinism: Poison to Anti-Capitalist Struggle

The build-up to the Summit of the Americas has featured a war of words between the federal Liberal government, which is hosting the gathering, and the Parti Québécois regime in Quebec, which is demanding the right to address the heads of state gathered in its national capital. New PQ premier Bernard Landry thundered: "It's as if someone borrowed your home to entertain friends at a banquet and said, 'Thanks for the house but stay in the back shed'" (*Toronto Star*, 5 February). Landry earlier provoked another Anglo-chauvinist outburst when he denounced Ottawa's insistence that the Canadian flag be flown at public buildings in Quebec City, calling the Maple Leaf a "red rag." At the same time, the PQ is working with the feds to set up the massive "security" apparatus of thousands of cops which is to be unleashed against anti-Summit demonstrators.

Anglo-chauvinist reaction has always been a cornerstone of Canadian capitalism, and it has sharply divided the working class along national lines. The English Canadian rulers consciously use national chauvinism to undermine proletarian unity in struggle, with the inestimable assistance of the central trade-union bureaucracy and especially the NDP. This has been shown from the labor tops' hostility to tumultuous class battles in Quebec like the 1972 General Strike, to the NDP's support for the Liberal government's "Clarity Act," which seeks to illegalize even Quebec's *right* to self-determination. In turn, the barrage of chauvinism from English Canada has served to drive the once-militant Québécois proletariat ever deeper into the arms of its "own" bourgeois nationalist exploiters of the PQ.

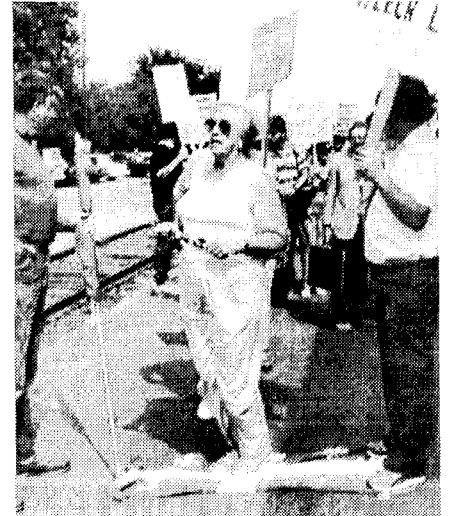
We summarized the revolutionary Marxist attitude to the Quebec national question in our August 1998 Programmatic Theses, "Who We Are, and What We Fight For":

"The Trotskyist League/Ligue trotskyste rejects the reactionary ideology of nationalism in all its forms. Nationalism and chauvinism are the key strands in the ropes which bind English-speaking and French-speaking workers to their capitalist enemies. The existence of two separate and increasingly divergent nations, one oppressing the other, defines the political landscape in this country, and has terribly undermined working-class struggle. We advocate *independence for Quebec* to help clear the way for united struggle by the working class against capitalist oppression."

Much of the reformist left in English Canada capitulates to Anglo chauvinism by opposing Quebec independ-



Pacific Tribune



CP Archive

At left, former CAW and CLC chief Bob White leads protectionist anti-NAFTA demo. At right, bigots trample Quebec flag in Brockville, Ont. in 1989. Protectionism, Anglo chauvinism are used by rulers to cripple workers struggle.

ence. Some, like the Communist Party, openly wave the flag of Maple Leaf chauvinism. Others, like the International Socialists, seek to cover their tracks by denying, in the face of all evidence, that the working class is sharply divided on national lines.

In Quebec, various anarchist groups also oppose independence, albeit from the more left-wing starting point of wanting to oppose their "own" capitalists. They cite the anti-working-class nature of the PQ as well as its attacks on immigrants and Native people. One of the more leftist of these groups, the Quebec City-based Groupe Anarchiste Émile-Henry, calls to "reject all nationalisms, not solely that of the right (patriotism and chauvinism), which goes without saying, but also its supposedly left version (revolutionary nationalism)," and continues:

"The fight for the independence of Quebec, even in an anti-capitalist framework, is not our struggle.... Our ambition is a global social revolution which will smash all borders."

—"Bases d'unités politiques"

But these anarchists nowhere address the key question: how can we get a "global social revolution which will smash all borders"? An essential precondition for any fight against capitalist exploitation is united struggle by the proletariat, regardless of language or nationality. This requires winning the proletariat, the only class with the social power to overthrow capitalism, to revolutionary internationalist consciousness. However, today the working class is imbued with reactionary nationalist consciousness; indeed, it is sharply *divided* along national lines, and has been for many

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Our comrade Susan Adams died at home on the morning of February 6 after a two-year struggle with cancer. In her 30 years as a communist cadre, Susan served on many of the battle fronts of our international party. There is hardly a section of the International Communist League or an area of our work which did not benefit directly from her political counsel and from her exceptional talents as a teacher and trainer of a new generation of proletarian leaders. She continued to carry out vital work as a member of the leading committees of the Spartacist League/U.S. and the ICL until her death. We salute her memory and share in the pain and loss of her longtime companion and comrade, François, her family and her many comrades and friends around the world.

Like thousands of youth, Susan was propelled into political activism in the mid-1960s by the civil rights movement, the growing opposition to the Vietnam War and the near-revolutionary upheaval in France in May 1968. She vehemently rejected the mysticism and hypocritical moralism of her Catholic background and struggled against the internalized oppression that it caused. While at the University of California in San Diego, she joined Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) and was drawn to the pro-working-class wing led by the left-Stalinist Progressive Labor Party. Susan was won to Trotskyism as she began working with the SL-led Revolutionary Marxist Caucus of SDS in 1970 after moving to the State University of New York in Stony Brook. She became a member of the Spartacist League in December 1971. Within months, she was elected organizer of our rapidly growing Bay Area local committee, helping to integrate new recruits from a variety of political tendencies.

When we set up a branch in Detroit in early 1973, Susan was chosen to lead it. She proudly described this center of the black industrial working class as the Vyborg of the American proletariat, in reference to the militant proletarian stronghold of Bolshevism in Petrograd on the eve of the Russian Revolution. After little more than a year in Detroit, Susan moved to New York to be the central leader of our national youth organization, the Spartacus Youth League. As always, she took on this task with energy and political determination, frequently touring the locals, initiating or directing local and national SYL campaigns, overseeing the publication of a high-level monthly press, *Young Spartacus*.

In 1976, as the Spartacist tendency began to gain small footholds in Europe, Susan took on another crucial area of party work, this time for our International Secretariat. Stationed mainly in Paris, she became the central leader of our work in Europe, and Paris became one of three main political centers of our International. Until 1992, Susan was the principal leader of the Ligue Trotskyste de France. Determined to

implant the Cannonist understanding of party building and Bolshevik norms of functioning which were largely alien to European cadre, she worked closely with often inexperienced leaderships in the European sections, getting them to seize on opportunities for building the party, to carry through regroupments with leftward-moving elements of opponent organizations and to combat the incessant pressures of French parochialism, British Labourism, resurgent German nationalism and so on.

In 1992, when the LTF leadership itself succumbed to the same pressures Susan had seen so clearly and fought so well elsewhere, there was a sharp political fight at an ICL conference. Susan sought to assimilate the political lessons of the fight and only a few months later accepted the difficult assignment of heading up our small ICL station in Moscow, taking up the work of our comrade Martha Phillips who had been murdered at her post there earlier that year. To her last days, Susan would speak fondly of her "Moscow boys," as she called the young members from various countries, among them recent recruits from the former DDR (East Germany), who had volunteered for this arduous and dangerous assignment and who received their shaping as Leninist cadre under Susan's tutelage.

After nearly 20 years of overseas assignments, Susan returned to the U.S. to work in the central party administration, directing her energies particularly on working with a new layer of youth recruits

in New York and nationally. Seeking to capitalize on our very successful anti-Klan mobilization in October 1999, Susan addressed the New York Spartacist branch, of which she was political chairman:

"This demonstration really does put into context the last decade, when there wasn't very much going on. In the last couple of years, there have been many struggles in the party. We have sought to grind off the rust in the party and prepare ourselves for exactly the kind of situation that I think our party responded to very well this month. And now the question is the follow-up. In short, the whole point here is: this is what we live for, this is what we prepare for, and now we're in it and we must take advantage of it in the maximum political way."

Susan's beauty and graciousness struck all who met her. She solicited and listened intently to the opinions of the newest youth member no less than those of the most senior party cadre, arguing with them openly when she disagreed. Her intellectual curiosity was intense. Her critical-mindedness, integrity and revolutionary determination serve as an inspiration to us all as we go forward to realize the task to which she dedicated her life, the reorganizing of the Fourth International and the achievement of communism worldwide.

A fuller appreciation of Susan's life and work is included in *Workers Vanguard* No. 755, 30 March 2001. ■

Susan Adams



1948-2001

Anti-Communist “Free Tibet” Protest **Down With “Human Rights” Crusade Against China!**

The 1949 Chinese Revolution ended over a century of direct foreign capitalist exploitation and oppression, ripping the world's most populous nation from the hands of rapacious capitalists. The 1949 revolution overthrew bourgeois rule and established a collectivized, planned economy, laying the basis for huge strides forward by workers and peasants—especially women. The newly formed workers state liquidated the landlords as a class, burning their property titles en masse before peoples' courts. Impoverished women, many of whom did not even receive names before they were married, won full legal equality with men.

Ever since the revolution, the imperialists have plotted to recapture China for capitalist exploitation through a combination of military pressure and support to internal counterrevolutionary forces. The nationalist, anti-working-class politics of the ruling Chinese Stalinist bureaucracy have opened the door to imperialist economic penetration, bringing the bureaucratically deformed workers state to the brink of destruction. Capitalist counterrevolution would be a devastating blow for the Chinese masses and the workers of the world. The Spartacus Youth Club fights for unconditional military defense of China against imperialism and internal counterrevolution. At the same time, we stand for proletarian political revolution to oust the Stalinist misrulers, in order to defend and extend the gains of the Chinese revolution.

Imperialist Hue and Cry over “Human Rights”

The drive to restore capitalism in China is ideologically justified by a furious offensive against “human rights abuses.” During a recent trade mission to China, “Team Canada” leader Jean Chrétien chided his hosts over such “violations.” At the same time, forces ranging from the right-wing yahoos of the Canadian Alliance through the New Democrats to the fake-left International Socialists have joined their voices to condemn Chrétien for being too soft on China.

In February, Alliance MP Jason Kenney and “left” NDPer Svend Robinson joined 83 Canadian politicians in endorsing a document which insisted that Canada use its clout to advance the cause for “human rights” in Tibet. Days later, 150 protesters, including the Canada Tibet Committee and



Anna King/Ubysey

Globe and Mail

Anti-Communist protest at Vancouver Airport in February (left) during “Team Canada” trade mission to China led by Jean Chrétien.

members of the counterrevolutionary Falun Gong sect, gathered at the Vancouver International Airport for a demonstration against China, which was addressed by Robinson.

The Coalition for Responsible Trade with China, organizers of the airport protest, wrote in their leaflet: “It’s great to trade with China but WE want to remind Jean Chrétien leading Canadian delegates and Business people to Beijing—that they should include HUMAN RIGHTS & ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION in their trade agreements.” The very notion that Canadian imperialism could be a progressive force *anywhere* is ludicrous. The only “freedom” they and other imperialists are interested in is the free flow of profits; the only “right” they demand is the right to untrammelled exploitation. Canadian imperialism remains the oppressor of the Québécois nation and Native people at home, and the exploiter of countless working people in the “Third World.” The racist Canadian government jailed and deported hundreds of Chinese immigrants from Fujian province desperately trying to escape the ravages of imperialist-backed “market reforms.” We Trotskyists of the Spartacus Youth

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China...

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Club say: **Smash Canadian imperialism! For workers revolution!**

“Free Tibet” Campaign: Cover for Counterrevolution in China

During the Team Canada visit itself, two Canadian university students were briefly detained by Chinese authorities after unfurling a banner reading: “Human rights before profit—Free Tibet” at a Beijing hotel. Even the kid glove treatment they received elicited an outburst of anti-Communism in the Canadian bourgeois press about “human rights” abuses in China. On February 14, the *Globe and Mail* editorialized: “China’s Communist system isn’t just different; it’s undemocratic, repressive and frequently cruel.”

The howl over “free Tibet” is a counterrevolutionary wedge against the Chinese deformed workers state. As one Chinese student at the University of British Columbia put it, in response to the Graduate Student Society flying the Tibetan flag on top of the GSS building during the anti-APEC protests in 1997: “[the Tibetan] flag represents a symbol of feudalism and tyranny by the nobility” (*The Ubysey*, 27 January 1998). The Tibet that the “human rights” crusaders would like a return to was a hell presided over by perhaps the largest and most idle ruling stratum in history in proportion to the population. In Tibet ruled by the priestly caste of Buddhist lamas, an estimated **90 percent** of the population suffered from venereal disease, women and children were treated as sexual slaves, and the illiterate peasantry toiled for the priests and noblemen in extreme poverty.

It was only the entry of the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) that enabled the Tibetan masses to begin even the most minimal steps toward progress. However, the Chinese revolution, led by Mao Zedong’s Communist Party, created a **bureaucratically deformed** workers state, ruled by a privileged petty-bourgeois caste, similar to that in the former USSR under Joseph Stalin. Though the PLA occupied Tibet

in 1950, the Chinese Stalinists did not move to abolish forced peasant labor, slavery and the taxes paid to the monasteries until the CIA organized a monk/aristocrat-led uprising in Lhasa, the capital, in 1959.

The modernizing improvements the Stalinist bureaucracy has made in Tibet are modest, but they include literacy, industrialization, the introduction of health care; all testify to the progressive nature of China’s collectivized economy. In 1973, a frequent visitor commented that “at least now you don’t see emaciated serfs in rags carrying the litter of a noble dressed in warm clothing, turquoise rings and gold bracelets” (*Guardian*, 29 December 1973, quoted in A. Tom Grunfeld, *The Making of Modern Tibet* [1996]).

But the nationalist policies of the Stalinist bureaucracy have also meant Great Han chauvinism against ethnic Tibetans and continuing inequalities, exacerbated by the Stalinists’ “market reforms” which are strengthening the forces of capitalist counterrevolution. As we wrote in our article “Anti-Communist Crusade for ‘Free Tibet’” (SC No. 118, Fall 1998): “The fate of the Tibetan people is inextricably bound up with the struggle for proletarian political revolution in China and socialist revolution in the Indian subcontinent and throughout Southeast and East Asia.”

NDP and I.S. Lackeys— Enemies of the Chinese Revolution

At the forefront of the China-bashing “human rights campaign” is the pro-capitalist New Democratic Party. The NDP sometimes claims to have the interests of working people at heart. But in power or out, the New Democrats uphold the interests of Canadian capitalism. While sermonizing about Tibet, NDP “leftist” Svend Robinson has also supported every Canadian imperialist military intervention from the Balkans to East Timor.

The NDP’s social-democratic politics, particularly their “left” incarnation typified by Robinson, define the framework for all manner of reformist left organizations. The International Socialists, for example, criticized the Team Canada trade mission for “openly courting profits and paying

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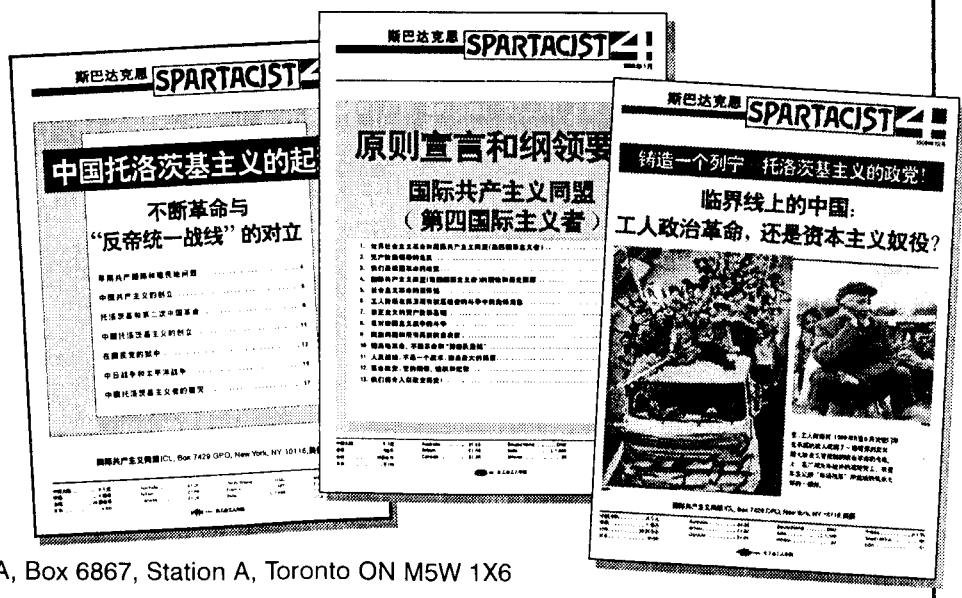
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only lip service to human rights abuses" in China (*Socialist Worker*, 21 February). The I.S. refuses to defend the hard won gains of the Chinese revolution, denouncing China as "state capitalist," just as they did the former Soviet Union.

The I.S.'s anti-Marxist "theory" of state capitalism paints the former Soviet Union and China today as themselves "capitalist" and "imperialist," and counterrevolution as merely a "step sideways." This anti-Marxist fraud has been exposed and destroyed by the devastating and worldwide consequences of capitalist counterrevolution in Russia and East Europe. In reality, the I.S.'s notion of "state capitalism" has always been a cover for their support for their own "democratic" imperialists against the Stalinist-ruled workers states. When American warships entered the Taiwan Strait in 1996, the I.S.'s parent organization, the British Socialist Workers Party, aimed their guns in the same direction as the Pentagon, proclaiming "We would oppose any Chinese invasion of Taiwan as an act of imperialist aggression" (*Socialist Review*, April 1996).

Reforge the Fourth International!

The Chinese Stalinist regime's "market reforms" are setting the stage for a showdown between world imperialism

and the Chinese proletariat. The Chinese working class has witnessed the devastating results of capitalist counterrevolution in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, and will not submit passively to the destruction of the gains of the Revolution. Meanwhile, the Chinese proletariat is responding to the attacks on the collectivized economy with convulsive battles and mass protests. On March 9, for example, two thousand coal miners in the northern city of Datong blocked roads defiantly protesting job losses.

It will take a Leninist-Trotskyist vanguard party to lead these struggles to victory in a political revolution to oust the nationalist, Stalinist bureaucracy, instituting a regime dedicated to international revolution and based on workers democracy. Such a political revolution is premised on the unconditional defense of the planned, collectivized economy which is the social foundation of the (bureaucratically deformed) workers state.

Moreover, such a party must be both internationalist in program and international in organization. With our comrades of the International Communist League we fight to reforge the Fourth International, world party of socialist revolution. If you are opposed to this racist capitalist system and want to fight to overthrow it, join the Spartacus Youth Club! ■

Quebec...

(continued from page 3)

years. Even the trade unions, the basic defense organizations of the working class, are in large part split on national lines.

The PQ's many attacks on working people and the poor have provoked sporadic resistance from the Quebec working class and also student youth—from the widely popular province-wide nurses strike in 1999 to numerous protests against cutbacks and tuition hikes. But the nationalist Quebec union bureaucracy has worked overtime to stifle, isolate and sell out any struggle which seriously threatens "their" government. And at every step of the way they can point to the chauvinist anti-Quebec provocations from English Canada in order to "rally the nation" and stifle proletarian combativity.

To be sure, and contrary to various left-nationalist social democrats who peddle their wares in the shadow of the PQ (Gauche Socialiste, Parti de la Démocratie Socialiste, Rassemblement pour une Alternative Politique, etc.), Quebec independence would not be "anti-capitalist." Indeed, today's anti-working-class PQ government precisely prefigures what a sovereign Quebec, where the Québécois capitalists are more thoroughly "masters in their own house," would look like.

But Quebec independence would **remove a gigantic obstacle to working-class consciousness and struggle**. It would allow the workers in both Quebec and English Canada to see more clearly that their real enemies are their "own" capitalist exploiters, not each other. Only an unambiguous stand against the dominant Anglo chauvinism and for the national rights of the Québécois can lay a basis for removing the national question from the agenda, for breaking the workers from their respective national-chauvinist misleaders and bringing the crucial class questions to the fore.

Making the working class conscious of its historic revolutionary tasks requires the instrumentality of a vanguard party modelled on the Bolshevik Party of Lenin and Trot-



SC photo

SYC speakout at UBC: For Quebec independence!

sky, who led the only successful workers revolution in history, the Russian October Revolution of 1917. Crucial to this revolutionary victory was the Bolsheviks' unstinting internationalist defense of the rights of oppressed minority nationalities in the tsarist empire. As Lenin stressed in his 1915 pamphlet *Socialism and War*, revolutionary Marxists must "recognize and champion the **oppressed** nation's right to self-determination, in the specifically political sense of the term, i.e., the right to political secession. The socialist of a ruling or a colonial nation who does not stand for that right is a chauvinist.... A proletariat that tolerates the slightest coercion of other nations by its 'own' nation cannot be a socialist proletariat."

Down with chauvinist Canadian capitalism! For Quebec independence! ■

The Main Enemy...

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communist society.

To realize its potential revolutionary power, the proletariat must become conscious of its historic tasks. To achieve this, a revolutionary party founded on Marxist theory and program is necessary. Such a political perspective is rejected by the CLAC (indeed, by all anarchists) in favor of rhetoric about “autonomous, decentralized and non-hierarchical” organization and developing “a diverse and pluralistic resistance movement.” However, the fact is that only the Bolshevik party of Lenin and Trotsky—professional, disciplined and programmatically firm—has ever led the working class to overthrow capitalism.

The 1917 Russian Revolution was key to winning the best elements of the anarchist movement worldwide to revolutionary Marxism. Among these was Victor Serge, who wrote to his French anarchist friends to motivate communism against anarchism:

“What is the Communist Party in a time of revolution? It is the revolutionary elite, powerfully organized, disciplined, obeying a consistent direction, marching together towards a single clearly defined goal along the paths traced for it by a scientific doctrine. Being such a force, the party is the product of the necessity, that is the laws of history itself. That revolutionary elite which in a time of violence remains unorganized, undisciplined, without consistent direction and open to variable or contradictory impulses, is heading for suicide. No view at odds with this conclusion is possible.”

—*La Vie ouvrière*, 21 March 1922, reprinted in *The Serge-Trotsky Papers*, Cotterill, ed. (1994)

The sections of the International Communist League struggle to build parties of the Bolshevik type, and to reforge the Fourth International as the world party of socialist revolution.

Imperialism and the Union Bureaucracy

The mainstream protest leaders’ warnings against “globalization” are a thin justification for their nationalist program—denouncing “global” corporations for usurping control from national states. As we pointed out in our pamphlet *Imperialism, The “Global Economy” and Labor Reformism*, “So-called multinational or transnational firms do *not* operate above or independently of the nation-state system. Rather they are vitally dependent on their own bourgeois national states to *protect* their investments abroad from popular opposition and rival capitalist states. Hence, imperialist states must maintain strong military forces and a corresponding domestic industrial base.”

The labor bureaucracy plays a key role in maintaining the imperialist system, acting as what Lenin called the “labor lieutenants of the capitalist class.” A privileged stratum bought off by super-profits extracted from neocolonial plunder, they work to imbue the workers with bourgeois ideology—e.g., nationalism—and enforce class peace at home while supporting the interests of their own imperialist rulers abroad. Witness their support to the NATO war against Serbia in the name of “human rights,” or their ravings against “cheap

labor” in China, designed to further the imperialist-backed drive for capitalist counterrevolution in the Chinese deformed workers state.

A clear example of the role of the labor bureaucracy in propping up the rule of its capitalist rulers is provided by the leadership of the Canadian Auto Workers (CAW), which has been prominent in the anti-globalization protests and more generally postures as a militant alternative to the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) tops. Faced with major job cuts in the auto industry internationally, CAW president Buzz Hargrove is campaigning to “save jobs” by offering up his members as a low-wage alternative to foreign labor.

Hargrove intoned: “You can hire three workers in Canada for the price of two in the United States. You can hire four workers for the price of two in Germany” (*Toronto Star*, 29 November 2000). At the same time, signs have appeared on union bulletin boards at Toronto-area plants with messages like “Hungry? Out of work? Eat your import.” Such protectionist poison sets workers in Canada against their class brothers and sisters in other countries. It is directly counterposed to the kind of international working-class struggle needed to fight industry-wide layoffs throughout the Americas, and beyond to Europe and Asia.

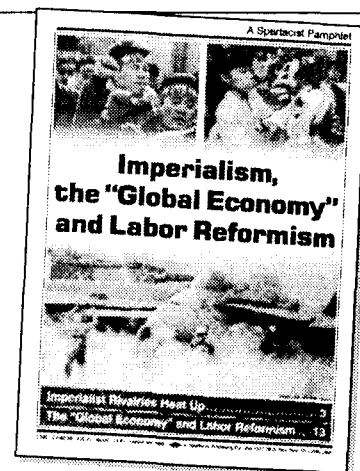
The CLAC and many other anarchists are repelled by the venal and conservative patriotism emanating from labor officialdom, even as they welcome rank and file workers to participate in “the globalization of genuine solidarity between peoples” (“Quebec 2001: A Carnival Against Capitalism”). However, they view the working class as simply one sector of the oppressed and not as the motor force of anti-capitalist revolution.

Rejecting the reservoir of social power necessary to overthrow capitalism—a power uniquely represented by the international proletariat—they instead project an eclectic “variety of creative initiatives,” look to non-proletarian forces, and call to “globalize our networks of resistance to corporate rule” (CLAC “Basis of Unity”) through “solidarity” with such diverse forces as the Zapatista rebels in Mexico, the ghetto poor in the U.S. or Native peoples in Canada—each of which is called upon to organize itself “locally.” But this only

This pamphlet assesses recent changes in the world economy in a historical perspective, from the origins of modern imperialism in the late 19th century through the capitalist counterrevolution in East Europe and the former USSR and its aftermath. Reformist ideologues of “globalization” seek to obscure the role of the capitalist nation-state and the danger of interimperialist 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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Seattle WTO protest: union tops' chauvinist, anti-Communist signs read "People First Not China First."

begs the question: indigenous peoples, the black ghetto masses, impoverished peasants remain deeply oppressed not least because, isolated from the working class, they have no social power.

The proletariat must become the champion of all those ground down by imperialism. Consciousness of its historic role can only be brought to the working class through a *political* struggle within the unions against the pro-capitalist, nationalist bureaucracy. We need an internationalist proletarian party which will fight to mobilize the working class independent of and against its "own" national ruling class.

Defend Cuba Against Imperialism, Counterrevolution!

The purpose of the FTAA is to shore up U.S., and secondarily Canadian, imperialist control of the various neocolonies and smaller capitalist states in Latin America and the Caribbean in the face of competition from rival imperialist powers in Europe and also Japan. It is to be a southward extension of NAFTA, which has deepened the neocolonial subjugation of Mexico and pushed millions there into ever deeper poverty. Heads of state from every country in the hemisphere except one have been invited to the Summit of the Americas. The exception is Cuba, the one country in the region where the oppressive rule of capitalism was smashed through a social revolution.

The Cuban Revolution has survived decades of CIA plots, American blockade and imperialist economic penetration, including from Canada. Even though deformed from the outset by the rule of the nationalist Castro bureaucracy, the smashing of capitalist class rule has enabled the Cuban masses to make tremendous strides in health care, education and general social equality. The restoration of capitalism would bring untold misery to the people of Cuba, and would further embolden U.S. and Canadian imperialism in exploiting the peoples of Latin America, more than any "free trade" agreement could ever do.

This is why it is absolutely crucial that all opponents of capitalist oppression stand in unconditional defense of the Cuban Revolution against imperialism and internal threats of counterrevolution. But in months of organizing and "educa-

tion" on the FTAA—including by left anarchists—the question of Cuba has rarely, if ever, been addressed.

Of course, anti-communist bourgeois liberals, pro-capitalist union bureaucrats and mainstream social democrats would applaud the "end of Communism" in Cuba or the other remaining deformed workers states—China, Vietnam and North Korea—just like they did in the former Soviet Union. And many self-styled "revolutionary" groups are no less in thrall to the wonders of bourgeois democracy. Among these "left" anti-Communists, the International Socialists yield pride of place to none. In 1994, for instance, they cheered on a revolt in Havana by black-market criminals, portraying it as "Cuban workers and peasants" who "have begun to break the hold of a repressive regime" (*Socialist Worker*, September 1994)!

While many anarchists claim to oppose imperialism, they transform "freedom" and "democracy" into abstract ideals, disappearing the class basis of all such notions. This leads them to deny the need for the victorious working class to organize its own state power, the dictatorship of the proletariat, to defend *its* freedom, *its* democracy, *its* rights against reaction. Opposition to the state "in general" has put the anarchist movement repeatedly on the wrong side in conflicts between world imperialism and the workers states. At the height of the civil war which followed the Bolshevik seizure of power, some anarchists hailed the 1921 Kronstadt uprising, a stab in the back of the Russian Revolution engineered by counterrevolutionary "White" emigrés. Kronstadt remains an anti-communist touchstone for anarchists today. (See "Kronstadt and Counterrevolution," *Workers Vanguard* Nos. 195 and 203, 3 March and 28 April 1978.)

Although its real history is hidden under mountains of fabrications and slanders, the 1917 October Revolution in Russia was the biggest victory for the working class in history. It was a beacon of hope for millions of oppressed peoples around the world and spurred revolutionary upsurges from war-ravaged Germany to China. Thanks to the Bolshevik-led overthrow of capitalism, Russia went from a backward country mired in feudal-like relations to one that provided jobs, housing, medical care, education, a large measure of women's equality, industrial and military development and technological advances that enabled it to stay the hand of U.S.-led imperialism for decades. The social transformations in East Europe after the Soviet victory in World War II and the revolutions in China, North Korea, Vietnam and Cuba brought tremendous gains for the working people of these societies.

At the same time, the popular association of human liberation with communism has been hugely undermined by the repressive and nationalist rule of Stalinism in these countries. The Stalinist bureaucracy, a parasitic caste resting atop the workers states (much like a labor bureaucracy sits atop a trade union), first arose in the Soviet Union in 1923-24 under conditions of economic backwardness and the failure to extend the revolution to any advanced capitalist countries. With the Soviet Union isolated, the Stalinists announced they would proceed to build "socialism in one country." This, they said, only required achieving "peaceful coexistence" with imperialism. Thus "socialism in one country" quickly became a justification for selling out revolutions elsewhere, to appease the imperialists and forestall military intervention against the USSR.

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The Main Enemy...

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But “socialism in one country” is a reactionary utopian pipedream—indeed, an impossibility, as Leon Trotsky (and before him Marx and Engels) explained, since socialism can only be founded on a level of planned production possible only on an international scale. The Trotskyists fought for workers political revolution to oust the Stalinist betrayers and reinstitute the Bolshevik program of revolutionary internationalism and proletarian democracy based on workers councils (soviets). As Trotsky brilliantly explained in *The Revolution Betrayed* (1936), the contradictions of Soviet society could not endure forever: “Will the bureaucrat devour the workers’ state, or will the working class clean up the bureaucrat?” With the final destruction of the Soviet Union in 1991-92, that contradiction was resolved bitterly in the negative.

From the union bureaucracy and NDP to reformist “socialist” outfits, most of the same forces who are today organizing against “globalization” actively joined with their own capitalist rulers in fighting for the destruction of the Soviet Union and East European deformed workers states. The CLC tops and New Democrats hailed and helped to finance Solidarność, a counterrevolutionary “union” backed by the Vatican and CIA which led the restoration of capitalist exploitation in Poland. In 1991, a host of reformist left outfits supported the imperialist-backed counter-coup in Moscow led by Boris Yeltsin, which paved the way for the final destruction of the Soviet workers state. Leading the pack, once again, was the I.S., whose rabid Cold War anti-Sovietism was expressed at the time: “Communism has collapsed.... It is a fact that should have every socialist rejoicing” (*Socialist Worker* [Britain], 31 August 1991).

The anti-Communist thrust which is integral to the globalization “movement” is personified by Naomi Klein, whose writings and speeches are wildly popular with both mainstream liberals and many in the diffuse anarchist milieu. Klein’s book *No Logo*, which has topped the national best-seller lists for several months, has even been called “the *Das Kapital* of the growing anti-corporate movement” by the

London Observer.

In her book, Klein attacks governments in North America and Europe for “constructively engaging” the Chinese deformed workers state with trade and being “largely unwilling to impose meaningful sanctions on such documented human rights violators.” And during the Prague demonstrations against the IMF last fall, Klein wrote in a column entitled “Capitalism and Communism Look Equally Bad in Prague”:

“Many of the young Czechs I met this week say that their direct experience with communism and capitalism has taught them that the two systems have something in common: They both treat people as if they are less than fully human.”

—*Globe and Mail*, 27 September 2000

In sharp contrast, we wrote in an International Communist League statement distributed during the Prague protests:

“Were it not for the capitalist counterrevolution which destroyed East Europe and the former Soviet Union a decade ago, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund would not be meeting in Prague! The ‘velvet revolution’ ripped Czechoslovakia apart and now the working people, women and national and ethnic minorities suffer the raw exploitation, impoverishment and depredations of the capitalist market.”

—“Smash Imperialist Exploitation Through World Socialist Revolution!” *Workers Vanguard* No. 742, 22 September 2000

The counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union and the deformed workers states of East Europe was a gigantic defeat for the world working class. In Russia, it has led to utter poverty, plummeting life expectancy, degradation for women and racist persecution of non-Russian minorities. Globally, the sharpening of interimperialist rivalries following the collapse of the USSR has made the world a far more dangerous place, heightening the rivalries between the U.S. and other imperialist powers, who now feel themselves unconstrained in their drive to impose a barbaric New World Order on the peoples of the world. These rivalries ultimately point to war, as in World Wars I and II—only this time the various competing imperialist powers have enough thermonuclear weapons to destroy human civilization. The only way to stop this, and give mankind a future, is the fight for new October Revolutions worldwide.

Environmentalism and Imperialist War

Environmentalism is a prominent aspect of the current “anti-globalization” movement. Numerous meetings and teach-ins in preparation for the Quebec City protests have featured Green Party spokesmen and generally accept “Green” ideology as scientific wisdom. Various reformist left outfits have jumped on the environmental bandwagon—once again including the I.S., whose *Socialist Worker* runs articles with headlines like “Why Green is Red” and “Killer Potatoes.”

For its part, the anarchist CLAC states in its “Basis of Unity” that it rejects “a system driven by an exploitative logic that sees...ecosystems as natural resources.” The irrational, profit-driven capitalist system cannot but be destructive to the environment. But the history of human progress has been a struggle to master the forces of nature. The development of agriculture and domestication of animals was a successful incursion into the “natural ecology” of the planet, opening a way forward from the brief and brutal struggle for survival in early human society. Today we Marxists fight for the elimination of scarcity, for a society where workers enjoy the fruits of their labor which today are expropriated by the capitalists.

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Canadian Forces
 Left: Trotskyists call for proletarian-revolutionary opposition to NATO war on Serbia, Toronto, March 1999. Right: Canadian army in Bosnia, part of imperialist occupation force.

SC photo

In particular, extending to the impoverished masses of the Third World the things Western petty-bourgeois leftists take for granted—electricity, schools, clean drinking water, medicine, public transport, computers—will take a huge leap in industrial and technological capacity. That leap requires an international revolution led by a revolutionary vanguard which can render the working class conscious of its mission and break it from the grip of capitalism's reformist and pseudo-revolutionary lackeys.

Indeed it is precisely the loyal service of bourgeois-nationalist Greens to the ruling class that led them to collaborate in one of the greatest ecological disasters on the planet. Joschka Fischer, Germany's Green Party foreign minister, vociferously backed the barbaric bombardment of Serbia by NATO warplanes in 1999. The Balkans are now riddled with depleted uranium shells and the Danube is poisoned by chemicals from bombed-out factories. The destruction of industrial and social infrastructure means the true death toll of the Balkans War will be tallied for years to come.

Likewise, the 1991 Gulf War against Iraq destroyed one of the most advanced societies in the region. A population whose overwhelming majority was literate and had access to medical care is now literally being starved to death by the ongoing UN blockade. The support of the NDP, the union bureaucracy, most of the fake-left *and* the petty-bourgeois "environmental movement" for these bloody crimes of imperialism is the only explanation for the thundering silence on these questions in any official propaganda for the anti-"globalization" protests from Seattle to Washington D.C., Prague and now Quebec City.

The war against Serbia showed with particular clarity the utter bankruptcy of today's social-chauvinist "left," who promoted the war aims and propaganda of the various imperialist powers while declaiming against the NATO bombing. In France, the fake-Trotskyist LCR—associated with Gauche Socialiste in Quebec—echoed the anti-American nationalism of the French bourgeoisie, promoting military intervention by the United Nations or the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) as an alternative to NATO. One prominent LCR leader co-signed a statement calling for

a "multinational police force" in Kosovo "under the auspices of the OSCE" (*Rouge*, 1 April 1999).

Alex Callinicos, a leading spokesman for the British Socialist Workers Party, parent group of the Canadian I.S., likewise signed the OSCE appeal, while the I.S. hailed the supposed "antiwar" stand of the CAW union bureaucracy...which was calling for Canadian ground troops to occupy Kosovo! Meanwhile, until they were rudely ejected for their lip-service opposition to the bombing, leaders of Socialist Action attended a *pro-war* demonstration in Toronto organized by ethnic Albanians whose signs and speeches said "Thanks for your support, NATO!"

Behind the occasional "anti-imperialist" rhetoric of the fake left lie deadly appeals for the bloody imperialist powers to adopt a more "humane" foreign policy. Far from ameliorating capitalist oppression in its neocolonies, such calls reinforce widespread illusions that imperialism can be restrained by democratic pressure. The result is to *strengthen* the imperialist system by offering its repressive military adventures a spurious "popular" seal of approval.

Many anarchist leaders also purvey dangerous illusions in democratic capitalism. Thus four years ago, when he was organizing protests against an Asia-Pacific economic summit

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The Main Enemy...

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in Vancouver, current CLAC spokesman Jaggi Singh called on the Canadian government to arrest Indonesian dictator Suharto if he entered the country. In November 1997, Singh told the *Ubysey* student paper: "There is a Canadian law, war crimes legislation, that states that people who've committed war crimes...outside the country are allowed to be tried for those crimes in Canada." This is an open call on the Canadian imperialists to act as guarantors of "human rights" internationally, no different in substance from the fake-leftists who justified NATO's assault on Serbia two years ago in the name of defending the Kosovo Albanians.

In sharp contrast, the ICL has consistently exposed the reactionary fraud of "human rights imperialism." We fought for the defeat of U.S. and Canadian imperialism in the Balkans and for military defense of Serbia without giving an ounce of political support to the Serb chauvinist Milosevic, just as earlier in the Gulf War we fought to mobilize the proletariat for the defeat of imperialism and called for defense of Iraq.

"Unity of the Left": Cover for the Pro-Capitalist NDP

The orgy of social-chauvinism among the reformist left today is a direct reflection of their support to the social-democratic and Labourite governments who prosecuted the Balkans war in Europe, and to the NDP at home. The NDP, stung by pathetic election results and the threat of complete annihilation as a political factor, recently announced its intent to march against the FTAA in Quebec City. The party is racked by internal bickering between mainstream elements such as federal leader Alexa McDonough, and "leftists" like B.C. MP Svend Robinson and the CAW's Hargrove. Hargrove recently called for McDonough's resignation and threatens to break CAW ties with the NDP altogether unless it changes course.

The NDP's turn to the anti-globalization milieu—a transparent attempt to gain credentials among youth by putting on an activist gloss—has been hailed by much of the so-called left. The 7 March *Socialist Worker*, for instance, says that "hesitantly or not, the fact that the NDP is backing the Quebec City protests is fantastic." In a companion piece, the I.S. implores the provincial NDP premiers to publish the draft text of the FTAA agreement, arguing that "Now it's time to use the resources of the NDP in office to really help the movement." What is truly fantastic (as in otherworldly, unreal) is that the I.S. can get away with its sometime claim to be building an "alternative" to the NDP!

The NDP is what Marxists call a "bourgeois workers

party": linked to the working class via the labor bureaucracy but thoroughly pro-capitalist in its program and practice. Like their social-democratic counterparts in Europe, NDP governments—from Bob Rae's union-busting regime in Ontario to the B.C. NDP government with its attacks on immigrants and Native people—are **capitalist** governments, instruments for the suppression of workers and the oppressed. Moreover, NDP "lefts" like Robinson have been particularly bellicose in backing Canadian imperialist intervention abroad.

The NDP is also in the forefront of the "national unity" crusade against Quebec's national rights. While the Chrétien government never misses an occasion to "put Quebec in its place," even refusing to let the *indépendantiste* Parti Québécois government address the FTAA meeting in its own national capital, the NDP and English Canadian labor tops wave the flag of Maple Leaf chauvinism to rally the working class to the interest of its "own" ruling class. The NDP caucus that will march in Quebec City is essentially the same one that supported Chrétien's "Clarity Act," which denies Quebec the right to secede even on a majority referendum vote.

The I.S. criticizes the NDP's most right-wing policies from time to time. But for these opportunist "socialists," to cite the words of right-wing German social democrat Eduard Bernstein a century ago, "the movement is everything, the end goal nothing." They claim that, whatever its bad positions, the NDP's presence in Quebec City will boost the "movement," bringing bigger forces into it. And come election time, these pretend "socialists" always and everywhere stump for the social democrats; indeed, when Tony Blair's British Labour Party government was elected in 1997, the I.S.'s British parent group declared itself "over the moon"! In sharp contrast, Marxist revolutionaries fight to break the working class from the pro-capitalist social democrats through a relentless fight against their support to the capitalist system.

Reforms under capitalism which benefit the working class, such as health care and education, must certainly be defended. But **reformism** does not lead to reforms—it leads to defeats, and to the prostration of the working class before their exploiters. It was the threat of **revolution** that forced capitalist governments to grant better social programs, free or affordable education, etc. In the wake of the 1917 Russian Revolution, and especially after the spread of Soviet influence following World War II, the imperialist ruling classes, worried about saving their system, decided to forego a small part of their profits to buy social peace via what became known as the "welfare state." At the same time, they have sometimes put social-democratic governments in place to administer the capitalist state, figuring they would better be able to regiment and pacify the working class. Indeed, today it is the social-democratic parties ruling in West Europe and some Canadian provinces who are busy **dismantling** this "welfare state."

Anarchism vs. Marxism

Given the all-sided bourgeois triumphalism over the "death of communism" and the evident political bankruptcy of most self-described socialists, today's revival of anarchist beliefs is not surprising. The Russian Revolution redefined the left worldwide, and its final undoing has had a similar impact in reverse. When the October Revolution was a beacon of liberation, and at the height of the revolutionary

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upheavals which came in its wake, the best of the anarchist and syndicalist militants—James P. Cannon in the U.S., Vicor Serge in Russia, Alfred Rosmer in France—became dedicated fighters for communism.

While today's anarchists run the gamut of everything from anti-communist thugs to youth genuinely repelled by the whole capitalist system, what they all have in common is a form of radical democratic idealism that cannot lead to victory against the "democratic" capitalist system. The best they can propose is an ever-increasing "solidarity" among people and peoples. About the time Marx joined it in 1847, the Communist League (formerly the League of the Just) had as its main slogan, "All men are brothers." Observing that there were some men whose brother he was not and had no desire to be, Marx convinced his comrades to change the slogan to "Workers of all countries, unite!"

Revolutionary Marxism takes as its starting point the class struggle between capital and labor. This is not fundamentally a battle of ideas, a matter of Good against Evil. Capitalist oppression is rooted in exploitative property relations defended by armed state power for the benefit of the dominant class. To fundamentally alter the lot of the overwhelming majority of humanity requires proletarian revolution to abolish private property and liquidate the bourgeoisie as a class.

Anarchist idealism, in contrast, is based on a moral imperative. The "Basis of Unity" of the left-anarchist CLAC repeatedly "rejects" the evils of capitalism:

"We fundamentally reject a social and economic system based on the private ownership of the means of production and exchange. We reject a system driven by an exploitative logic that sees human beings as human capital.... We reject the idea that the world is only valuable in terms of profits, competition and efficiency."

But to reject capitalism is not to overthrow it. This is a revolutionary act which can only be based on social power, class organization and communist leadership. The world won't be transformed through militant action at any number of big demonstrations. How then do we get rid of capitalism and its oppressive state? That is a question to which anarchism has no answer.

Defeat Imperialism Through Workers Revolution!

We Trotskyists look above all to the history and struggles of Lenin's Bolshevik party to map out a strategy for the proletarian overthrow of capitalism today. The workers cannot take hold of the machinery of the capitalist state and "reform" it in the interests of the oppressed. They must smash the capitalists' repressive apparatus and create a workers state which will put down the counterrevolutionary resistance by the former capitalist rulers. The Bolsheviks had a revolutionary internationalist perspective: against appeasement of imperialism, they fought to extend the Russian October to world socialist revolution.

Anarchist and other youth who hate capitalism have to choose between joining the fight for an international party of socialist revolution or maintaining (at best) an empty posture of moral outrage. A revolutionary party must fight every instance of social injustice and oppression. Faced with the national chauvinism of the labor tops—which poisons class consciousness among workers by fomenting religious, national and ethnic divisions—it must fight for full citizenship rights for all immigrants to further genuine internation-



Novosti


Bolshevik soldiers march through Moscow under banner of Communism, 1917. Only workers revolution can sweep away capitalist oppression.

alist solidarity among the world's working people. It must oppose Anglo chauvinism and champion independence for the Québécois in order to instill in the working class the need for common anti-capitalist struggle. It must combat every instance of women's oppression and "all the old crap" of religious obscurantism, attacks on abortion rights and anti-gay bigotry. Welding the audacity of the youth to the social power of the proletariat is crucial to the fight for a new socialist society.

As we wrote in the ICL statement distributed in Prague last September:

"Our aim is a revolutionary leadership whose cadre must be tested and trained in the class struggle. The road forward is for the presently small forces adhering to the program of Lenin and Trotsky to forge parties with the experience, revolutionary will and authority among the masses to lead successful proletarian revolutions. Nothing less than a reforged Trotskyist Fourth International will suffice for the task of leading the workers and oppressed to the victory of world socialism. We have no illusions that this will be an easy road, and we recognize that the possession of the technology of nuclear holocaust by an irrational and genocidal ruling class foreshortens the possibilities: there is not a lot of time."

For socialist revolution throughout the Americas and around the world! Join the International Communist League! ■

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Mexico...

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There are 259 military outposts in Chiapas and another 396 points occupied by police forces! While the government claims that it has already dismantled four outposts, the reality is that the troops have just been moved back to their barracks a few miles away. Meanwhile, major bourgeois spokesmen are screaming for blood. The PRI is dead set against any autonomy legislation. The head of the COPARMEX employers association rails that "too much space" has already been given and warns Fox it would be "a grave error" to allow the EZLN march to take place. A leading official in Fox's own party, the head of the Chamber of Deputies (Congress) commission on "public security," demands that EZLN leader Marcos be arrested if he leaves Chiapas.

Standing behind the Mexican bourgeoisie is the U.S. imperialist colossus, which has funneled vast quantities of military aid to the war of terror against the EZLN peasant insurgents in Chiapas, the Popular Revolutionary Army (EPR) in Guerrero and the Insurgent People's Revolutionary Army (ERPI). Since the imposition of NAFTA, U.S. imperialism has planted its boot even more firmly on the necks of the Mexican workers and peasants, and Fox was elected on a platform of extending the PRI's sell-off of the Mexican economy to the imperialists. The American capitalists are watching closely to make sure Fox delivers on his promises to further open Mexico to U.S. economic penetration. Days after his inauguration, Republican president George W. Bush announced that his first visit abroad would be to Mexico. Down with the NAFTA "free trade" rape of Mexico! Mexican army out of Chiapas now! Immediate freedom for all EZLN, EPR and ERPI prisoners!

Fox's Sham Autonomy Scheme

The COCOPA proposal, based on the 1996 San Andrés accord, would grant indigenous people "autonomy as part of the Mexican State" and "collective access to the use and enjoyment of the natural resources of their lands and territories...except those whose direct control corresponds to the nation." In practice, these vague promises are meaningless. The proposed autonomous regions, with limited rights to land, would often come into conflict with the big landholders and the industrial enterprises Fox wants to introduce in the area. The territories whose control "corresponds to the nation" are presumably those rich in oil, gas and water resources. Chiapas has 30 percent of Mexico's scarce water resources, 47 percent of natural gas reserves and 21 percent of the oil. In fact, some of the army outposts in Chiapas were set up specifically to protect oil reserves.

The contempt of the government for the indigenous population is clear from the openly racist statement of Rafael Rangel, the president of Fox's National Council of Education for Life and Work. Rangel declaimed that it is "very difficult" to educate half of the country's 36 million illiterate people, who are "dispersed indigenous people" or "don't have the mental capacity" because "their brains didn't develop" due to malnutrition (*La Jornada*, 11 December 2000). First the bourgeoisie starves the rural and indigenous population, and then uses that to justify the fact that they are denied even the most basic education!

Fox took over a country racked by widespread social unrest, exemplified by the year-long strike at Mexico City's



Zapatista protest in Chiapas on January 12 demands: "We Want Peace." EZLN promotes illusions in sham "autonomy" proposal.

National Autonomous University (UNAM) that was brought to an end last February when police stormed the campus and arrested over 700 people, including leaders of the General Strike Council. The NAFTA pact has brought untold misery to the proletariat and peasantry. Since 1994, prices for basic necessities like tortillas rose over 400 percent while real wages plummeted by some 25 percent and are barely two-thirds what they were 30 years ago. With the products of American agribusiness flooding Mexican markets, the already impoverished peasantry has been ruined.

Since last July's elections, Mexico has been rocked by labor actions, including a strike by Volkswagen auto workers and, in mid-January, work stoppages by Mexico City subway mechanics and ticket collectors. Fox's selection as labor minister of a former head of COPARMEX was a slap in the face to Mexican workers. One of the government's first acts was to issue an injunction against a strike of 45,000 sugarcane workers, declaring it "nonexistent." On January 11, state cops in Puebla invaded a factory making sweatshirts for Nike, beating and dragging away some of the 850 strikers who had been occupying the plant in protest against wages less than 70 cents an hour and conditions in which workers as young as 14 are forced to work ten hours a day.

At the same time as he moots "peace" in Chiapas, Fox is pushing to impose a 15 percent tax on food and medicine, provoking a furor among working people and the middle class. He is also proposing to open the nationalized electricity industry to foreign investment, which would amount to the privatization his PRI predecessor, Ernesto Zedillo, failed to implement in 1999. In response to the California power crisis, U.S. vice president Cheney is already talking about building new generating facilities in Mexico. Fox's proposal, which would cost tens of thousands of jobs, has spurred union protest marches and could detonate an explosion among the strategic and militant electrical workers. The privatization plan also poses a direct clash with the indigenous people in Chiapas, whose water resources are key to expansion of the electricity system.

The Fox government's talk of transforming Chiapas peasants into small and medium businessmen is worse than a sick joke. A few paltry grants to create tourist enterprises and craft shops will not address the utter destitution of the

region. In reality, Fox would like to convert the area into another *maquiladora* zone, exploiting its natural resources and converting the impoverished peasants into low-wage labor for U.S. and other "multinationals."

For Permanent Revolution!

Many radical youth who previously supported Cuauhtémoc Cárdenas' PRD had their illusions broken by the blows of billy clubs wielded by police repeatedly called out by the PRD city administration against the UNAM strikers. At the January 12 march in Mexico City, many students told our comrades that the PRD "is just the same as the other parties." These youth continue to look to the Zapatistas' struggle as a way to end misery and oppression. But the Zapatistas don't even pretend to fight for social revolution; Marcos states that they "don't want to create the Union of Socialist Republics of Central America" (*La Jornada*, 8 January).

As the EZLN's current pursuit of a negotiated settlement with Fox underlines, its peasant-guerrillaist strategy is nothing other than liberalism with guns, propagating the illusion that capitalism can be transformed into a more "humane" system. The Zapatistas march with the Mexican flag, promoting the lie that somehow the workers and oppressed will satisfy their felt needs by uniting with the Mexican bourgeoisie to fight against the ravages of imperialism. Mexican nationalism is the common coin of all the capitalist parties—PRI, PAN, PRD—and is counterposed to achieving the rights of the indigenous peoples oppressed by the Mexican bourgeoisie.

Under capitalism, hunger and illiteracy are all the ruling class has to offer the peasantry and indigenous peoples. The fight for social justice for the indigenous peoples, for the elimination of hunger, misery and illiteracy, for an end to the deep-seated oppression of women can only be victorious through a socialist revolution that sweeps away the capitalist system of racism and oppression and expropriates the bourgeoisie! In countries of belated capitalist development like Mexico, the weak national bourgeoisie, dependent on the imperialist overlords, cannot resolve the tasks—agrarian revolution, political democracy, national liberation—historically associated with bourgeois revolutions such as the French Revolution.

We Marxist revolutionaries understand that the poor peasantry is an indispensable ally of the proletariat in the struggle for socialist revolution. But the peasantry can play no independent revolutionary role; these intermediate elements, producing for and dominated by the capitalist world market which drives them to ruination, strive for land and compete among themselves to sell their produce. The peasants' narrow, petty-bourgeois outlook is further reinforced by rural isolation and backwardness.

It is only the proletariat, concentrated in large factories and wielding social power derived from its relationship to the means of production, which has the historic interest and ability to liberate all the oppressed. The rule of the industrial and agrarian capitalists and landlords must be replaced by the rule of the proletariat, supported by the rural and urban poor, which will sweep away pre-capitalist vestiges and resolve the burning democratic tasks as it proceeds to the establishment of a socialist economy. This is the Trotskyist program of permanent revolution, which can only be fully realized through the victory of the proletariat in the advanced capitalist countries, centrally the U.S.

The Grupo Espartaquista de México, section of the International Communist League, fights to forge the Leninist-Trotskyist vanguard party needed to lead the Mexican proletariat to power. Crucial to this struggle is combatting the influence of bourgeois nationalism within the working class. Nationalism binds Mexican workers to their class enemy and prevents them from uniting with the workers and oppressed in the U.S. in common struggle against the capitalists on both sides of the border.

In the U.S., it is necessary to politically struggle against the AFL-CIO bureaucracy which pushes protectionist poison against Mexican workers and to fight for full citizenship rights for all immigrants. With the living bridge provided by millions of Mexican immigrant workers in the U.S., and as the two countries' economies are increasingly interpenetrated, there is a tremendous opportunity for joint class struggle uniting workers in Mexico and the U.S. against the imperialist exploiters. But this struggle will only be victorious under the leadership of a revolutionary-internationalist party. It is the purpose of the Spartacist League/U.S. to build such a party.

Fake Trotskyists Push Illusions in EZLN

The fake-left groups in Mexico which claim to offer a socialist alternative to the Zapatistas in fact serve to promote illusions in these nationalists. This is crystal-clear in the case of the Liga de Trabajadores por el Socialismo (LTS), a centrist group which is revolutionary in words and opportunist in deeds. In a 10 January leaflet titled "The Politics of the Zapatista Leadership," the LTS declares: "Only the *independent mobilization*, nationally and internationally, and the unity of the working class and the poor masses of the city and the countryside can solve the demands of the peasantry." But while raising a call for an "internationalist workers party" and making ritual reference to the proletariat leading the oppressed, the LTS fosters the view that the petty-bourgeois EZLN could play a more revolutionary role. Thus they lament, "Regrettably, the Zapatista leadership changed the demands of LAND!, DOWN WITH NAFTA! and DEATH TO THE BAD GOVERNMENT! a few days after the armed uprising began—to give way to the San Andrés Accords—under the promise of Zedillo's PRI government that it would grant indigenous autonomy."

But from the very start, the Zapatistas made it clear that they were seeking to pressure the bourgeoisie! Lacking in the LTS's whining is any recognition of the *petty-bourgeois class character* of the EZLN. In a separate piece in the same flyer, the LTS demands: "Dissolution of the repressive apparatus of the state that serves to harass and persecute peasant, workers' and student fighters! Punishment to repressive assassins!" While posing as revolutionary advisers to the EZLN leadership, the LTS calls upon the bourgeoisie to punish its own hired assassins and suggests that the repressive apparatus of the capitalist state can be "dissolved" short of a workers revolution. The capitalist state cannot be reformed to serve the interests of workers and the oppressed; it must be smashed and replaced by a workers state.

The Grupo Espartaquista fights to sweep away the ideological barriers to revolution represented by such centrists as part of the struggle to bring revolutionary consciousness to the proletariat. The urgent task is building a Mexican section of a reformed Trotskyist Fourth International under the banner of permanent revolution and proletarian internationalism. ■

Beware Peace Talks Fraud

Mexican Troops Out of Chiapas!

The following article was written by our comrades of the Grupo Espartaquista de México, before the Zapatista march to Mexico City and the 100,000-strong March 11 pro-EZLN rally in the capital's main square. The article first appeared in Workers Vanguard No. 751 (2 February) and has been lightly edited for publication in SC.

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On New Year's Day 1994, the day the NAFTA agreement for the imperialist "free trade" rape of Mexico took effect, the Zapatista National Liberation Army (EZLN) launched the peasant rebellion that cast an international spotlight on the hideous poverty and oppression of the

Down With NAFTA !

indigenous people in one of the country's poorest states, Chiapas. The uprising was quickly contained by military repression and death squad terror unleashed by the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) regime. In the intervening years, the EZLN has pursued one sham government "peace" initiative after another. Yet Chiapas remains under occupation by at least 70,000 troops, and the government-sponsored right-wing paramilitaries responsible for the 1997 massacre of 45 men, women and children in the town of Acteal continue to operate with abandon.

As soon as he assumed the presidency on 1 December 2000, ending more than 70 years of PRI rule, Vicente Fox Quesada of the National Action Party (PAN) vowed to secure a peace deal with the EZLN. With much fanfare, Fox ordered the withdrawal of troops at a number of outposts in Chiapas. The day after his inauguration, the EZLN announced that Subcommander Marcos would lead a two-week march to the capital beginning February 25. The Zapatistas' stated aim is to pressure federal legislators to adopt a constitutional amendment on autonomy for indigenous peoples proposed by the Commission of Concord and Peace (COCOPA)—a group of congressmen designated to mediate peace talks—and endorsed by Fox. They have also called for



Reuters

U.S.-backed military occupation of Chiapas has meant bloody repression of peasants, indigenous peoples.

the release of more than a hundred imprisoned EZLN militants and the withdrawal of troops from seven outposts near Zapatista villages as a precondition for renewed peace talks.

On January 12, more than a thousand protesters, mainly students, marched through the capital to support the EZLN's demands, while thousands more demonstrated in Chiapas with signs reading "We Want Peace." After years of looking to the "left" bourgeois-nationalist Party of the Democratic Revolution (PRD) and seeking to pressure the PRI to the bargaining table, the petty-bourgeois EZLN now hopes to pressure the new clerical-reactionary regime to negotiate a peace agreement. In Chiapas, the PRD is in a coalition with the PAN. Addressing Fox, Marcos told the *New York Times* (30 January), "If this government truly represents change...it will address all the issues that provoked war." Such illusions are deadly. The blood-drenched Mexican bourgeoisie, backed to the hilt by rapacious U.S. imperialism, will not and cannot bring justice to the oppressed and impoverished.

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